

Ephesians Chapter 6
Week 8, v.12-14

Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenly [places.]

Why do we need to put on the full armor of God?

Because we are in a spiritual fight, against the power of darkness and evil. We are soldiers in a continuous battle with sin and the rulers of all that is evil.

'struggle' (KJV – wrestle) <pale> to throw (in various applications, more or less violent or intense):--arise, cast (out), X dung, lay, lie, pour, put (up), send, strike, throw (down), thrust.

When we struggle or wrestle with something, we put great effort into fighting against a problem or dealing with a challenge or difficulty. To physically struggle means we move forcefully in an attempt to escape. To struggle against something means we work hard to resist.

Verse 12 says this struggle is not against flesh and blood. Though it seems that our flesh is the constant battle, the real enemy is Satan and his demons. Our greatest struggle is not against men like ourselves but with that which is spiritual. While we do have conflict with men, our main battle is with the forces of darkness, the spirits of wickedness. Our mightiest enemies are invisible.

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Notice how many times the word against <pros> is used. This word pertains to direction with motion towards something. *Robertson's NT Word Pictures* says against is used in the sense of *face to face conflict to the finish*.

flesh <sarx> ...the body (as opposed to the soul (or spirit), or as the symbol of what is external,...

2 Cor 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,
Our combat is against principalities – the chief powers

powers – superhuman strength
rulers – satanic rule
of the darkness - shadiness
of this world - an age, a period
spiritual wickedness in high places - supernatural
depravity,
wicked spirits

Although Satan is powerful, he is not as powerful as God. God is the only being Who was not created, therefore God is not limited in any means. God is omniscient – all knowing, Satan is not; God is omnipotent – all powerful, Satan is not; God is omnipresent – everywhere at once, Satan is not. So, although Satan is a powerful foe and one to be reckoned with, he is limited to what God allows.

“So, although Satan is not a spiritual counterpart to God – he is not omnipotent, omnipresent, or omniscient – he is nevertheless a very formidable foe, and a Christian is foolish if he thinks Satan can be resisted by human strength alone.” J M Boice, Ephesians

John 14:30 "I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;

2 Cor 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Our "wrestling" is with foes of evil natural and supernatural. We sorely need "the panoply of God" (furnished by God). Robertson's NT Word Pictures

...wicked spirits – who continually oppose faith, love, holiness, either by force or fraud; and labour to infuse unbelief, pride, idolatry, malice, envy, anger, hatred. John Wesley's Notes on the Old and New Testaments

...by principalities, &c., we are to understand different orders of evil spirits, who are all employed under the devil, their great head, to prevent the spread of the Gospel in the world, and to destroy the souls of mankind. Adam Clarke's Commentary

...false teachers, who endeavoured to corrupt Christianity, are meant; such as those mentioned by St. John, 1Jo 2:19: They went out from us, but they were not of us, &c. And he thinks the meaning may be extended to all corrupters of Christianity in all succeeding ages. Adam Clarke's Commentary

- we are in a war against our own sinful desires
- we are in a war against evil in general that is a part of the world we live in
- we are to be prepared as soldiers to battle sin and corruption

How have you prepared for this battle? How do you prepare daily for this battle?
How do you fight against evil minute by minute?

Eph 6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Again in verse 13 we are told to take up our full armor so that we can resist sin and stand firm. **Do you think this is important?!** Because we are in a continual battle against evil, we are to take up or receive the complete weaponry that is available to us from God as His child. There is action needed on our part. The resources are always available to us but we have to make an effort to use them. When we do this it is possible for us to resist wickedness continually and completely, having done everything to stand against the enemy.

(Saving grace illustration of a person stranded on a small island who finds a row boat – if he doesn't get in it and use it he will perish. His rescue is available but he needs to act.)

2 Cor 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

1 Cor 2:5 that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

The truth is we have enemies. Be prepared! We are to expect evil; we will not be victorious without the armor of God. God has provided for us everything we need in His gospel to rise against evil. Our armor needs to be on at all times.

Luke 21:36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

This is the third time in this chapter we see the phrase *stand firm*.

Eph 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil.

Eph 6:13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**.

The repetition of this phrase means it is important. It is something the apostle Paul wants to get across. We don't *maybe* need to stand firm, we *definitely* need to stand firm. This is serious, not a suggestion but a command.

We need to stand or resist, remain steadfast against sin and 'walk in a manner worthy of being a child of God'.

Stand <histemi> abide, appoint, bring, continue, covenant, establish, hold up, lay, present, set (up), stanch, stand (by, forth, still, up)

What does it mean to stand firm? To withstand, to bear up. The word stanch means to be firm, resolute, unyielding, unbendable, determined, unwavering, steadfast, persevering.

The opposite of standing firm would be indecisiveness, vacillating, unsure, undetermined, wishy-washy.

Eph 4:14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

In light of the things Paul has warned about our combat with evil, we are to remain steadfast in our faith, resolute to move forward in a direction that honors the calling of being a child of God.

How? Using the armor given to us by God. We are in a battle, but it is God's battle and He is victorious. The weapons He gives us are able to defeat sin and Satan.

"Paul commanded his readers to put on the armor, take the weapons, and withstand Satan, all of which we do by faith. Knowing that Christ has already conquered Satan, and that the spiritual armor and weapons are available, by faith we accept what God gives us and go out to meet the foe. The day is evil, and the enemy is evil, but 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' (Rom 8:31). Be Rich (Ephesians): Gaining the Things that Money Can't Buy, Warren Wiersbe

Having girded your loins with truth

...the military girdle, which was worn about the loins for strength... Family Bible Notes

zwma, the GIRDLE; this went about the loins, and served to brace the armour tight to the body, and to support daggers, short swords, and such like weapons, which were frequently stuck in it. Adam Clarke's Commentary

What is the opposite of Truth? Satan is a liar. John 8:44 "You are of [your] father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [nature;] for he is a liar, and the father of lies.

We are to be ready at all times with the Truth, having prepared ourselves so that we are able to stand firm in the midst of evil, to counter the inevitable attacks of the devil with the truth and a heart that is obedient to God's will.

We need to know the Truth and practice the Truth in order to use it as a weapon.

Isa 11:5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Luke 12:35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; (KJV)

1 Pet 1:13 Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober [in spirit,] fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Gird – to get self ready; to prepare yourself for conflict or vigorous activity; to fasten something on; to surround or encompass something

Preparing for battle is not passive, rather it is active and continuous.

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness

ywrax, the BREAST-PLATE; this consisted of two parts, called pterugev or wings: one covered the whole region of the thorax or breast, in which the principal viscera of life are contained; and the other covered the back, as far down as the front part extended. Adam Clarke's Commentary

We are righteous because of Christ's work in our lives. Through His blood we are able to wear a breastplate of righteousness. **How can we fight sin without righteousness?**

"The life we live either fortifies us against Satan's attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us (2Cor 6:1-10). When Satan accuses the Christian, it is the righteousness of Christ that assures the believer of his salvation. But our positional righteousness in Christ, without practical righteousness in the daily life, only gives Satan opportunity to attack us." Be Rich (Ephesians): Gaining the Things that Money Can't Buy, Warren Wiersbe

Application

Read Ephesians Chapter 6. According to verse 12, who or what are we in a struggle against?

Although Satan is powerful, he is limited in his resources. We talked about three attributes of God: He is omniscient, He is omnipotent and He is omnipresent. What do these words mean and how do they compare to Satan's abilities?

- Omniscient –
- Omnipotent –
- Omnipresent –

Think of how you would prepare to go into a physical battle. Do you put the same effort into facing the spiritual battles that you encounter?

Read Eph 6:13. What does it say we are to do?

Why?

What does it mean to 'stand firm'?

What is the opposite of standing firm? Read Eph 4:14.

Where does our protection come from? Read 1 Cor 2:5.

How do we 'gird' ourselves with Truth?

How do we put on a breastplate of righteousness?

What is the overriding theme here?
your armor?

Where do you need to strengthen