

Ephesians

Spiritual Warfare 101

Ephesians 6:10-20

TALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Compare the impression you get from Ephesians 6:12 with that of 1 Peter 5:8 and Hebrews 2:14. So, should we or shouldn't we be afraid of the devil? **Why** do you think that?
- Have you ever heard someone "rebuke Satan" in prayer? What do you think of that practice? What light do the following verses shed on the subject:

Jude 9-11 _____

James 4:7-8 _____

Read Acts 13:6-12. Elymas clearly was an agent of Satan (v. 10), yet in v. 10-11 **with whom** does Paul speak—with Elymas or with Satan? What does this suggest to you? Did it work? (See v. 11)

- Have you ever encountered someone who was a tool of Satan?

If you don't think you have—perhaps you should think again! Have you ever encountered bitter jealousy or selfish ambition? Read James 3:14-15. Where do they come from?

- Read Ephesians 6:10-20. Is any sort of "rebuking of Satan" taught here? If not, what is?

Circle and write "C" at every command in Ephesians 6:10-20.

Circle and write "P" at every promise in Ephesians 6:10-20.

What do you learn?

- What challenges are you currently experiencing?

From what you've learned in this sermon, what actions should you take?

Sermon Summary

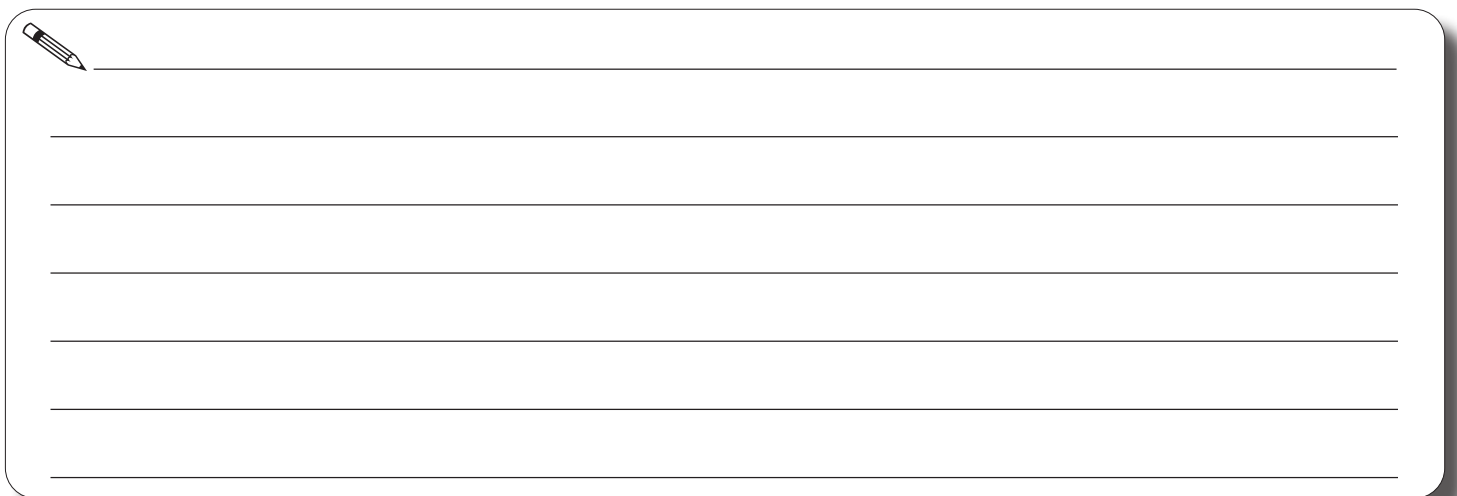
In Ephesians 1-3 Paul laid out what God is going to do about the mess this universe is in. In chapter 1 he tells us that when Jesus returns to set up his kingdom, he will make right all that has gone wrong in the universe. Chaos will be transformed into cohesion and disorder will be restored to order. In chapters 2-3 we're told how through Christ's death and resurrection, Jesus brings that kingdom power into our lives when we trust in him. Then in chapters 4, 5, and 6 Paul begins by saying, "Now if this is true, how shall we live?" He goes on to give a very detailed teaching about what it means to live the Christian life. The whole point of chapters 4-6 is to drive home the point that because we are not who we used to be we must not live the way we used to live. Our Christian walk needs to match our new identity in Christ—putting off the old life and putting on the new by renewing our minds with God's truth, and being filled with the Spirit in our relationships—at church, in our marriages, in our parenting and in our work life. The Christian life, says Paul, is lived out on a battlefield, not on a playground (6:10-12). Christians face three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 John 2:15–17). This world is at enmity with God, as is our fleshly nature and, of course, the devil constantly opposes God and his work. It is important to recognize that since Satan is a created being, he is *not* God's equal. Formidable as he is, he is limited in knowledge and power. Nor is Satan omnipresent—however he does have a host of fallen angels, called demons, to carry out his purposes. But the Bible assures us that by His death and resurrection, Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33; Galatians 6:14), the flesh (Romans 6:1–6; Galatians 2:20), and the devil (Ephesians 1:19–23). As believers, we do not fight *for* victory—we fight *from* victory! God wins the war, and we will be victorious with him. While our ultimate victory is assured, to win our individual skirmishes with demonic powers we must be on guard and draw upon God's resources.

I. Genuine Christianity involves spiritual warfare (v. 10-12). The Christian life involves both peace and conflict (Philippians 4:6–7; John 17:14–15). When you align yourself with God, his enemies become your enemies (Ephesians 6:18). This world is engulfed in spiritual warfare at both the individual and national level (Daniel 10:13-20). Demonic forces are wicked, so if we hope to overcome them, we must bear in mind that they have no moral principles, no code of honor that might restrain their evil. He seldom attacks openly, preferring darkness to light, yet he often disguises himself as an angel of light, presenting evil as though it were good. He is referred to as the serpent (Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 20:2), "the great dragon" (Revelation 12:9; cf 20:2), "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4), "the evil one" (Matthew 13:19, 38; John 17:15; Ephesians 6:16), "the prince of demons" (Matthew 9:34; 12:24; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15), "the accuser" (Revelation 12:10), and "the tempter" (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5). Satan opposes the spread of the gospel by blinding unbelievers to its truth (2 Corinthians 4:4), he inspires persecution of the church (2 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:17–18; Revelation 2:10), he promotes false doctrine within the church (John 8:44; cf 1 Timothy 4:1), he actively seeks to incite Christians to fall into sin and to dull their devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3), he is the accuser of believers (Job 1:9–11; Revelation 12:10). What hope do we possibly have against such a powerful foe? None—without God's help (v. 10-11).

II. God has provided the equipment we need to win this war (v. 13-17). As Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians he was chained to a soldier—he referred to himself as "an ambassador in chains" (6:20)—and so as describing the equipment God gave us, he used the metaphor of armor. **(a) The belt of truth** (v. 14). Since Satan is a liar, as we move forward in spiritual battle, we need to make sure that we put on the belt of truth (John 8:32 & 44). Paul spoke of truth in two senses: a life oriented around correct theology as well as being truthful. The soldier's belt also held his sword, and unless we practice the truth, we cannot effectively wield the Word of truth—the Scriptures. **(b) The breastplate of righteousness** (v. 14). The breastplate symbolizes both the believer's righteous standing before God (2 Corinthians 5:21) as well as his righteous lifestyle (Ephesians 4:24). Satan accuses when we sin, yet because of union with Christ, a believer has the righteousness of Christ. We need to actually live out the righteous standing we have before God, and we do that by "putting on the new self" (Romans 13:14).

We must live out our new identity, drawing upon God's power. Allow Jesus to express his life through us so that our walk matches who we really are "in Christ". Positional righteousness before God, without practical righteousness in our daily life, opens us up to Satanic attack and to accusations of hypocrisy by others. Mere words are not a very good defense against character accusations; a good life is! **(c) The shoes of the Gospel of Peace** (v. 15). Paul is talking about standing on the saving truths of the gospel. These truths enable Christians to stand their ground when attacked and to respond appropriately when challenged or questioned. It is called the gospel of peace for a reason. Because of what Jesus has done for us, we have peace with God (Romans 5:1) and we are to act as peacemakers in the world. We must be prepared to share the Gospel of peace with a lost world (2 Corinthians 5:18–21; 1 Peter 3:15). **(d) The shield of faith** (v. 16). Arrows often were dipped in a flammable substance, and Roman shields were designed to put them out. Paul has in mind the various temptations Satan sends our way—temptation to immorality, to hatred, envy, anger, covetousness, pride, doubt, fear, despair, distrust, and every other sin imaginable. Satan's first flaming missile came in the Garden (Genesis 3). All of Satan's missiles are designed to cause us to doubt God's goodness, thereby driving a wedge between us and our Savior. In the wilderness he tempted God's own Son to distrust his Father's provision, protection and plan (Matthew 4:3–9). Against such attacks, we are to take up the shield of faith by choosing to trust in the promises and the power of God (1 Corinthians 10:13). **(e) The helmet of salvation** (v. 17). The purpose of the helmet, of course, was to protect the head from injury. The helmet of salvation refers to the mind controlled by God—loving the Lord our God with all of our hearts, soul and mind. When God controls the mind, it's much more difficult for Satan to lead us astray. Earlier in his letter Paul taught us that we need to be "taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus" (4:21). We are to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). **(f) The sword of the Spirit** (v. 17). The Roman sword was a lethal weapon in the hands of a trained user—and please note that of all the six pieces of armor, the sword is the **only** offensive weapon (Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16) for teaching (showing us the right path to walk on), for reproof (showing us where we got off the path), for correction (showing us how to get back on the right path), and for training in righteousness (showing us how to stay on the right path). God's Word plays a critical role in spiritual warfare. When tempted by Satan, Jesus refuted Satan's lies by quoting back to him God's infallible word. We must do the same.

III. Prayer is the means by which we draw upon God's victorious power (v. 18-20). There is a direct correlation between our prayer life and our experience of God's power. Little prayer, little power. Much prayer, much power. Through prayer, we join our weakness with God's great strength. Pray for one another, asking God to give us greater boldness and clarity as we seek to share God's love with those who don't yet know him (v. 19). And while you're at it, put on the whole armor of God so that we will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against wicked demonic forces. Church, be on the alert!

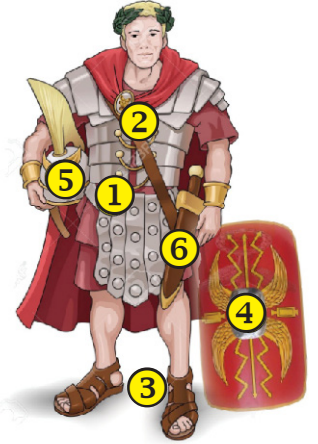


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Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) is a simple way to study any topic.
Let's use it to learn about the Armor of God...

- 1 **Monday**—Read Ephesians 6:10-20, focusing on the belt of truth.
- 2 **Tuesday**—Read Ephesians 6:10-20, studying the breastplate of righteousness.
- 3 **Wednesday**—Read Ephesians 6:10-20, learning about gospel preparation.
- 4 **Thursday**—Read Ephesians 6:10-20, exploring the shield of faith.
- 5 **Friday**—Read Ephesians 6:10-20, learning about the helmet of salvation.
- 6 **Saturday**—Read Ephesians 6:10-20, learning how to use our sword.



Five Question Bible Study

Bible Text: _____ Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would *this text* answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]