

Standing Orders

As Hitler's appetite for power and territory grew, his army began to march across Europe. In some cases, the fight could hardly be called a battle. The German army advanced, with its tanks and with technologically advanced weapons. In some of the underdeveloped nations, their armies made a futile effort to resist Hitler's aggression, fighting back with spears and even rocks. It was no contest at all, because these nations were not equipped for the battle.

The same could be said of Satan, and those whom he opposes. Many of his victims do not even know there is a war going on. They make easy prey. Christians should know that we are in the midst of a great spiritual struggle, although many seem not to believe it. And even more distressing is the fact that many who consider themselves "in the war" do not understand the nature of Satan's schemes, or of the power and weapons which God has provided for our defense.

If you are a Christian you also are in a battle everyday! And upon this battle depends your joy, overcoming sin, happiness in your marriage, and the well being of your children! The problem: most Christians don't realize this is a fact of life and too many of us are asleep in the barracks rather than being active on the battlefield!

C. S. Lewis wrote, "There's no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, every minute of every hour is claimed by God and counter-claimed by Satan."

Today we get our standing orders from our Lord.

Ephesians 6:10-13

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Last week as we began to study this last section of Ephesians we said it falls into three sections: (1) (6:10-13), The explanation for the fight; (2) (6:14-17), The equipment for the fight; (3) (6:18-20), the effecting of the fight.

I. Our STRUGGLE in Spiritual Warfare (v. 12).

A. Our Struggle is Real

B. Our Struggle is Personal

C. Our Struggle is Spiritual

II. Our POWER in Spiritual Warfare (v. 10).

We defeat the enemy when we are strong IN THE LORD.

In explaining the battle, we said our struggle is real because we have a real enemy, our struggle is personal so each of us must stand in the fight, and our struggle is spiritual so we must fight with spiritual weapons.

Secondly we saw that our power in this spiritual warfare was not in ourselves but in the Lord. We have a mighty God and He is mighty to save. We saw that Jesus Christ won the ultimate victory over Satan and his evil forces at the cross and through the resurrection. Jesus defeated sin, death, and the devil. And if we are in Christ, we have that victory also. Paul said in Romans 8:37, **"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."**

Today we are going to briefly look at our protection in the battle, we will just give an overview of our spiritual armor today and we will study each piece of armor more fully next time.

III. Our PROTECTION in Spiritual Warfare (v. 11, 13).

A. Our Protection Requires Putting on the Armor of God.

Paul says that we are to **"put on the full armor of God."** The **"armor of God"** is a metaphor of the components of the spirit-filled life. We will examine the six pieces of armor in detail next week.

Paul may have gotten the idea of putting on the full armor of God from the Roman soldier that was chained to him as he dictated this letter. That soldier was a vivid reminder to Paul of the armor of God that we need for the spiritual battle. But I think that Paul must have also been reading and meditating on those great prophecies in Isaiah about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Turn to Isaiah 11 with me.

- 11 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.**
- 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.**
- 3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;**
- 4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.**
- 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.**

This passage obviously describes the Lord Jesus. He as the Rod from the stem of Jesse (the family of King David). Jesus is the Branch or Root from David's family and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon Him. King Jesus will rule and judge and save. And look how Isaiah describes Him in verse 5, **Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist."**

Then again in chapter 59 Isaiah prophecies of a redeemer will come:

**16 He saw that there was no man,
And wondered that there was no intercessor;
Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.**

**17 For He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.**

**20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," Says the Lord.**

The full armor of God is just a graphic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so to put on the full armor of God is just another way of saying what Paul says in Romans 13:14, **"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."** In other words, it is Christ Himself we are to put on in the battle against sin and Satan. Christ Jesus is our armor.

Jesus is the belt of truth (John 14:6, **"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"**).

Jesus is our breastplate of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21, **"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."**).

Jesus is the gospel of peace that we stand on (Eph. 2:14, 17, **"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ... And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near."**).

Jesus is the shield of our faith (Heb. 12:2, **"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."**).

Jesus is our helmet of salvation (Acts 4:12, **"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."**).

Jesus is our sword, the word of God (John 1:1, 14, **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."**).

Jesus is our full armor, capable of protecting us from every onslaught of the devil. Putting on God's armor means that in every trial and temptation by faith you appropriate Christ's strength in place of your weakness. You depend on Christ's righteousness, not your own. You stand on the truth of Jesus, not the world's philosophies. Your feet run to tell others the good news that Jesus saves. By faith you cry out to Him for deliverance and He strengthens you to stand in the fight. That's what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

B. Our Protection Requires Making a Stand.

“**Stand**” is a key word in this section. He repeats it in verses 11, 13, and 14. Also, the word “**withstand** or **resist**” (6:13) comes from the root, “to stand,” meaning literally to stand against. It’s a military term for holding on to a position that is under attack. It implies the courage to hold your ground because of your allegiance to King Jesus, even when others may be fleeing from the battle because the enemy seems so strong.

An incident about one of David’s mighty men, Shammah the son of Agee, illustrates standing firm in the battle (2 Sam. 23:11-12 NASB): **“And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines. But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the Lord brought about a great victory.”** Because of his allegiance to David, Shammah stood firm and he fought, but the Lord brought the victory.

We rely on God’s strength and use His armor, but we must take the initiative to put on the armor and stand firm in the battle because we love Jesus. It’s not a matter of “letting go and letting God,” where you are passive and God does it all. Nor is it a matter of gritting your teeth and doing it yourself, with occasional assistance from God. Rather, it is a blending of His power and our striving. As Paul puts it (Col. 1:29), “For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.”

Here are three things to remember when taking your stand against the evil one:

1. *Remember that we have been delivered from Satan's dominion.* Col.1:13: **"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."** The devil is no longer your king. Jesus is our King. The only hold Satan has on you is what you give him.

2. *Remember we can't just send demons away.* Saying "in Jesus' name" won't necessarily make everything easier. We defeat the hoards of hell by being filled with the Spirit and living in holiness and peace. Ja.4:7 says, **"Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."**

3. *Remember we are strongest when we are weakest.* When we rest in the Lord we are the most secure. God said to Paul in 2 Cor.12:9, **"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."** Paul then said, **"...gladly I will...boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then I am strong."**

A pastor, who was also a veteran, shared the story of how at the end of boot camp he was assigned to a platoon with an experienced sergeant. He said the sarge deployed the green recruits in a trench on a battlefield. He took his bayonet and scratched marks in the dirt on each side of each man. Then he said, *"Soldier, your battle exists between these two marks. Your sole task is to defend your 24 inches of battleground. Don't worry about everything and everyone else. That's my job. Don't worry about the whole battle, that the brass' job. You just worry about your 24 inches, that's your battlefield."* Sometimes we can get so overwhelmed by the titanic clash between righteousness and evil that we forget our personal battlefield. This sergeant knew that wars are fought and won as each soldier stands his ground.

Are you holding your 24 inches? Are you making your stand?

It was 1854, Pastor Dudley Tyng succeeded his father as the senior pastor of the large Church of the Epiphany in Philadelphia. He was only 29 years old. At first the work went well until he started to preach against the sin of slavery – some in the church did not want to make anyone mad so they told him to shut down such silly preaching. Pastor Dudley was forced to resign after only 2 years at that large church in Philadelphia.

So Pastor Dudley started Bible studies at the YMCA. He had a passion for leading husbands and fathers to Christ. He helped organize a great gospel rally for men in Philadelphia. On March 30, 1858, 5000 men gathered in the streets to hear Dudley preach the gospel. As he looked over the sea of faces before him he felt overwhelmed saying, “I would rather this right arm were amputated at the trunk than that I should come up short of my duty to you in delivering God’s message.” It was reported in the paper the next day that over 1000 people got saved.

Two weeks later Pastor Dudley was visiting a farmer as he was corn thrashing in the barn and all of a sudden, Pastor Dudley’s sleeve got caught in the thrasher and ripped his arm out of his shoulder and the main artery was severed. Four days later his right arm was amputated. When it appeared he was dying Dudley told his aged father, “Stand up for Jesus, father, tell my brethren of the ministry to stand up for Jesus.”

Another pastor was stirred by these words as they were spoken at Dudley’s funeral and wrote a hymn based on them,

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross

Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss

From victory unto victory, His army shall He lead

Till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed!”

Take this thought with you today...from our armor comes our position, power, privileges and our praise!