

Ephesians 6:10-24

As we approach this final text in Ephesians, I want us to listen carefully to the warnings and instructions found in these verses. I want us to be reminded that a war that is more real and more serious than any war ever fought on earth is raging!

1. There is a war raging now for the souls of our children
2. there is a war raging for the strength of our marriages
3. There is a war raging for the life our church
4. For your spiritual pulse and testimony as well!

So I want you to be reminded of the unseen reality. I want you to understand the only hope of protection that you have. And I want you to embrace the only real strategy for advancing the KOG against the enemy lines in your life, your child's life, your family member's life, and your church.

Read/Pray

As we consider the unseen reality around us, our desperate need of protection, and our desire to advance the KOG against the enemy 4 things are vital for us to see in this text.

I. Our Strength v10

There is a lot of emphasis on being "strong" these days. 5k's, crossfit, diets, etc. but notice Paul's concern...that they be strong...in the Lord.

1. Imagine if we put as much effort into being strong in the Lord as we do at staying alive?
2. *1 Timothy 4:7-8 discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; 8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

But then always remember that no matter how strong we get in the Lord, the strength is not ours.

1. It is the strength of His might.
2. We rely on Him for our physical breath...and spiritual heartbeat.
3. He is our strength.
4. The strength of the general lies in his soldiers, but in the army of God, the strength of the soldier is in the commander!

Ephesians 3:14-16

II. Our Struggle v11-12

We vote for leaders, read headlines, see the wars, watch the markets, etc. but if we are not looking beyond all of that to the real powers at work behind the scenes we are on the wrong battlefield and definitely not on the front lines of the war!

1. We are not to stand firm against secular society
2. We are to stand firm against the schemes of the devil
3. We must constantly remind ourselves of this...for there is no way we can win the war if we are on the wrong battlefield!

Likewise, we see our issues, our sin, our despair, frustration, apathy, personal conflicts, misplaced focus, and spiritual dryness, but if don't look beyond the surface to the powers that are at work in the spiritual realm, we are on the wrong battlefield.

1. This is a spiritual battle.
2. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but with spiritual forces.
3. We react against those who see the devil behind every bush by pretending he doesn't really exist. He is happy with both ignorant views.

How quick is he to take the scent which way the game goes, by a word dropped, the cast of an eye, or such a small matter.

1. He has much experience inspecting and dissecting hearts.
2. He has a stunning ability to lead us down into the depths of sin by winding stairs that keep us from seeing the bottom of where we are going.
3. We must stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

III. Our Stability v13-17

1. Stand Firm v11
2. Resist v13a
3. Stand Firm v13b
4. Stand Firm v14a

Put on the FULL armor of God.

1. Don't miss a piece!
 - a. It is the whole armor of God.
 - b. A dart may fly in at a little gap, like that which brought death to Ahab, through the joints of his harness.
 - c. Satan is an archer that can split an arrow!

2. Make sure it is standard issue...by God.
 - a. The soldier comes into the field with no arms but what his general commands.
 - b. It is not left to every one's fancy to bring what weapons he please; this will breed confusion.

We must not confide in the armor of God, but in the God of the armor! Ultimately it all points to Christ!

1. Belt of Truth: John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the **truth**, and the life.*
2. Breastplate of Righteousness: 1 Cor 1:30 *you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, **righteousness** and sanctification and redemption,*
3. Shoes of the gospel of Peace: Eph 2:14 *For he himself is our **peace**, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility*
4. Shield of Faith: Hebrews 12:2 *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our **faith**,*
5. Helmet Salvation: Psalm 62:2 *He alone is my rock and my **salvation**, my fortress;*
6. The sword of the Spirit, which is 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 have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

It is one thing to have armor in the house, and another thing to have it buckled on.

1. Put on the armor. Put on Christ!
2. Romans 13:12-14 *The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*

IV. Our Supplication v18-20

1. All prayer
2. All times
3. All perseverance
4. All Saints

Prayer is a good starting point to begin pushing back.

1. Recognizing our strength give us faith to deploy for battle
2. Recognizing our enemy gets us to the front lines
3. Putting on our armor enables us to stand firm in the face of the enemy.
4. But prayer enables us to advance!

We need to ask ourselves if we take prayer as seriously as Paul did...and as he appeals to us to do.

1. How quickly we erupt into fellowship when we need to crumble in prayer.
2. We don't advance the KOG by having a good time with each other, but by prayer.

Conclusion:

Are you strong? If not, why not? What is it that is keeping you from being strong in the Lord? What is He showing you now? What will you do about it?

Are you dressed for battle? Have you put on Christ? THE GOSPEL

Are you engaging in battle through prayer? All prayer at all times with all perseverance for all the saints? Look around. There are people who are lost! Who are drifting and struggling...pray!