

"The Armor of God, Part I"

Ephesians 6:10-12

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“ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:10-12) The emphasis of the book of Ephesians is the inner life of the Christian. It is the exposition of the prayer of Paul for the church in chapter one:

“17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” (Eph 1:17-23)

If Paul prayed this for the church, don't you think it would be a pretty good idea if they prayed it for themselves? Wouldn't it make sense to read the Bible faithfully and pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him???

In addition, if the Lord would have the eyes of our understanding enlightened and that we have a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, should we be very zealous in seeking and longing after the Lord. This is the reason that the Scripture says,

“Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” (Isa 55:3)

“Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel.” (Jos 24:23)

“That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.”

(1Ki 8:58)

“So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;” (Pr 2:2 av) We are to stretch out our hearts to Him, to long after him, to seek to know and understand. Then, Paul prayed this for the church;

“16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” (Eph 3:16-19)

As I said last week, once again, might it not be a very good plan to pray this for yourself? Have you prayed for the strength of the Spirit in the inner man. Jesus said that if we knew how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. He will not give you the serpent of irrationalism if you ask Him for the fish of the Spirit; nor will He give you the rock of rationalism or the scorpion of heresy if you ask for the bread of the Spirit and the egg of the Spirit. Ask, Seek, Knock. This is what we are called to do. You are not going to deplete the riches of His glory, for He has plenty.

You can ask for these things because He has quickened you to life; He has already given you the Spirit of Adoption, whereby you know that God is your father. You have been invited and called to the feast; now you are to eat and drink and revel in the fullness of the riches of his grace to you.

A man who prays for the Lord to give him his daily bread, but does not work, will become poor. “He becomes poor that deals with a slack hand,” is the way proverbs puts it. And the man who does not energize himself to read the Bible, pray for understanding, use the ministry of the church to learn and understand, will also become poor in the things of God, for the soul needs nourishment and strength just as the body does.

From the beginning of chapter 5 we have made the application of these things: we are to be followers of God. We are to “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” (Eph 5:1-2)

We are called to be like God, as his children. Hence, “15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. 18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; 21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” (Eph 5:15-21 av) I have preached on all these texts, and began the application of the applications.. This is Paul’s argument: We need the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, so we might be filled with the fullness of God, so that we might be strengthened with might in the inner man, so that we might rejoice and sing with joy

and submit one to another in the fear of God.

So we have come back to where we started: We are not our own. By the blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit we can begin to be what God has created us for: to serve Him in serving one another. The first application of this application we have already made. Wives are to serve their husbands; and husbands are to serve their wives. In losing ourselves we find ourselves. Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we are to lay down our lives for one another, and the first application Paul makes of this is in the way the wife is to reverence her husband, and the way the man is to love his wife. Be ye followers of God and walk in love. We are to walk in service toward one another; thinking more of our neighbor's needs than we do our own. In doing this all human relationships will be transformed and renewed.

We must do these things because we are involved in a conflict and a warfare that cannot be endured without this work of God and this strengthening by might in the inner man. We cannot stand in our own strength, but in the strength of the grace and mercy of God. Paul lays out this reality in very clear terms:

“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:10-12 av) Please note the following things about our text:

I. The conflict of the Christian life is not against “flesh and blood” vs. 12.

A. The things that we see that are contrary to us are not the real enemy, and must not be perceived as such.

1. It is necessary to contend with people, but the people are not the real enemy. The ungodly are instruments of Satan, and are taken captive at his will.

2. It is possible to know when people are being used of the devil for their spirit will be one of wrath, strife, sedition, backbiting, talebearing, hypocrisy and lies. Chiefly lies and hatred, for this was the devil's work from the beginning. This wisdom from above is first “pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” (Jas 3:17 av)

3. If we see flesh and blood as the enemy, we will be tempted to return evil for evil, harshness against harshness, forgetting that we will not overcome evil by evil, but evil must be overcome with good. The keys to overcome evil are the keys of the church, the faithful preaching of the Gospel and the exercise of church discipline in the elders and leaders of the church. We cannot be saved if we turn away from the benefits that God has given us in His church.

B. He has prayed that we be “strengthened by might in the inner man,” now he says, “Be

strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” The exhortation follows the prayer. Jesus prays for us and then exhorts us to do what he prayed for.

1. Teaching, prayers, exhortation: this is the way of the church and the people of God. We are taught about the resurrection and power of Christ in those who believe, for we have been born again by the Spirit of God;

2. Then we pray for one another to know the power of Christ in our lives;

a) “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;” (Col 1:9 av)

b) “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” (Mt 5:43-44 av)

c) “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. 13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?” (1Pe 3:8-13)

3. Then we exhort one another to put off the old and put on the new; if we have been risen with Christ, we are to seek those things which are above. We have begun in the Spirit and now we must not think that we are perfected by the works of the flesh. We walk just as we have begun; rejecting the world, the flesh, and the devil, and putting on Christ and obedience to Him and His authority.

II. We do war “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

A. There is a kingdom of darkness: based upon unbelief, ignorance, evil deeds, and indolence.

1. A kingdom of unbelief. They have their portion in this world and war after the manner of the world against truth and righteousness. They do not love the truth but contend against it. Jesus said

“18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is

condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (Joh 3:18-21)

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:” (1Pe 2:9)

2. A kingdom of ignorance: because faith is dim or lacking, true knowledge is lacking.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2Co 4:6)

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” (Ac 26:18)

“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.” (Joh 12:35)

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (Joh 12:46)

3. A kingdom of evil deeds hatred, wrath, strife:

“Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” (1Jo 2:8)

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.” (1Jo 2:9 av) “But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” (1Jo 2:11)

4. A kingdom of slothfulness in the things of God. A deep sleep has fallen upon them, a sleep of self satisfaction, a sleep resembling death.

“And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into

temptation.” (Lu 22:46) “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” (Ro 13:11)

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” (1Th 5:6)

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.” (1Th 5:7)

“Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” (1Th 5:10)

B. This kingdom of darkness is ruled by great and mighty evil powers. The devil and his demons, and you and I are no match for them in our own wisdom and strength.

1. We must cast of the works of darkness, of unbelief, sinful deeds, ignorance, and slothfulness.

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.” (1Co 15:3) “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.” (1Jo 2:13)

2. There is no middle ground in this warfare. You cannot serve on both sides of the conflict. Either you will be overcome by evil or you will overcome evil with good.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1Jo 5:4-5)

III. We must therefore be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

A. Wiles: He uses tricks and smoke and mirrors. Clever words and stratagems. “Lie in wait”

“3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words: 4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.” (Ps 64:3-4)

B. It is spiritual warfare against spiritual things, not against flesh and blood: against unbelief, against ignorance, against evil deeds, against spiritual sloth.

C. You will be overcome of these things if you do not rouse yourself, be diligent, put on the whole armor of God. We will continue this next week, Lord willing.

**Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us
an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.**

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” (Ga 6:9-10 av)

Amen and Amen.

God bless you.