

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 6

Message 94

Date:

Words: 6052

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10

INTRO: In the previous message we introduced Ephesians 6:10-20. Since some time has passed since then because of summer schedules, let me remind us briefly what we looked at. Verses 10-20 are a tacked on, concluding point that is unrelated to all the previous information. It is a conclusion, before the final conclusion. These verses give us a picture of the Christian's battle in this life. We saw that the Christian's opposition in this passage is Satan and his demons. It is most important when one will go into battle with another, that one knows one's opponent. Many professing Christians do not even believe in the devil, how then can they win in this battle?

One of the important things to understand is that we are fighting an unseen enemy. He and his army are there, but we do not see them. The only way we can know this enemy and stand against him is to know the Word of God that reveals him. This is a formidable and relentless foe. He is even now out to destroy you. Pastor Daryl gave a good message on darkness recently. The whole world lies in the wicked one, and thus lies in darkness. He pointed out that we do not naturally like physical darkness, but we love spiritual darkness.

I mentioned that demon possession is much misunderstood. The phrase, "demon possessed" does not ever occur in the Scriptures. The actual wording is "demonized." A Christian cannot be possessed by demons, but a Christian can be demonized. This is most obvious to those who work in this area.

Then we looked at what God controls. He controls the physical universe. That is why the sun burns and why it stays where it is supposed to. But He does not control the vast majority of mankind. All of lost mankind, which is by far the majority, are under the control of the devil. That may seem harsh, but such are the facts. And God controls the believer only in so far as the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit.

I mentioned as well the sovereignty of God. As I see it, the Bible calls that which we call sovereignty, lordship. It does not mean that He controls everything everyone does, but He has authority to deal with all wrongdoing. Someday we will all give account of our life before the Lord of lords, and the King of

kings.

This morning we come to the text itself Let us read verses 10-12:

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.

Must not every normal human being ask, "Where did everything come from? Why am I here? Why is there evil? Why do I desire that which I know is wrong?" How many answers has man given to these questions? When man does not have answers he theorizes. Man guesses and guesses become religion. So in the OT you read of many kinds of gods that man guessed existed. He did not know these gods, he guessed and thus made them up. In modern times we have made this guess: Everything came about by evolution.

But not until you come to the Bible and the God of the Bible do you have answers that have substance. The Bible speaks authoritatively about all that we need for life and godliness. It tells us how everything came into being. It tells us how, evil, that is, how Satan came into being. God did not make Satan. He made a highly exalted angel who then, through pride, became Satan. He took with him a host of angels and they became demons.

And then God created man, and Satan deceived man, and there began the battle that is described in our verses. And now Paul will tell us how to wage war with this enemy. So he begins in verse 10 to tell us what to do in order to be able to stand against this very deceptive and evil opposition.

Now the apostle Paul will give us some very important instructions on dealing with this demonic opposition. You might hear something like this in the news: Here are the headlines, and then later; here are the details. In verses 10-13 we have the headlines, and in verses 13-20 the details. Verse 10 begins the headlines.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

A. Preliminary Conclusions: Paul's Final Concern (6:10-20)

1. The Believer's External Opposition (6:10-12)

a. What to do (10)

So, we go then to verse 10 which says:

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

Paul says, "Finally." He is saying, "My last point is this." And note that this is addressed to "my brethren." This is specific instruction to Christians. Let me say this, no non-Christian can stand against the wiles of the devil. Every non-Christian is under the control of the devil. This may seem harsh but we have seen it already. John said the whole world, all unbelievers, are in the hand of the wicked one. They belong to him. Paul says the god of this world, Satan, has blinded their minds.

Let me mention here, that though unbelievers may not be bound by biblical restrictions and guidelines, and can live in pleasure as they wish, they do not have an easy life. The devil is a taskmaster, and they are under one form of bondage or another all their lifetime. Only salvation can deliver them from their bondage. The god of this world has blinded their minds.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 says:

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

Satan has blinded their mental perceptions. How can they understand the Bible? They cannot. The natural man, which means all unsaved people, is

hopelessly bound in blinded mental perceptions.

Go now to Ephesians 2. Look at verses 1-3:

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Every unsaved person is dead in trespasses and sins. Everyone walks according to the course of this world to some degree. This is the world of the lost. Everyone walks according to the prince of the power of the air. Well, who is this? It goes on to say it is the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience. That is Satan's work in all the lost.

Then Paul says we all once conducted ourselves in the manner which the devil loves; in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. We were all by nature the children of wrath.

You see, what we must realize is that every lost person is influenced by the demonic realm. That is what keeps them blind to spiritual truth. Try talking to them. You might be speaking to a very nice, seemingly moral unbeliever. And if you press on you will meet a brick wall. And there, at that brick wall, the unbeliever will have to decide, and the majority will decide against the truth of the Word of God and their need for the new birth.

Listen now to 2 Corinthians 2:10:

10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also

forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

When it speaks of Satan's devices, it's what he cooks up in his mind; that which he perceives and uses to take advantage of Christians. These devices he uses at will in the unbeliever who is not able to resist them.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says:

14 But the natural man (the soulish or unsaved man) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Before a non-believer can have any understanding of spiritual things he must repent of his sins and put his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus be born again. So our passage is addressed to "my brethren," that is Christians.

Now Paul will tell the believer what to do. It is this: *Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* I am most amazed at how the verb *be strong* is translated. Verbs teach three very important things. They give us tense. That is time. This verb is in the present tense. The Christian is to be strong, now.

Then it gives us mood. The mood of this verb is imperative. It is a command, not a suggestion. Then a verb has voice. Voice tells us that either the subject is doing something, or something is or is done or to be done to the subject. Every translation I checked has this as an active verb. It says, "Be strong." But this verb is not active, it is passive. It does not say, "Be strong." It says, "Be strengthened!" This is most important here. Why is this so important? It is because the Christian cannot make himself strong. Somebody else must make him

strong. It must happen to him. He can put things in motion so that it will happen, but he can't make himself strong. That is what this passive command tells us.

Let me illustrate this. I have two bad knees. And the doctor says I should have them replaced. He did not say I should replace them because I can't do that. It is quite impossible to give yourself a needle, put yourself to sleep, and then replace your own knee. It is just that impossible to make oneself strong in the Lord!

So in order to obey the doctor's passive command to have my knee replaced, I must now ask him to make an appointment with a doctor who replaces knees. Not any doctor can do that. And that doctor now goes through the procedures that must take place before he can replace the knee. So I have to go see him from time to time. And eventually they will take all the measurements of my knee bones and set the date, and then they will put me to sleep and then they will cut off some bone and replace it with new material.

You see, there is a way to get new knees in our day, but one can't do it to oneself. It must be done to one. So, if I don't do certain things, it will not happen.

Now our text says, "Be strengthened in the Lord." What is Paul's desire of the Christian in our text? It is that he be made strong. And why is it necessary to be made strong? It is precisely this: We have an enemy too strong for us! We will see over and over that we are to be strengthened in order to be able to stand against the devil. May I ask you, do you feel you are you sufficient to overcome the devil? If one thinks one can stand against the devil without being strengthened, one is already deceived.

Now the word translated to be strong is *dunamis*. I have mentioned other times that we get our word "dynamite" from this word. The idea of this word is *ability*. It could be translated like

this: "Finally my brethren, be enabled in the Lord..." In the context, the believer's opposition is the devil. The believer does not compare in ability with the devil. He must have help from elsewhere or he will fall before the onslaught of the devil. He needs to be enabled to stand.

Many believers fall under the influence of the devil. Many are rendered powerless by the devil. No human or group of humans, apart from the strength of the Lord can stand against the power of the devil.

Turn to Luke 11. We begin in verse 14:

14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled.

Now note that this demon made this person unable to speak. When the demon was gone, the mute person spoke and the multitudes marveled. I remind us that what we are looking at here is the authoritative Word of God. There is no guessing about this event. This is what happened. The facts are this man could not speak because a demon took that ability from him.

Verse 15:

15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

16 Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.

Others said, "Before we believe this is real and right, we want to see a sign from heaven. Come on Jesus, do a sign by which we will know for certain that this is not some trick."

Verse 17:

17 But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided

against a house falls.

18 "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub.

Here Jesus showed that if they are right that He is casting out demons by Beelzebub, then Satan is divided against himself and he will destroy himself. Well, that is absurd. Then He gives a second reason why they are wrong. Verse 19:

19 "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.

From Jesus' own words it is obvious that there were Jews who cast out demons as well. So Jesus argues that if He is casting out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your own people cast them out? Without doubt, those Jews who did this would realize that they did not do it by the power of the devil, and so they would disagree with those making these accusations here.

Verse 20:

20 "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

In this verse we are shown the incredible ability of the Lord. God only needs one finger to deal with demons. This is His mighty power.

Verse 21:

21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

22 "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils.

Now notice that the devil is described as a strong man, one with a well-fortified domain. This is why the believer must be strengthened or

enabled in the Lord. Like this mute man, without the Lord no one is able to overcome the devil. The stronger man of verse 22 pictures the Lord and it is He that can overcome the strong man and take everything from him that he has to disenable a person.

What Paul is telling us in our passage is that without enablement from the Lord, we cannot stand against the wiles of the devil. So we need to be strengthened because we have a strong enemy. Then we need to be strengthened because we are weak. Have you come to realize that you are weak without the Lord? I look back at a good many of the young people I trained in their early Christian lives and now one is off over here and another over there. We are weak. If we are not divinely enabled, we will fall before the onslaught of the evil one.

Let us go back now to the passive voice of the word to be strengthened or enabled. When one needs to have one's knees replaced one goes to the hospital. You cannot have this done in a garage or grocery store. It must be done in a place equipped to do such surgeries. Knees are replaced in a hospital by a doctor, not in a garage by a mechanic. When one is to be strengthened in order to overcome the Devil, one must go to the Lord. There is no other place to be strengthened spiritually. It is in the Lord one is enabled to overcome the wicked one.

Now notice that we are to be strengthened in the power of His might. We have in our verse three words that have related ideas; these are to be *strong* or *able*, and *power*, and *might*. I have mentioned that the words translated, "be strong," might better be understood as "be enabled." The facts are that we have an enemy big enough to bring about all that we see as sin and big enough to be a major problem to God Almighty. No doubt then that he is much more than a match for us. For this reason we need to be enabled in the Lord.

Now I ask you a question: What is the difference

between being enabled in the Lord, and being enabled in the power of His might? You see, the word "and" connects the words, 'in the Lord'; and the words, 'in the power of His might.' That means we are to be enabled in the Lord and we are to be enabled in the power of His might. Let me suggest they are one and the same thing. The word translated "and" can also be translated "also" or "even." I think that here, the word "even" is best. I am not an expert in Greek, but from what I know, I would translate this verse like this: "Finally, my brethren, be enabled in the Lord, even in the power of His might."

I understand the word 'His might' to mean inherent strength. We do not have this inherent strength in order to stand against the devil. We are to be enabled in the Lord's inherent strength. What is the difference between *power* and *might*? Let us say over here is a very muscular man. Now you need a two hundred pound machine to be lifted onto a truck. In this big muscular man is the might or the energy to lift the machine onto the truck.

Now he reaches down and takes hold of the machine, and he lifts it onto that truck. That is power. Lifting the machine onto the truck is the manifestation of power.

Now in our context, the believer needs to be enabled in the power of God's might in order to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The word translated 'might be able' is a verb that comes from the word *dunamis*, to be enabled.

What we learn is that we do not have the ability to stand against the wiles of the devil. We are unable. On our own, we topple before him. So we are commanded to be enabled in the Lord, even in the power of His might.

Now what kind of power is Paul speaking of here? Turn to Ephesians 1. We begin in verse 18. Paul prays for the Ephesians that:

18 the eyes of your understanding being

enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers that they might know what the exceeding greatness of God's power toward the believer is. The word "to know" here has, I believe, the idea of experiencing. He wants the believer to experience the power of God. Verses 20-21 then describe this power. It is the power:

20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His 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 age but also in that which is to come.

What kind of power does Paul want the believer to experience? The power which was used to work in Christ when He was raised from the dead. I ask you, what kind of power is that? You might wish to listen to message 29 in the Ephesian series to learn more of this power.

Now it takes a lot of ability to raise someone from the dead. Ephesians 1 speaks of the exceeding greatness of this power. It is *super surpassing* power. It takes this super surpassing power to save people from their sins. It takes this super surpassing power to stand against the wiles of the devil.

So let me include one paragraph from that message here. I said:

"I have been told many times, in the discussion of the doctrine of once saved always safe, that we are kept by the power of God. That is true in so far as it goes. It is what I call a half

truth. The claim comes out of 1 Peter 1:5 which says we are kept by the power of God through faith. The power of God is the energy force that keeps us but it comes to us through faith. There is the perfect balance; God's power, man's faith. If I want to be kept by the power of God I must tap into it by faith. It is active faith that taps into the power of God. You see, the exceeding great power of God is ever emanating towards us, but it only becomes ours as we exercise faith."

Well, we are looking at the words, "The power of His might." Turn to Luke 12. Jesus was going to send out the twelve disciples. Verse 1 says:

1 Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases.

Note first the word 'power.' It is again the word *dunamis*, the ability. The Lord enabled them to deal with demons and to cure diseases. Now note that He gave them power and authority. There is a big difference between the two. One might have the power to do something, but one may not have the authority to do it. Here the Lord gave the disciples both the ability and the right over all demons. That is the subject of our text. Now, in our text, the believer is to be enabled in the Lord to overcome the wiles of the devil.

Now our verse in Ephesians can be translated like this: *Finally, my brethren, be enabled in the Lord even in the power of His might!* If one is enabled in the power of His might with regard to dealing with the forces of darkness that are arrayed against the believer, then available to the believer is more than enough power to overcome these forces in all things.

We saw earlier that Jesus cast out demons with the finger of God. So great is God's strength that with one finger He can overcome the demons. This is that great strength the believer can tap into to overcome the wiles of the devil. If

God's might is so great that He can cast out a demon with a finger, then if we are empowered in His might we can overcome the wiles of the devil.

Now I ask you, do we need to be enabled in the power of God's might? Let me address one area of concern for both men and women in which you will need the power of God's might. It has been a long time since I addressed some issues of dress. We have hit the warm season of summer. There is this idea that when it is hot you can strip down to what sometimes covers little less than underclothes, especially at the beaches.

Let me begin with men. God has designed men and women most wonderfully with regard to a very important part of life. In Satan's wiles he uses the most wonderful and powerful desires in men and women to lead them into sin. Today, pornography is available in the grocery stores. Look at many ads or our modern malls. On every hand we are bombarded by the devil with a distortion of one of God's most wonderful aspects of creation.

Now we are talking about being enabled in the Lord, even in the power of His might. Men, every one of us, if we are not enabled in the power of God's might, will fall in this area. Let us be honest and agree that we need to be enabled in the power of God's might. Let us be honest and say that we are not able, without being empowered by a power outside ourselves, to withstand this temptation. Let us be honest that if we are married, and we fail in this, we are committing adultery; and if we are not married we are living in fornication. And let us be honest and realize that adulterers and fornicators will go to hell. How serious is this matter?

Let me give you a word that might help you. I know I am talking to teen-ages as well as married men. If you chance upon that which entices you, a picture, a poorly dressed woman, or in whatever form it will come; immediately

look away and say, "Lord cleans me with the precious blood of Jesus." Then don't look again. You will have to be empowered in the Lord to do that. That is hard because you may be required to be in such a circumstance for some time due to certain situations.

Let me share with you something else. I taught a class of about 100 teen agers in a SS class many years ago. I mentioned this subject. And some young men came to me later and said something like this: "I have these pictures in my mind. I don't want them there but they are there. I cannot get rid of them. What am I to do?" I ask you, is this a problem everywhere?

I used to be a logger. Oh what fornicators and adulterers are found in work places. When I went to buy parts for a machine, there on the wall these men displayed their hearts in pictures. Oh, they were nice business people, but their hearts were polluted with filth. And I had to learn how to deal with that.

And so I said to these young men who came to me something like this: "Here is my advice. You cannot remove those pictures. But you can guard your life from here forward. From now on when you see something you know you should not see, ask the Lord to cleanse you right there and don't look again. And then live like that from here forward, and slowly those other pictures will fade into the background and eventually leave." Let me add now to that, the reason some pictures are so hard to get rid of is because when you feed your lusts on them they burn into your minds like a tattoo is burned into the skin. To remove it may be painful. When you see something inadvertently, and you deal with it right there, that picture will not carry the same kind of power. You see, those pictures have power. They have the ability to destroy your soul. And our natural endowments coupled with our sinful nature and demonic pressure, can cripple or destroy us.

Now the Apostle Paul's teaching is so very

helpful. He does not only tell us what to do and what not to do, but he tells us how to gain the victory. In verse 11 he will begin to tell us. Then in verses 13-20 he will give us detailed instructions. So he will teach us how to deal with this and many more such things.

Maybe you say, "I don't like preachers who talk about things like this." I ask you, what should a pastor do who sees this danger? Should he be silent? If he really cares for people's souls, should he not speak? A pastor who does not address this, does he care for people's souls?

Now for ladies. I checked on the internet to see if women struggle with this same issue. One stat on the internet said 1/3 of porn visits are by women. We do not know how accurate stats are, but here is a warning. By the way, what day is the most popular day to watch pornography? The Lord's day! Sunday!

Listen to me carefully now: In general, where men struggle with looking, women struggle with showing. You might know we have standards for wedding dresses here. Let me tell you what women in the wedding dress shops think when they hear from young ladies who want a modest dress. They think that those who make rules about dresses come from another planet.

The very first wedding I was to do I said to the young couple, as I have from there forward: I will tell you what I expect, and then you may have your wedding done anywhere you wish. If you go to someone else, you will not hurt my feelings. Women want a white wedding dress, when what they display in their dress is some of the darkness pastor Daryl spoke of last week.

Well, many young women said they wanted a pure wedding, but when they got into the wedding dress shop, they could hardly find a dress fit to wear. One sales lady in a wedding dress shop said in exasperation to one of these young ladies, "Well! You won't go to hell for showing a bit of skin!" That, of course is right. But

the problem is how much is that "bit of skin" allowed to grow? A godly lady gave us this advice for young women recently that she called the three bears: Avoid, bare shoulders; bare chest and bare back. Generally women like a wedding dress with a long train, so I guess that covers the rest. Another older godly lady said, "If I spoke to young women, I would advise them, don't wear something you'll be ashamed of in the pictures some years from now." She is speaking right now.

Well, this first wedding I was to do, after the young lady came back from the dress shop had caved in to the pressure and I ended up not doing the wedding. Listen, do you profess to be a Christian? Then you will need to be enabled in the power of God's might to dress right!

Let me give this advice to women: When you dress ask what would the Lord be pleased with? When you wear skin tight clothing or reveal skin, ask the same question. Then when you have answered that question, since all our hearts are desperately wicked, now go and ask some godly older woman and ask if you are right. Let me just say, I understand some body builds make things difficult. In all things, discretion. The NT guidelines are, dress modestly. Every age must determine what that is.

How about everyday clothing or swim wear? I would encourage, apply the principles already mentioned. May I say a word to every married man? Talk honestly to your wife. If she looks at you like you came from the mars too, then talk to her, explain, and pray for her. Here is what I wonder: How much of what belongs to the husband only is he willing to share with others?

And for both men and women, what will you need to live godly in this area? You will need to be enabled in the Lord, even in the power of His might! It takes the kind of power that only God has. It takes the kind of power you and I don't have. If you will look around at all, you will see almost the whole world falling before

Satan's onslaught in this one area alone, and a big percentage of Christians too!

CONCL: So we conclude this message. Our passage is addressed, like the rest of the epistle, to the Christian. There is no use asking the unbeliever to stand against the wiles of the devil. He is not enabled in the power of God's might. The believer is not able to stand against the wiles of the devil unless he is enabled in the Lord, even in the power of His might. We are not able on our own to stand against Satan and his host. We must be enabled by God, or we will fail.

With regard to men, it is not a pastor's responsibility to police men. It is his responsibility to give godly directions and godly principles and every man's responsibility to live them.

With regard to ladies, it is not a pastor's responsibility to tell you how to dress. It is his responsibility to give you godly principles to live and dress by. I have given just a few general guidelines. It is every Christian woman's task to decide before the Lord what belongs to her and how she should dress.

I ask you, should pastors preach messages like this? Let me tell you one reason why most don't. If the statistics are even close to right, the majority of pastors are in trouble themselves. If that is true of the pulpit, what is true of the pew? Did you know that people living in this sin, whether pastors or not, are on the road to hell unless they repent and overcome? Read 2 Corinthians 6 and Galatians 5. Pastor Daryl sent me two sites regarding this subject. The wiles of the devil in this area is horrifying.

When this life is over, and life is very, very serious, then God will judge us for how we have lived. We will not get away with unconfessed sin. It is coming up some day. It behooves us to live in such a way that we will hear these words: "Well done, good and faithful servant. Come, inherit what I have laid up in store for you."

Now I want you to do something. This is for both men and women. If you agree with one of the following statements, say it in your own mind: "I know what he has said about men and women is right." Or say: "I don't believe what he said is right." Or you might say: "I only agree with part of what he said."

Now if you said: "I know what he said about men and women is

right, or it is partly right" and you know you need to change some things, then make this commitment: "I will take a stand for what I know is right."

Then, to the married, teach your sons and your daughters what is right in this matter.

And only one more word: If you determine to live right in this area, you will meet the wiles of the devil mentioned in the next verse. He will fight you in your mind. And when he does, you will need to be enabled in the power of God's might.