

<b>1</b>	<b><i>The Armor of God and Spiritual Warfare</i></b> <b>Ephesians 6:10-18</b>
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**Introduction**

In the Return of the King, to provide a distraction for Frodo and Sam, Aragorn prepares the remaining armies for one last battle:

<b>3</b>	“SONS OF GONDOR! OF ROHAN! MY BROTHERS. I SEE IN YOUR EYES THE SAME FEAR THAT WOULD TAKE THE HEART OF ME. A DAY MAY COME WHEN THE COURAGE OF MEN FAILS, WHEN WE FORSAKE OUR FRIENDS AND BREAK ALL BONDS OF FELLOWSHIP, BUT IT IS NOT THIS DAY. AN HOUR OF WOLVES AND SHATTERED SHIELDS WHEN THE AGE OF MEN COMES CRASHING DOWN, BUT IT IS NOT THIS DAY! THIS DAY WE FIGHT! BY ALL THAT YOU HOLD DEAR ON THIS GOOD EARTH, I BID YOU STAND, MEN OF THE WEST!” – ARAGORN
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The Christian life is war! And we are frontline officers in that war preparing our people and leading the charge.

- Like an experienced general, Paul equips us for battle with one final speech.
- And in the face of war and the threat of death, what do the troops need to hear?
  - Courage and strength – “Be strong and courageous!”
  - Stand firm; don’t give up ground.
  - We will fight to the death!

How may we fight well and lead our people to fight well? Let’s walk through Ephesians 6:10-18.

<b>5</b>	Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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 firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.
<b>6</b>	In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, Ephesians 6:10-18 ESV

**Main Argument:**

*If we are to stand firm against the devil and his forces, we must find our strength in the Lord, put on his armor, and pray.*

**Exposition**

<b>8</b>	<b>6:10   Be strong!</b>  Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Ephesians 6:10 ESV
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“Be strong!”

- Passive command – “Be strengthened...”
- NOT in YOUR strength – “in the Lord and in the strength of his might.”
  - This same phrase – “in the strength of his might” – is used in 1:19-20.
  - IOW, we are to be strengthened by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead!

- The Christian life is war, but we don't fight it in OUR strength, we fight it in the Lord's strength!
  - To try and fight this war in our own strength would be suicide.
  - But how are we to be strengthened in the Lord?!

10	<p><b>6:11-13   Suit up!</b></p> <p>Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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 firm. Ephesians 6:11-13 ESV</p>
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- 6:11a | "Put on (imp.) the whole armor of God,..."
  - We are strengthened in the Lord BY putting on his armor.
  - This will become even more clear in v.14.
  - Once again, we don't suit up in OUR armor; we suit up in the armor of God.
  - This is the armor God/his Messiah put on to save his people and judge his enemies (Isaiah 59:16-21).

12	<p>He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives.</p>
13	<p>"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD. "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore." Isaiah 59:16-21 ESV</p>

- Why do we need to put on God's armor?
  - Purpose (v.11b) – "that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."
    - NOTE: our enemy is the devil, NOT blood and flesh – not one another (v.12).
    - It's important that we identify our enemy – lest we take out our own.
  - Satan has a force working for him, and he has a strategy and methods:
    - O'Brien (469): "The evil one works through the events of history, including a visit hindered by him (1 Thess. 2:18), the circumstances surrounding Job's life (Job 1-2), the casting of believers into prison (Rev. 2:10), the inherent distresses of life (cf. Rom. 8:38), and illness which is occasionally due to their demonic activity (Matt. 9:32; 12:22; Luke 9:42), while Christian teachers and their instruction is the subject of attack and distortion by principalities

and powers (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13-15). Heresy is assigned to their activity (1 Tim. 4:1; cf. 1 John 4:1), ... Social, political, judicial, and economic structures can be used by Satan and his evil authorities to serve their malevolent ends. The last and greatest enemy to which humanity is exposed by Satan and his lieutenants is death.”

- Satan will use whatever methods are at his disposal to seek, kill, and destroy!
- So, we put on God’s armor (v.13), and that’s how we stand firm against the devil’s attacks.

15	<p><b>6:14-17   Stand firm!</b></p> <p>Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,</p>
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This is the emphasis of the passage and, thus, the main command – Stand firm (v.11, 13, 14)!

- We’re not called to WIN the fight – Jesus has already done that!
- We’re called to STAND FIRM – to not lose any ground to the enemy.
- How do we stand firm?
- We stand firm, in the strength of the Lord, HAVING put on God’s armor!
- 6:14a | We stand firm against the devil’s schemes by standing on the truth of the gospel..
  - Satan is a liar. He is the father of lies. He attacks through deception, telling you lies.
  - But we are armed with the truth by girding ourselves with the truth (1:13).
    - Girding pictures getting ready for something difficult.
    - It is this truth that we are to speak to one another in love (4:15).
    - This is how we learned Christ – the truth that is in Jesus (4:21).
    - We are to speak truth to one another, instead of falsehoods (4:25).
    - Truth is one fruit of walking in the light (5:9).
  - We stand firm against the devil & his schemes when we stand on the truth and reject Satan’s lies.
    - Having your personal devotions is war-time activity!
    - Reading and studying the Bible are war-time activities!
    - Speaking the truth in love to one another is war-time activity (4:15).
    - Gathering with the church to hear the gospel preached is war-time activity.
  - But our battle is not just about knowing the truth; we must live it out.
- 6:14b | We stand firm against the devil’s schemes by walking in righteousness.
  - Breastplate protects our hearts.
  - In Christ, we are a new creation, being “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (4:25).
    - We grow in righteousness and holiness as we put off the old self and put on Christ.
  - We stand firm against the schemes of the devil when we pursue righteousness in the Lord’s strength.
    - Empowered with the knowledge of the truth, we walk in righteousness.
    - How are you walking on the path of righteousness that leads to life?
- 6:15 | We also stand firm against the devil’s schemes by proclaiming the gospel.
  - Satan seeks to blind unbelievers and disguise himself as an angel of light.
  - But Jesus WILL build his church!

- Idea comes from Isaiah 52:7 |

17	“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”
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- This is exactly what Jesus did – preach the gospel of peace (2:17).
  - And this is what we are called to do – evangelism/missions is wartime activity.
  - OT prophecies of military conquest are transformed in NC to missionary conquest.
  - Jesus’ great commission are our marching orders.
- We stand firm against the devil and his schemes when we share the gospel in the strength of the Lord.
  - Why we share the gospel with unbelievers
  - Why we preach Christ in every sermon
  - Why we send out missionaries
  - Why we lead our churches to connect with faithful gospel partners
- Evangelism and missions is war-time activity, and we must join in the battle.
- 6:16 | We also stand firm against the devil’s schemes by protecting ourselves with faith.
  - Satan bombards us with arrows and missiles to get us to doubt God – his sovereignty, his goodness.
  - The fight against sin and Satan is a fight of faith:
    - We were saved by grace through faith, not our own works (1:13; 2:8).
    - Through faith in Christ, we have bold access to the Father (3:12).
    - Christ dwells in our heart through faith (3:17).
  - When we believe Jesus – his word, his promises, his warnings – the devil’s arrows will have no effect.
  - We stand firm against the devil and his schemes when we believe Christ and his gospel.
- 6:17a | We also stand firm against the devil’s schemes by remembering our salvation.
  - Satan will tempt us to doubt and despair over our salvation – to undermine our assurance.
  - But we have been united with Christ and receive all the spiritual blessings of the salvation he has planned, accomplished, and prepared for us (1:3-14).
    - Promises NOW/ALREADY – election, justification, forgiveness, adoption (1:5-14).
    - Promises NOT YET – future inheritance.
      - ◆ Because we are justified, there is no condemnation for those in Christ.
      - ◆ Because we are forgiven, there is no guilt for confessed sin.
      - ◆ Because we are adopted, nothing can separate us from God’s love for us in Christ.
  - We stand firm when we believe the truth about Jesus and the salvation he has won for us.
- 6:17b | We also stand firm against the devil’s schemes, as we use Scripture against him.
  - The sword of the Spirit (offensive weapon) is the word of God – truth: the gospel.
    - The word of God is made active by the Spirit.
      - ◆ We combat Satan and his schemes standing firm on this word – like Jesus.
      - ◆ We equip the church for war when we speak it to one another: discipleship (4:11-16).
    - Parents – at home! Discipleship – one another:
      - ◆ What relationships do you have?!
      - ◆ The Christian life is not meant to be fought alone, in isolation!
- 6:18 | Finally, we stand firm against the devil’s schemes as we pray.
  - How are we to pray – look at v.18.

19	praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, Ephesians 6:18 ESV
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- Prayer is not a part of the armor; it undergirds it.
- Remember how Paul prayed for the Ephesians
  - 1:13-23 | That God would reveal the truth of their salvation – so they would KNOW gospel.
  - 3:14-21 | That the Ephesians would experience the truth of the gospel – so they would be EMPOWERED to live in a manner worthy of the call.
    - ◆ Prayer is war-time activity!
    - ◆ In the words of John Piper, it is the war-time walkie talkie to God!
    - ◆ Our prayer life exposes our mindset: comfort/peace OR war-time.
- Summary: We stand firm against the devil and his schemes when we stand on the gospel, in the strength of the Lord, and put on the whole armor of God.
- To put on the armor of God is another way of saying put on Christ (Romans 13:11-13).

21	Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. Romans 13:11-13 ESV
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- Christ is victorious, and we stand firm in his strength – to display God’s wisdom in unity and holiness.
  - Satan seeks to stop us!
  - We make war against him by putting off the old and putting on the new – Christ!
  - This is how we learned Christ.
  - This is how we stand firm in his strength.

## Conclusion

When we think of spiritual warfare, don’t think about the stuff that happens in horror movies or Frank Perreti novels.

Think about the daily war that is the Christian life – thousands of fire fights each day.

- Jesus has already defeated Satan and his powers and rules over them.
- Still, with his last gasps Satan seeks to distract, deceive, and destroy us if he can.
- BUT, we stand firm against the devil and his schemes, in the strength of the Lord, donning his armor, and depending on him in prayer.

This is the Christian life! And the Christian life is war!

Maybe we’ve been too complacent – living for comfort and peace.

Let’s do battle together against the devil.

- Be strong
- Suit up
- Stand firm
- Pray