

Facing Your Enemy **Ephesians 6:10-20**

Jesus' manifesto, Matthew 16:18, He will build His church and the gates of Hades will not destroy it. The story of the Christian Church is the story of Jesus building his new community in enemy occupied territory. We, therefore, must learn that we have an enemy, and we must learn to stand against him. Ephesians 6:10-20.

Earlier in Ephesians, Paul stated that Christ has already won the decisive victory over Satan on the cross and the empty tomb, but now we are engaged in mop up operations. This is not easy, for our enemy are not other humans, but supernatural powers in the heavenly places.

We will focus on three areas: The first is the nature of the battle, in which we are engaged. The second is the character of the enemy that we have. The third is the resources for victory that Christ gives us.

The Nature of the Battle

The battle against the forces of evil is being fought in the heavenly places. In Ephesians 1, Paul tells us that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the *heavenly places*. These are bookend expressions. When you come to Christ, you are brought into a new realm-the heavenly places. This is where the conflict is engaged.

The topic that Paul discusses immediately preceding his discussion on spiritual warfare is your relationships in your daily life. This is the sphere where the battle takes place. *It's in our ordinary life, that Satan seeks to bring us down. Why? Because it's in our ordinary life, that the Lord Jesus wants to show His glory and to use us for His glory.*

This battle take place on "the evil day." This is the time when we are weak, when we have wrong desires, and we are tempted. When that happens, the pressure is on and we're in "the evil day."

We are to be always on guard, remembering that Christ has given us the recourses to stand our ground. V 10

The Character of the Enemy

First, your enemy is supernatural in his power. When something goes wrong in the world, the world wants to blame someone. When something goes wrong in the church, we tend to do the same, but more often, we try to ignore the problem. We are often surprised at the thins that go wrong in the church, because the enemy has blindsided us. Always keep one eye open to Satan's presence and power.

Second, Satan is well organized in his strategy. The terms rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers do not indicate a well-organized structure. Matthew 16:18 – *the gates of Hades*. In the Old Testament, the gates of a city or a village were where the community had an organized seat of authority. The gates of Hades indicates that Satan is organized; his demons are organized. We Christians are under strategic attack. We, therefore, must never downplay the strategies of the evil one. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:11, "We are not ignorant of his strategies." The New Testament teaches us about Satan's strategies, because this is a spiritual conflict.

Last, Satan is a deceiver. He is a liar and the father of lies. That's why the New Testament exhorts us to understand the gospel so that you won't be deceived. Being deceived can ruin you. Everything about Satan is difficult for us to grasp. We struggle grasping that he is evil in his disposition. The devil is no laughing matter. He is supernatural, and He is wicked. He will not play by your rules or any rules, for that matter. He is evil.

Our Resources for Victory

These resources Paul describes as the Christian armor.

First, this armor can be trusted completely. Paul is using the picture of the Roman soldier to remind us that there is in the scriptures, a picture of another soldier: God Himself. In Isaiah 11:4-5, 52:7, and 59:17, Isaiah speaks about the Lord Himself, wearing the armor that he needed, to conflict with Satan. The armor that Paul describes here, therefore, is reliable because Jesus wore it Himself.

So, what is the armor?

-The belt of truth – the truth of the gospel received in our hearts. The Bible being brought into our hearts. This is what holds us together.

-The breastplate of righteousness - Satan tries to bring us to despair of our salvation by constantly reminding us of our guilt, our shame, and our sin. When Satan accuses you of these, you say to him, “I’m worse than that, but upward I look and see Him there, who made an end of all my sin.” My righteousness does not depend on anything in me. My righteousness is found in Jesus Christ. And if I’m in Jesus Christ, I can say to Satan, “Satan, I am as righteous before the throne of God as Jesus the Son of God, because the righteousness with which I am righteous is His righteousness.”

-The shoes of readiness or stability – The gospel of Jesus gives peace and assurance of salvation. Just as the shoes of Roman soldiers gave them the stability of walking on the rough terrain of Roman roads, so the gospel of peace gives us stability to stand against Satan.

-The shield of faith - Paul is referring to the large Roman shield which covered the entire body. It was often soaked in water so that the fiery arrows of the enemy would be quenched. The image of the shield was a metaphor for God’s protection. Here, Paul says that we are to lay hold of God’s resources, especially His power, through faith, believing that He will protect us when Satan attacks.

-The helmet of salvation - When Christ saved us, when he rescued us from death, wrath, and bondage and transferred us into His dominion where He rules, we rule with Him, possessing His power and authority of that is mightier than our enemy. As we live life in Christ, working out our salvation, we grow more confident that our enemy is defeated.

-The sword of the Spirit – The Word of God. With it, you go on the offensive. The short-handled sword which Romans soldiers used to attack was easy to use and highly effective. The Word of God, the gospel, is powerful and effective in stopping Satan’s onslaughts.

Then, of course, you pray, asking for help against your enemy.

And what do you do if you fail? Then you come back to him, and you get his forgiveness, your repent. And you start putting on the armor all over again. And in the evil day, you’ll be able to stand.