The Believer's Warfare, Part 1
Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-13
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We come this morning to a brief kind of introduction, a look at the first section verses 10 through 13. Let me read it to you. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, 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. Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand." Now that's as far as we'll go this morning and we will not exhaust all that's in those verses but be coming back to them next time we study this and in following sessions. So, we'll kind of look at it in an overview and pick out some key things.

But let me remind you of the context briefly as we begin. Paul has, in this book, presented to us the great realities of being in Christ. What it means to be a believer. What it means to belong to God. What it means to have the Spirit of God indwelling. What it means to become adopted into God's family. What it means to stand in Him, the position of the believer, who he is in Christ, who she is in Christ where we stand, our identity, a definition of our character because of Jesus Christ. And we have seen in the first three chapters of this great section on positional truth; who we are in Christ. We saw the great realities that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies that we have been given adoption and love and predestination and forgiveness and enlightenment and knowledge and understanding and power. We've been taken out of the dominion of Satan and placed into the kingdom of Christ. We have been made to do good works which God has before ordained. We have been moved as it were, away from the style of living of the world and ushered into a whole new dominion, a union with God, a union with Christ, a union with the Spirit, a union with every other believer. Our attitudes change, we think different, we feel different, we talk different, we act different. And all of these things are identified as marks of a believer in the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians. And all of it according to the tremendous purpose of God in the mystery of the church as He has made us one in Jesus Christ and filled us with resurrection power.

And then as we came to chapter 4, 5 and 6 we saw that our practice was discussed, our position of who we are, our practice of how we live and the apostle delineated for us standards of living which we are to attain. The idea, I showed you, could be illustrated by a car. First three chapters describe the car, its engine, its power plant, its capabilities. And then the second three the road map on which the

car is to drive. And we as believers are defined as high powered individuals and the second three chapters show us where we are to go with this power, the ignition switch is being strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, being filled with the Spirit as the Spirit controls us we turn on the power plant and begin to move out in obedience to follow the road map God has given us. And we saw in chapters 4, 5 and 6 that the way we are to live is different than the world. We are to walk worthy. It is a walk of oneness, a walk of unity, a walk different than the world. A walk of love, a walk of light, a walk of wisdom, a walk in the Spirit. Our relationships are different. Our songs are different. Our marriages are different. Our families are different. Our employment situations are different. All of these things unique standards, principles by which the believer is to function in the world.

Now, think of it then this way in summary. You have all the resources, all the power. You have all the principles to live the Christian life. There is just one thing you need to know. In spite of all of resurrection power, in spite of all of the truths that you need to know being available, it will not be easy. And that is the way Paul wants to end his letter. Don't dare take anything for granted. Because you know how you are to operate on the job doesn't guarantee that you'll pull it off. Because you know how you are to conduct yourself and your family doesn't mean that you will fulfill it. Because you know the truths about resurrection and about the power available doesn't mean you're going to apply it necessarily. Because you know what God teaches about marriage is no guarantee that you'll see the fulfillment of it. Even though the power is there and the principles are there something else is there. And that's the enemy, the adversary who wants to withstand any good thing God sets out to do. The enemy will be there to thwart divine purpose in your life.

And so, when you come to defining the Christian life, the best term is simply warfare, warfare. That's what Paul uses to speak of it in this passage. In fact, at the end of his life he said, “I have fought a good fight.” In his ministry he said, “I fight not as one who beats the air.” To Timothy he said, “Be a soldier who endures harness.” Repeatedly in Scripture the Christian life is seen as a warfare. When Jesus began His ministry the initial thrust of His ministry was a war with Satan, a conflict with Satan after forty days of fasting in which Satan approached Him and tempted Him subtly three times. And the way His ministry ended was the same way as Satan began to besiege Him in the garden of Gethsemane and He began to sweat as it were great drops of blood.

That shows us a lot of things but it shows us one thing I'd like to point out and that is that whether you are at the beginning of your experience or at the end of it you're going to be in the same battle. And if you think it will get easier you're wrong. Jesus had a conflict at the beginning but He didn't sweat great drops of blood in the wilderness, that was at the end when He was in the garden. There was, if anything, an intensification of the efforts of the enemy as Christ came closer to accomplishing His goals.

I remember when I was young somebody said to me, “You know, you ought to begin to witness because the more you do it the easier it gets.” That isn't true. The more effective you become the

harder Satan works. You know, people say to me, you've been preaching so long it must be easy. It isn't any easier than it ever was. It's the same. If anything sometimes it's more difficult. You might be surprised to know that Satan would want to thwart me anyway he possibly could from preaching - I fight more now to get the time to study then I ever fought in my life. I mean it's early morning, late night and doing it wherever you can because there are so many things that Satan wants to do to undermine that priority of teaching the word of God. And then he slams away at me, you know, sometimes I get tired.

I woke up this morning and I stared at the ceiling and the first thought that came into my mind was this - Oh, no, it's Sunday. I've got to preach again. That's the truth. Oh, I wanted to go back to sleep, I thought to myself - Oh, if I were just sick. Not real sick, just sick enough not to preach. But not sick enough not to take a trip or a ride somewhere, or play golf. And then I just had a little prayer time and I said - Lord, this isn't the new me this is the sin that is in me. By the time I got myself together and had my breakfast I couldn't wait to get out the door to get here. But it isn't any easier. Because it's always a war, it never stops being a war. And you always have a certain sense of weariness that goes along with a great sense of accomplishment because the longer you fight the battle the greater the string of victories. Right? And the greater the string of victories the more of the confidence you have in God and the more you know that God is going to take you through and the more thrilling it is as you see God's power working.

I can understand what it means in Revelation when the saints die and it says they rest from all their labors. I think about heaven in those terms sometimes. But I'll tell you, as long as I'm here the battle is there and I want to be in the midst of the battle. The apostle Paul said in I Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 8, he said - I must tarry at Ephesus. Why? Because a great door and opportunity is open unto me and there are many adversaries. He says I've go to stay here because this is where the war is the hottest. There's a lot of people in the Christian life that say -I've got to get out of this, it's getting difficult. I've got to find an easy ministry. A lot of men in the pastorate, as soon as it gets tough they want to go, you see. Got to leave. And Paul says I've got to stay here this is where the battle is the hottest; this is where the greatest victory is potentiated. It's a war.

I like what old Uncle Bud Robinson said - he looked at the Christian life as a war and he said - All my life I'll fight the devil and when I've lost my teeth I'll gum him till I die. It's relentless. It never ceases to be warfare, living for Christ is not waltzing through a meadow picking daisies, it's walking through a mine field with snipers all around you. Snipers you can't see or perceive because they belong to a supernatural realm beyond your ability to conceive. This is war and the enemy is hell-bent on destruction of every divine purpose.

And so the believer has to view himself in that manner. We are sons, yes, and we are servants, yes, but we are soldiers too. And as Paul says in II Corinthians chapter 10 - the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but they are spiritual and we are dealing with imaginations and we are dealing with

high things, he says, and we are dealing with bringing our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. We are fighting a war that is not simply physical, not simply fleshly. It can have that element. The battle against the enemy can come through human beings. It can come as it did through Jesus through the persecution of men, it can come in the form of spit, it can come in the form of mockery and cursing and abusive language. It can come in the form of blows to the face; it can come in the form of nails and spears in the side. It can come to the Christian today as it did to the apostles in the form of being beheaded or being killed for the sake of Christ. It can come in those ways and maybe as we continue to preach Jesus Christ faithfully in increasingly godless humanistic society, it will come to that. But behind the physical, behind the hatred and the persecution we see from people there is a domain of spiritual beings that are at war with the believer. And they simply use the physical world as a means to their ends. It is not so much that men hate Christ as that Satan hates Christ and uses men as his pawns. He is the force behind the warfare.

And so we face an enemy that is so strong and so clever and so deceiving and so subtle that if ever we are to fulfill the potential of our position, if ever we are to live in practice of what we are in position, if ever we are to know the fullness of Christian living we must listen to what Paul says at the end of this book. We can't be so foolish as to think now that we've got all this data we can run out and make it the way it ought to be. We're going to hit opposition at step one and all the way down the line as long as we endeavor to live in God's Kingdom on God's terms because Satan will do his best to withstand us. And so as we look, then, at verses 10 to 13 let me share five things with you.

The preparation, the armor, the enemy, the battle, the victory and this is just brief and introductory this morning, we'll get into detail next time. First, the preparation. And, by the way, this is basic. You do not want the battle to begin when you are unprepared. You don't want to be just sort of lollygagging around and all of a sudden you're half way defeated before you wake up and realize you are in the war. So, preparation comes first and this is Paul's word in verse 10. "Finally," and he says that because it is the last of his major themes in the book. "My brethren," he uses that term because he wants to identify with them in the struggle, "Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might." As a general principle in living depend on the strength of God. That's what he is saying. As a way of life, my brethren, depend on God's strength.

You'll notice that two times he uses the word in - in the Lord and in the power of His might. And that is a cardinal reality in the book of Ephesians, we are in Christ, we are in Christ, we are one with Him. His life is our life. His power is our power. His truth is our truth. We are one with Christ in Him. And so it is in Christ that we are strong. It is in Christ that His might becomes our might. And, by the way, no matter how strong our enemy is and we'll see how strong in a moment, His strength is superior.

I can't help but think of the church at Philadelphia in Revelation chapter 3 and it talks about this church as a good church. In fact, it's one of the two out of the seven churches to which no condemnation was given. This was a righteous community of faith. And our Lord says to them, “You

have an open door before you." This was a church that was reaching out, a church that was blessed by God. And then in verse 8 it says, "And you have a little strength." And you know what's beautiful about that is the fact that even a little strength preserves the church. God is so much more powerful than Satan that a little of His strength is enough to overcome all of the enemies. You see? Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. And so infinitely greater that the smallest amount of divine power can overcome the greatest amount of the power of hell and the enemy. And so the strength is ours in the Lord.

In Phil. 4:13 Paul says - I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. Again, the resource is ours. Beloved, I believe that we have that resource. To deny that, to me, is to deny a basic fundamental reality of the Christian life, to say nothing of the havoc with the thought of Paul in Ephesians chapter 6. I believe at the cross Jesus Christ gave a death blow to Satan as recorded in Hebrews 2:14, He destroyed him that had the power of death. And I believe all we have to do is enter into that victory.

Listen, if Christ defeated Satan at the cross and I was in Christ, then I defeated Satan at that same cross and as Satan is now subject to Christ so is Satan subject to me as he is under His feet so as Romans says is he under my feet. I believe he is a vanquished foe, I believe he can lay no just claim to a believer, Romans 8 says - Who shall lay any charge to God's elect, it is God who justifies and if God has declared me just and if God has won the battle if God has gotten the victory in Jesus Christ then that victory is mine and Satan has no power to withstand the resurrection resource that dwells in the life of every believer.

The point is this, we are in a war but there is no reason to lose and there is no reason to be afraid. Divine resource belongs to us. Timothy as a young man in the ministry had grown fearful, he had grown timid. He had been besought by the lust that comes to a young man, he had been besieged by people who were telling him false doctrine and they were pretty strong at what they were doing. He was being inundated by his own fearfulness so that he literally became ashamed of the testimony of Jesus Christ, he became ashamed of his companion in the gospel the beloved apostle Paul who had discipled him. And in the midst of these terrible feelings of timidity of fear of a lack of love, shame, lust and all of these things the apostle Paul calls to him in II Timothy 2:1 and says - Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Timothy, there is no reason for this; you claim the strength that is yours. And in chapter 1 verse 8 he said - God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

The point is this; there is no Christian, no time in his life who needs to feel that he loses the battle to the enemy. God has given us, in Christ, the resource for victory. "Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think according to the power that works in us." Now the fact is we can win. We know we're going to win the war in the end because Christ has gotten us the victory, there is no sense losing the battles along the way. But there are some things we have to

know.

First we have to have our strength in the Lord and secondly we have to have the armor on. We hear a lot about demon problems today. Christians are supposedly worrying about how to deliver each other from demons. There is a lot of what is known as Christian exorcism going on which is totally foreign to Scripture. There is no word about that in Scripture. In fact there is no incident in all of the Scripture where demons are ever cast out of a believer anytime, anyplace. Whenever Satan is dealt with, he is dealt with in terms of two things; one, the strength of the Lord, and two, the provision that God has made for every believer in Christ. It's always that way. Rituals and exorcisms and all of that are foreign to Scripture. Why? We don't need that. Because the resource is there. That's what I want to get across to you. It's there.

In Ephesians chapter 1 in verse 19 it talks about the power towards us who believe. What kind of power? Mighty power. How strong? Power that raised Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but in that which is to come. What kind of power do we have? The power that conquered death on the cross. The power that conquered death in the grave. The power that exalted Christ to the right hand and set every angel and demon in the universe under His feet. That's the power we have. That's the power toward us so that I say to you that every believer has a resource within him with which he or she can deal with Satan no matter what onslaughts the devil may bring. But on conditions. One, that his strength is in the Lord, not himself. Two, that he fulfills the conditions of the armor, the provision God has made.

And so preparation, beloved, means we recognize that in the Lord the power is available. Col. 1:10 says that you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing being fruitful in every good work and increasing by the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. We have all might according to His glorious power. Christ who has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear son has given us this power. There is no believer who cannot deal with Satan on terms of resurrection, power available in Christ.

Recently, I heard about a Christian who supposedly has demons and doesn't have the resource to get rid of them so people are doing it for him. That is foreign to Scripture. There is within every believer the resource in the power of God to free that individual from any satanic involvement whatever, no matter how simple or complex it may be. In I Cor. I want you to notice the word of Paul in chapter 10 and verse 12. It says this, "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." You know when you are vulnerable? When you think you are not. When you think I have all the information - I've mastered the book of Ephesians, I've even memorized it. I have all the doctrinal data, I'm alright, I know what to do. I've got the principles. Or when you think you can handle Satan - I can handle that. I've got all the necessary equipment. But on the other hand, the point is this, when you think you can do it - you can't. But on the other hand, when you depend upon God there is

nothing Satan can do, to you that needs to cause you to lose the victory. Look at verse 13.

"On the other hand, there is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man but God is faithful," now notice, this whole thing is dependent on the character of God. Not just His power but His faithfulness to make that power available. God is faithful who will not permit you to be tempted above that which ye are able. God will never allow Satan any foothold in the life of a believer that is more than that believer can deal with. Right? But, with the temptation also make the way to escape that you may be able to bear it. There will never be a time in this warfare when you need to lose. There will never be a time when you cannot overcome, in Christ. If you depend on Him. In fact, the resource is going to be most available to you when you are the weakest.

In II Cor. 12:9 Paul says - When I am weak then I am strong, His strength is made perfect in my weakness. As long as you think you can handle it you can't. When you know you can't and depend on Him, He can. Listen, if you are a guard on duty and let's say you're guarding, you're looking for the approach of an enemy army. All of a sudden the enemy army approaches your fort - what do you do? You run down from the parapet from where you've been watching and run out there with your little gun and start fighting the enemy? Not if you're smart you don't. Guards don't go and fight the war, they tell the commander. And the sooner you learn that in the Christian life the better off. When Satan attacks don't fight it, report to the commander. As David said to the Philistines, the battle is the Lord's. The battle is the Lord's, let Him fight it; He knows what He is doing. Let Him be the one who fights the battle. And so we simply need to face the reality that the power is there.

Ephesians 6:10 tells us we can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. There is no reason for feeling defeated. There is no reason to think that a believer is so inundated by Satan that he can't get out of it. There’s no bondage so great that there is not a way to escape if he takes the resources available, and they are one confidence in the power of God. And then as we'll see in the weeks to come, putting on the armor is the other one. And that must be done as well.

So, the preparation. The Holy Spirit said to Jehoshaphat one time, the battle is not yours it's God's! Boy, what a great thing to know. Because I wouldn't want to get into this warfare which is something I can't even see, something spiritual, something far beyond me, I wouldn't want to get into that and fight without even being able to see the enemy or know how he operated. I'm so glad the battle belongs to the Lord. And when the temptation comes, Satan sends his confusions then I report to the Commander in Chief, I ask Him to purge my life and make me as righteous a vessel as can be and in that righteousness I stand fearless, protected by Him. From there we move to the armor. Because that is the second way we have to deal with the enemy.

Verse 11, "Put on the whole armor of God." We'll stop right there. We're going to get into that in detail. But a believer needs to have the armor. It doesn't do a bit of good unless you put the armor on. You can have people sitting around you, calling demons out of you till they are blue in the face and it

won't do any good until the armor is on. And if the armor is on you don't need all those people doing that. Because the dependence upon God's power and obedience to put on the available armor is the only resource the believer needs. That's the only way the Bible deals with this problem in terms of the individual.

The phrase, “put on,” by the way, is interesting because in the original it means put on once and for all. This isn't like game uniforms, you know, where you just put it on on Saturday when it's game time; you put the armor on once and leave it on the rest of your life. You never lay your armor down until you meet the Lord. You put your armor on and keep it on. And if you don't have it on you become vulnerable at any point. And so Paul, probably chained to a Roman soldier as he wrote this, sees the whole of the Roman soldier's uniform and all the armor that went with it as a perfect illustration of how the believer is to be prepared to fight the enemy. Verse 14, he speaks of this armor, the loins are girded about with truthfulness, the breastplate of righteousness, the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

And we'll be getting into these fabulous thoughts in detail in coming weeks but this is the basic necessity for the believer - depend on the Lord and put the armor on and leave it on. And that's why I am saying people, you know we are so gullible sometimes because we think that because we have facts we're alright. We need to have the armor. The armor goes beyond the facts to the response to righteous living. We're going to see that. If you want to win in the Christian life, get the armor on; get your life right because it's going to be a battle till the day you die.

That brings us thirdly to the enemy, verse 11. That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. In other words, we know we have the power of the Lord and His might. We put on the whole armor, we're ready, obedient with our armor, depending on divine power and are able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Always the believer is to stand because Satan will attack him. You don't need to go find the devil. You know, I always worry about people who rush into situations and start calling on demons and calling out demons and talking to demons because you are really delving into an area where you have no information. You just hang around long enough, they will be there. And you really don't need to get involved with them. You deal with the power of God and you deal with the armor that you have and God through that will take care of the enemy you stand firm.

Now, we're never told in the Bible to attack the devil either. We're just told to resist him and he'll flee - stand firm, hold your ground. And that's what he says here. And who is the enemy? Easy to see, the devil. The devil. People say - Ah, there is no devil. The devil is just a Halloween costume, pointed tail and two little horns and all of that, pitchfork. That's not what the Bible says. The Bible tells us there is a real devil that this is nothing-but Lucifer, the greatest angel, read Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28 talks about this angel, the anointed cherub, the one who sparkled with all the jewels of heaven.

The highest being God ever made, this anointed, angelic being wanted to be like God and in the sin of pride he was thrown out of heaven and Revelation 12 says - Like a great dragon he fell and with his tail he swept a third of the angels with him. So, Lucifer, this fallen angel, the highest of the angels leads a host of one third of all the angels that God ever created. And there are literally millions of them. And these then become the demonic enemy. This is the devil. Jesus believed in him. He talked with him in Matthew 4. He talked about him in John 14, John 16, and elsewhere. The apostles believed in him, Paul talked about him, Peter talked about him, James talked about him. If you look at history you know there is a devil he tempted Eve in Genesis 3, he tempted Christ in Matthew 4. He perverted God's word in Matthew 4 and he opposed God's work in Zechariah 3. He hindered God's servant in I Thess. 2 and he hinders the gospel in II Cor. 4. He snares the wicked in I Tim. 3; he desires the nations in Rev. 16. He's an angel of light in II Cor. 11, he fights with Michael in Jude. He brought sin into the world in Genesis 3. He now has the whole world lying in his lap in I John 5. He's been all through history.

He has personal titles. The Bible calls him in Ezekiel 28 the anointed cherub. In John 16, the prince of this world, in Ephesians 2 the prince of the power of the air, in II Cor. chapter 4 he is called “the god of this age.” And in Luke 11:15 “the prince of demons.” Fifty-two times he is called Satan which means adversary. That is his most common title. Thirty-five times he is called devil, diabolas, which means slanderer. He is called the old serpent, the great dragon, the roaring lion, the evil one, abadon, appolyon, tempter, accuser, the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience.

He is described by our Lord in John 8:44 as a murderer and as a liar. He works overtly and covertly with flat-out doctrines of devils and with seducing spirits. He is a sinner in I John 3:8, he is an imitator in II Cor. 11:13-15. He is some formidable enemy.

Lucifer, fallen from heaven, the ruler of a vast host of demon beings who have been around for centuries and thousands of years since first they fell and first they were created. They've been here a long time they are wily they are clever they are cunning, they are subtle, they are invisible, they are super-human and they are our enemy. And it says in verse 11 they operate on the basis of the wiles of the devil. Methodia, methods and the word is used in Ephesians 4:14 and translated cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive us. About what? Like children tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

The emphasis is that the wiles of the devil are lies, false doctrines, false religion, false teaching. He is a liar and the father of it. He is a deceiver. His whole system deceives subtly, supernaturally, cleverly, powerfully. He has deceived mankind the world over with false religious systems. It's incredible how sophisticated they come.

Can you believe that in the Old Testament Satan deceived Israel into worshipping idols and turning their back on the true God? Can you remember that in the New Testament Satan deceived Israel into murdering their own Messiah? Would you believe in the future he will deceive Israel into thinking the anti-Christ is Christ? He is a deceiver. He is subtle. His area is lies, heresies and false doctrine. He will lie about everything whether simple or sophisticated. And if I sometimes get upset about false doctrines and false cults and false teaching the reason is because I believe all of that stuff whether it is a denial of the truth of the word of God or whether it is Zoroastrianism, whether it's the new liberation that denies God's order for the family, whether it's homosexuality, the new morality, whether it's the cults and isms and schisms and spasms and the rest of that stuff or whether it's old line religions of the world, if I get excited about that it is because those things should be blasted with the fierceness equal to their hellish origins. Because they are from Satan. They are the wiles of the devil. And he is clever. He moves into the world and prevents the word from reaching the hearts of men. He snatches the word, Luke 8 says. He twists and perverts it. He has men stand in pulpits who deny the authority of Scripture, deny the deity of Christ, deny salvation by grace, deny the second coming, deny judgment, deny sin, deny everything. He teaches a lifestyle that damns. He involves himself in politics and governments and nations as well as individual lives.

To Christians he comes and creates doubt in their minds as he did to Eve and did throughout the history of God's people. He creates persecutions against them. He hinders their service. He infiltrates the church with his tares, he tempts us to self-reliance, to doubt, to lies, to immorality to worldliness, to pride to discouragement to on and on and on. And this is subtle, really subtle. People might think the longer you are a Christian and the more mature you become the easier it gets. No. Because the more you know the more subtle the temptations become. And so this is a formidable enemy. But it isn't just the devil, look at verse 12.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood," and keep it in mind, people, our enemy is not the system, the world as we see it. You know, they may persecute us and someday they may do to us what they did to Jesus, John 15 he said -Don't be surprised if they persecute you and kill you and hate you they hated Me, they persecuted Me they killed Me, you wouldn't expect them to treat the servants any different then they treated their Lord. So don't be surprised but the real enemy is not flesh and blood, the real weapons of our warfare are not carnal but principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. Those are all terms to describe demons. It is a demon empire that is the real enemy and we wrestle and the word wrestle is not talking about a simple athletic game.

In the Roman times when the wrestlers went into the ring to wrestle the idea was to get two hands around the neck of the man in a stranglehold and press not only his shoulders but his head to the ground. And if his head was on the ground for' a certain time he died; if only his shoulders touched and you didn't get his head down he lived to fight again. And Satan wrestles with us through his demons and we with them and it is a life and death matter. They read the Bible, they know the way it

is charted to come out, they know there is a bottomless pit, they know there is an eternal place created for them and they will do everything they can to get a stranglehold on the things of God to change that. And so it is a warfare on a level unhuman. And it is anything but a sport.

In fact, humans are just duped into a supernatural war. They are just duped to fight Satan's causes. And so our enemy is a subtle enemy. You know, whenever I begin to think about how clever he is and then you see people, you know, who want to delve into this demon stuff, boy, you don't know what you are getting into. You can't handle it.

John Weldon, a friend of mine, who has done so much research on the cults is probably the most prolific cult researcher today sent me a report, and in it he discusses something of this issue and this is what he says; "God did not make us in such a way that we can function either safely or effectively in a demon environment. Even if it is neutral which it clearly isn't who knows what demons can do in their own environment and what interrelationships exist or can be manufactured between their world and ours. We weren't made to fly around in astral realms. Granted the existence of the demonic one is playing in an astral pigpen filled with evil and hostility. We were not made with the intellectual capacities to separate the good from the evil, the true from the false, in the occult realm. For example, the prophet Daniel was a brilliant and godly young man, however, even he had to be given additional wisdom from God in a special way to be able to have discernment in occult matters. Thus involvement in such will always produce faulty conclusions because man as a fallen creature does not have the necessary equipment or ability to sort out demonic matters." He's right. Report to the commander is all you need to do. Get the armor on. Don't mess with the dominion that you can't even comprehend.

And so, this is a look at the enemy for whom we need the armor, for whom we need the preparation. And to understand the battle is important, people, it isn't going to be easy to live the Christian life; it isn't easy for me either. But I'll tell you one thing, the only things that matter in life, and the only things that taste sweet in life are the things you work hard to get. Right? The things where you see real victory. The greatest joy day to day is to know that I've overcome Satan.

Listen, Satan is around; his demons are all over the place. They know me, I've told you about that. I walked into a room one time where a person was full of demons and the demons started screaming at me, “Get him out of here.” They know who I am. They know me. But you know something, that's the only time I ever got in conversation with them. Once in ten years. I don't even fool with them. You know why? Because the Bible doesn't tell me to do that. I don't know what they are doing, I don't know what kind of games they play. That's a domain I don't get in. I don't talk with them, I don't pay any attention to them, I just get my armor on, I report to the commander and you know what? In ten years God has continued to bless the ministry here and we haven't paid any attention to that.

Listen, they know we are here. But I don't care how many of them attack me, a thousand, ten-thousand, or a hundred thousand or a million I don't care if they all gang up. I don't care if Satan stands against me himself - you know something; greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world? And I have a resource in Christ to deal with that domain. Listen, I'm convinced that for the last ten years they've been trying to stop what God is doing here but they cannot succeed. They cannot succeed as long as we are faithful to put the strength where it belongs in God in humility to know we have no strength on our own and to keep the armor on to live a righteous life. I don't care what all hell amasses against us it is impotent even if we had but a little strength as the church in Philadelphia. And so the story ends this morning with victory, verse 13.

From the preparation to the armor to the enemy to the battle to the victory -"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand." What I love there is - you may be able to stand, you can stand there is victory if the armor is on, and the confidence is in, the Lord. Don't get caught with your armor off. You say - well, when is the evil day? You want to know when the evil day is? Today. Yesterday, tomorrow, any day the evil day is the day when evil reigns in the world and that's as long as Satan is the prince of the power of the air. Report to the commander, the victory is yours. Resist the devil he will flee from you. The hymn writer said - "Am I a soldier of the cross?" But that was the wrong question. Yes, we're all soldiers of the cross; the question is what kind of a soldier am I? Do I win? Do I lose? No reason to know anything but victory and with victory comes joy, happiness, contentment, and peace. That's the way God intended it. And that's the way He wants it for you. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You this morning for the confidence that we have boldly to stand before the enemy in the power of God. To go on about depending on You and wearing the armor and letting You fight the war. Oh, God, may we in this church as individuals, every person sitting here be dependent on Your strength wearing the armor knowing it's a warfare but knowing that even the warfare is joyous because victory is ours every day, every moment as we count on You. May we know that the enemy can do nothing to us as long as our strength is in You and our armor is on. And God, in the weeks to come help us to see what this means practically and to be equipped for the battle we've been in all along but maybe getting even hotter now in these days in which we live as we approach the coming of Christ. Father, minister to every life here in Christ's name. Amen.

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