

The Believer's Warfare, Part 2

Ephesians 6:10-13

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In our Bible study this morning, we're going to worship the Lord together as we learn more about Him, by hearing His word in Ephesians chapter 6, and we're just kind of now looking at verses 10 to 13. We're talking about the believer's armor. As Paul closes the letter to the Ephesians, he speaks of a great struggle which lies before every believer.

And we told you last time that Paul is very clear about the fact that the world is a battleground that the whole universe, in fact, is at war. There is a war between God and Satan. We see it in many places in Scripture, perhaps no more clearly than in the book of Job, where Satan and God are in conflict verbally.

But everywhere throughout the history of man and the revelation of God, the conflict is seen. The conflict between God and Satan comes down to the holy angels and the evil angels and they are at war. It comes down another step to good men and evil men and they, too, are at war. The whole of the universe is a warfare. The whole thing, since the fall of man, since the curse entered into the earth is a warfare.

Christian life is a struggle, a battle, a wrestling match, as Paul calls it in verse 12, and so we literally exist as believers in a life-and-death struggle. And frankly, people, I don't think anybody understands this. I really don't. I think that there is a – and this is easy to see here, and I love you all, and that's why I say what I feel – because I want to help you all to understand it – but I feel you can get such a smugness about Christianity that you lose the whole perspective.

You know, you just kind of sit in a corner, and you kind of dote over your theology for one thing, where everything is so good, you know, at Grace Church, you know, your kids are in the junior high department, and you've got one in the high school department, having a great time. Everybody is going to camp. You got little kids over there in the gym playing around, and you've got them in Awana, or you've got this going. You're buying books, listening to tapes, and the world is all beautiful and glorious.

And you get so wrapped up in your little thing that you forget what a warfare is going on, and you forget there are literally millions of souls around the world who are in the grasp of Satan. And you forget the things Satan is doing so subtly to just debilitate you by what may be the greatest attack of Satan – lethargy, indolence, indifference, stagnation. And I fear for this. I fear for this for Grace Church.

You know, I get up here to preach about the warfare, and everybody sort of sits there and says, "We're going to talk about the warfare today. What warfare? What battle is he talking about? He must

be going through a lot – poor fellow. We need to pray for him.”

And there’s so many people who don't even realize it’s going on. You look at each other, and you say, “This battle seems very serious. I wonder what it is like.” See, there is a warfare, and if you don't know it, then you're not a soldier – or a very good one. You're not fighting.

You know, one thing I couldn't stand when I was young was sitting on the bench. I could take a lot of things in life, but sitting on the bench wasn't one of them. I remember when I was playing football in college. My first year I got some injuries. In fact, the first game I played in, I had a rather severe injury, and so the coach decided to leave me on the bench because he was afraid I would get hurt. And he’d save me for special things like carrying the equipment, passing out the tape to tape the ankles, and things that really mattered.

But so one day I said to the coach, I said, “You know, there is one thing I really hate, and that's sitting on the bench,” and I said, “There's a guy playing a position that I'm supposed to be backing up, and I really feel that I can do better than he can.” And the coach says, “Well, do you want to try to prove that?” I said, “Yeah.” I said, “Give me an opportunity and let us go head to head and let's see who wins,” and so he did.

One night, after practice, it was dark, and he turned the headlights of a car on, and he said, “All right, you guys.” He drew a white line on the ground, and he said, “I'm going to give you 45 minutes to go at it head on. I'll blow the whistle. You hit each other and see who drives each other across the white line the most times.”

Well, that's the way it is in football. If you're going to prove, it's going to be a little tough. So we went at it for 45 minutes, and I mean it was rough because we both wanted that position. And as it turned out, I prevailed in the end – didn't always prevail, but I did that time, and I got that position.

But you know, that sticks in my mind as indicative of the fact that I didn't like to be on the bench. I couldn't stand to be on the bench. I mean if there was something going on, I wanted to be where it was going on, and it was kind of like the apostle Paul. You remember we saw last time in 1 Corinthians 16:8 and 9. He says, “I have to stay in Ephesus because there are many adversaries.”

I think a lot of Christians don't know there is a battle because they don't ever go where the battle is, you know? They hole up in their sanctified environment, and we don't really ever get in to the warfare. And I think we're lull to think the warfare isn't there when all the time Satan is gaining the victory in our lives because of our indifference and our lethargy. Oh, indifference is such a killing thing.

You know, the greatest tragedy that could ever happen to Grace Church would be to have all these people come and enjoy what is going on and be indifferent about the battle. Do you see it as a warfare? It's easy to see. Look at your life. Where do you invest your time? Where do you invest your money? Where do you invest your talent? Where do you invest your energy? If it's all in the things that are passing and mundane, then you don't understand the warfare at all.

Somebody said to me the other day, “You know, I feel that the wonderful thing about life is that basically you can do what you want.” This is a Christian. “You basically can do what you want.

People do what they want, basically. If they want to do this, they do it,” and I said to the person who said it, “You know something, to be very honest with you – “ this is a personal testimony “ – I can't remember the last period of time in my life when I did what I wanted.” I don't do what I want.

You know what I do? I keep doing what I have to do. There are so many things that I have to do that I don't ever think about what I want to do. I guess what I want to do is what I have to do. I mean there are pressing things I have to do. The last time I said, “Well, I've got a little time. I wonder what I want to do,” I can't even remember that. There's a warfare. There's a battle.

I get on an airplane and sit down, and I've been flying so much lately I feel like I ought to have a pilot's license. But I get on an airplane and sit down, and I say to myself, “I know what I want to do. “I just want to sit here. I just want to sit here and read, and I want to meditate, but I know what I've got to do. I've got a guy sitting next to me. I've got to tell him about Christ.”

Going back there again, I sat down. I said, “Lord, give me a Christian, will You? A really mature one who won't care.” So this guy sits down next to me, and he says, “What do you do?” Here we go. There goes three hours and a half to Chicago I'll have to talk, and so I told him what I did, and he said, “Oh, that's interesting.” He told me about his business and so forth and so on and told me he was a Catholic.

And so we went to Chicago talking about the difference between ritualistic religion and a relationship with Jesus Christ, and I said, “I just so happen to have a series of tapes in my suitcase.” So I gave him the series on Kingdom life and the Beatitudes, and I didn't do what I wanted to do. I do what I have to do – what I have to do and what I'm compelled to do, like the apostle Paul says, “The love of Christ constrains me.” Right?

We do what we have to do. This is the battle. You can't just let the war pass in front of you without ever fighting it. I can't let the enemy drop somebody right in my lap and not do anything about it. This is a warfare.

It comes down to the issue of what I do with my dollars. Where do I put my dollars? Do I put them in the passing mundane things of the world? Or do I put them in the things that are going to make an eternal difference? What do I invest in? This is a warfare. And sometimes I don't think we understand it. It's so easy for us to just waltz in and out of the church and enjoy all of the entertainment that's provided and all of the activities that are provided, and we never get to the place where we understand how serious this is.

“Oh, I pray, God, that the devotion and the commitment level of this church will deepen to the point where we will never settle for indifference; we will never settle for complacency. And yet, in my heart, I know there are some who will, and I fear it like I fear the bubonic plague.” Now that's what Paul wants to say in Ephesians 6. He wants to say this is a war.

And you see, even though we are in Christ, chapters 1 to 3, and even though we have all spiritual blessings in the supernatural realm, and even though we have, in chapters 4 to 6, all of the direction for living the Christian life, and even though we have the fullness of the Spirit of God, and even though we are literally drowning in the love of God, and even though we have power to do beyond what we could ask or think, in view of all of that, we still must remember it won't be easy. This is war,

and every child of God is a soldier, and we've all been drafted and you can't dodge the draft and there are no deferments. This is war. And if you don't know that there is a war, you just lost the battle.

We have so much in Christ. We have so much in the Word of God to give us direction. We have the indwelling Holy Spirit, and yet we can't stand on our own confidence. We can't smugly say, "Well, I've got all of this going for me. I'm all right." First Corinthians 10:12 says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he – " what? " – lest he fall."

Now, we have to recognize that we're in a war. Now, where do we turn for our resource in this war? The hymn writer said, "The arm of flesh will fail you. You dare not trust your own." We don't turn to ourselves. Isaac Watts wrote, "From thee, the overflowing spring, our souls shall drink a fresh supply while such as trust their native strength shall melt away and droop and die." We can't trust ourselves.

And so verse 10 says this: "Finally, brethren, if this is war, and if to win you have to be a soldier, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." That's God's half. That's God's 100 percent, really. That's God's part. His strength is the issue. God is our strength. "From thee, the overflowing spring, our souls shall drink a fresh supply." He is the resource. "The arm of flesh will fail us."

And so we must know, then, that, to win the battle, there is a divine energy. There is a divine resource and a divine power that gives us victory, but verse 11 says we have to have a part, too. And verse 11, as we saw last time, says, "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Listen. There is that same divine paradox: the strength is God's, and yet the commitment must be ours. We see it in the Christian life. The apostle Paul simply says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I but Christ..." So it is my life, and yet it is Christ in me. This divine paradox we see in every revelation of God's Word to man.

We see it even in the Scripture itself. The book of Ephesians is written by Paul, and yet it's written by the Holy Spirit. You were saved by God and His sovereignty alone and His grace alone, and yet you committed yourself to Christ. You must live the Christian life with diligence and commitment, and yet it is God's power and God's power alone living through you.

And so we see both sides, and so it's there together here. We are strong in the Lord, and it is the power of His might, and yet we must appropriate the resources. Cromwell said it right. He had great theology – he didn't know it – when he said, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry."

I remember when I was a little boy. We were watching television with my father, and it was a boxing match, and the fighter was standing in his corner, you know, going through the little ritual of kicking his feet and getting his rosin on his shoes. And all of a sudden, he knelt down and crossed himself, and I said to my dad, "Dad, does that help?" And he said, "It does if he can punch." The fact of the matter is, if he can't punch, it won't do a bit of good.

And you see, that's the way it is in the Christian life. The strength is God's, and the might is God's, and the power is God's. And does it help? It does if we can punch. It does if we put the armor on.

You see, it's a question of availability and appropriation. Beloved, know, first, it's war. Know, second, the power is there, and know, thirdly, you've got to appropriate it.

I remember when I was involved in the accident that God used to turn my life around, when I was thrown out of the car and all those things happened, and I really came to grips with my ministry. There was one thing that I asked the Lord at that time. And as I look back on this – I haven't thought of it too often – but I remember it. I remember saying to the Lord, “Lord, if You want me in Your ministry, I want to be different than just run of the mill. I want to have Your power in my life. I don't want to just do this thing. If it's going to be that I'm going to give my life to this, then I want to know Your power in my life.”

And the answer has come back all through the years: “The power is available, John. It's just a question of whether you put the armor on. That's all. It's all there. It's all there.”

And you know, it's so stupid for a Christian to live his life in a listless manner. It's so silly to fill yourself up with the things of the world, to just move along at a snail's pace when all the power of God, the God of the universe, is available.

And so says the apostle Paul, “Yes, it's a battle. Yes, it's a battle, and know well that our enemy is a formidable enemy. You can't see him. You can't touch him, and you can't outwit him, and it's an enemy in the supernatural realm, literally, perhaps, millions of demons engulfed in a system that's beyond our comprehension. There's no way you can deal with that system with human intellect. There's no way that you can deal with that system in human power, but be this known: God's power is available, and if you put your armor on, the whole system is impotent against you.”

What an incredible thought. God is our strength, but that strength can only be appropriated in obedience. We're secure, ultimately, I believe that. I believe, if you're a Christian, you're secure in God's power. I think God's power is enough to hold you.

You know, in John 10:29, it says Jesus is talking about His sheep, and how secure they are, and He says, “...no one can pluck them out of My Father's hand.” Know that statement? “My Father is greater than all, and no one can pluck them out of My Father's hand.” It says “no man.” I've heard people say, “Well, it says ‘no man.’ That's all.” No. It says “no one.” It's *oudeis* – “no one.” *Dunatai*. No one has the power.

In other words, if I'm a believer, and I'm in the Father's hand, no being has the power to pluck me. And by the way, the word there is *harpasei*, which means “to snatch.” No one can snatch me out of His hand. It is the same word used in Matthew 13:19, you know, where it says, “The Word is planted, and Satan snatches it away.” Satan is a snatcher. But no one can snatch you away from the Father's hand because He is greater than all, and so, ultimately, beloved, we win. There is no power to overcome us. None at all.

In Psalm 91, just a tremendous portion of Scripture – listen to what it says, “He who dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide unto the shadow of the Almighty.” What security. The secret place of the Most High. We abide in a place that is so secret no one can take us from there for they don't even know how to get there. That's, in essence, what he is saying.

“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust. He shall cover thee with His feathers; under His wing shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Therefore, thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor the arrow that flieth by day; nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come near you.” See? What a tremendous promise. Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the Lord encamps around those that trust in God.”

Listen. As far as the ultimate is concerned, as far as the war is concerned, we can't lose because He is greater than all, and His power is beyond all. But the fact is we can really lose in the skirmishes along the way. Second Corinthians 2:11 says, “We by our sin can give an advantage to Satan.” Doesn't have to be a very big sin either. It's the little foxes that spoil the vines. A little sin gives Satan a foothold, and from the foothold, he cracks open a grand entrance for his demonic efforts.

Oh, we won't lose the war. No being has the *dunatai*, the power. No being has the power to snatch us out of his hand. Satan is the snatcher, and he'll try, but he can't do it. Satan cannot overpower God. If Satan is a strong man, then God is a stronger one. And so it is, then, that ultimately we win the war, but the sad thing is, even though we're going to win the war ultimately, we keep losing the battle along the way because we're not willing to put on the armor.

Now, let me go back to verse 12, where we left off last time. I want you to understand how important it is to put on the armor. It's important because of our enemy. Look at verse 12: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood...” Man is not our enemy. Man is not our enemy. That's a good reason why we shouldn't hate men. That's the reason Jesus hated sin and loved sinners because the sinner was not really the one. It was what was behind the sinner. That's the reason Jesus would weep over sinners. He wept for sinners because they were duped.

You see, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not lest the glory light of the gospel should shine unto them.” The thing you should feel about sinners is pity – a loving, sympathetic, gracious, merciful pity because they are the dupes of Satan. If you're going to hate, then hate him and his forces. He's the enemy.

And don't be so foolish as to think that if you've outwitted men you've accomplished the victory. Men are not the enemy. We're men. We can cope with men. Our enemy is beyond the human, and the point that Paul is making here is you cannot do this on your own. You cannot fight this battle on your own. It is not a human battle. You, as a human being, are fighting against a superhuman force, and not just one of them. Satan is not a solitary enemy. He has amassed a force of demon beings that are so vast they are beyond our ability to know.

Now, how does he define them? Let's look back where we left off with the terms of verse 12, and you will notice the word “against” appears before each of these separate items – against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. Now, you'll notice the use of the word “against” separates each of the categories. You have principalities. You have powers. You have rulers, and you have wicked spirits, literally.

Now, these are simply categories of demon beings. Here is Paul's statement: “We are fighting a superhuman foe, highly and intensely organized.” In God's governmental order, you'll notice that, as

you study God and the holy angels, God had the angels organized. God created all the angels, I believe, the Bible says, all the angels at one time. The angels do not procreate, so they were all created at some point in past eternity. They were all created at one point of time. They have existed since that time. They were created differently. Just like people are different, angels are different. There are all different kinds of angels.

For example, we read in the Bible about archangels, and then we read about cherubim, and we read about seraphim, and we read about principalities and powers and thrones and dominions and those that are even called “strengths” or “might.” And if you want to look at that, look at the first chapter of Ephesians, verses 20 and 21, where you have some of those terms. So God has organized this whole angelic force from the top down. You’ve got the archangels, and then you’ve got the principalities and then the powers and the thrones and the dominions and the mights and the cherubim and the seraphim, and they all have different functions, all have different capacities.

For example, read the book of Daniel. You go back into chapters 9 and 10, and you get some insights into this. God gave orders, perhaps, to the archangels, and the archangels would then disseminate the orders to the host of angels who would carry them out – and in Daniel’s case, some angels on the way to assisting Daniel. This angel is on his way to assisting Daniel. He gets confronted up in the heavens somewhere by a demon who holds him up.

Now, I don’t know how that works. They’re spirit beings, but that’s not for me to know. Someday, maybe, I will. But anyway, this demon holds up this holy angel from accomplishing his purpose. And so God, then, dispatches Michael who is super angel, archangel. He comes down, gives a shot to the demon, and sends the angel on his way, which means that one angel apparently has greater resources in dealing with the foe than another, which simply points out the distinctions in angelic beings.

Now, there are, among the demons, distinctions also, whereas you have the principalities and the powers who maybe more involved in higher operations, and then you have – look at the phrase, “the rulers of the darkness of this world,” literally should be translated “the world rulers of this darkness.” These would be demons that infiltrated the political structure of the world. They are called “world rulers of this darkness.”

The term “darkness” refers to hell and the pit and the dominion of Satan. When you were saved, Colossians 1:13 says you were taken out of the kingdom of darkness; you were translated out of the kingdom of darkness. The Bible says that hell is a place of darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. It’s called “outer darkness,” and so “darkness” is synonymous with the dominion of demons with the abode of Satan.

In Revelation chapter 9, it is out of the darkness that the belching forth of the filthy vile locust comes to overrun the earth, and so darkness is associated with Satan’s dominion in light with God’s, and from this darkness come world rulers. I believe that behind the scenes, ruling the world, are demon forces.

You know, it’s interesting, nowadays, people are always asking me this wherever I go, “Do you believe there is a sort of a worldwide conspiracy going on?” Now, people have called it all kinds of things. They’ve talked about ancient writings of this and Egyptian writings, and people use the

phrase “the Illuminati,” and they talk about this conspiracy and that conspiracy, and what about on the dollar bill the pyramid with the cycloptic eye on it, which is an occultic symbol, and all of this network of things. They say, “Do you believe in this? And do you believe there are demons in high places?”

Well, I'm not too sure that all these people know what they're talking about, frankly, and I'm not too sure that all of their sources are proper and all their information is correct. But aside from all the peripheral stuff, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that there is a global conspiracy in which demons are involved in high places working the world to their own ends. There's no question about that.

Now, whatever terminology it takes and whatever the things that we think it is, I'm not sure about that. And I'm very slow to believe some of the stuff I read and I hear, but I know demons are behind the systems of the world – not just the Shahs and the Idi Amins but the sophisticates of the world, too. I know the Old Testament says the gods of the nations are demons. There's no question in my mind that demons were behind Hitler, and no question in my mind that demons were very active in other world rulers such as Napoleon, Alexander the Great, and on and on and on, we could go.

Yes, of course, that's what Paul is saying. There are not only principalities and powers, certain kinds of high-ranking demons, but there are world rulers that have come out of this darkness, too. I believe the world is Satan's. Do you believe that? He is the prince of this world, right? He is the prince of this world, and I believe he has infiltrated the world with the network of world rulers that are demonic, and I think the way the world is going – it is going because of demonic influence.

In some places, it is overt, such as in the case of an Idi Amin. In other places, it is covert, such as the occupation of demonic forces functioning in our own country to godless, humanistic atheistic ends, but it's there. There's no doubt about the fact that it is there. In fact, we find the culmination of the system defined in Revelation 18 as a system known as Babylon which is to be literally obliterated and destroyed as the Lord Jesus comes to set up His kingdom.

So the term, by the way, “world rulers” here, in verse 12, is one word in the original. Just one word. These demons are behind the forces of the world.

I remember talking to a young man who had come out of the occult, and he was very highly involved in this thing, had reached high, high levels of what was a thing called the Mark Age Society, and he was getting all kinds of privy opportunities to get in on some information. And they were teaching him in one particular point in time how the demon network worked and how demons were involved in all these things. They gave him the name of certain demons that were involved in the United Nations and certain demons that were occupying themselves in various continents and in various countries, and he told me things that were literally beyond my comprehension.

There is no doubt about the fact that this is a reality, biblically, to say nothing of what we hear from the testimony of those who have been in on some of that information. And so what we're saying is this, beloved, that we are in a warfare that is very sophisticated. There are high-ranking and powerful demons who are principalities and powers.

There are others who have found themselves to be occupying places of world leadership as they

literally indwell the world rulers, and so the battle lines are drawn. It is against this incredible force that we fight. We are pitted against an enemy that is beyond us. We can't see. We can't touch. We can't outthink, outwit, that is deceiving, that is lying, that is powerful, supernatural, superhuman. And that's where the battle lies, and the sooner you realize it the better off you're going to be. That's where the battle lies. And if you don't know there's a battle, as I said, you probably lost one along the way because you really haven't taken time to think it through.

The saddest thing, as I said in the very beginning, that could ever happen to Grace Church would be for us to think that we have arrived – just get smug, just sit here and say, “Well, you know, we've got it all now. We know everything, got a full thing going here. Isn't it all wonderful? We're all here, and everything is fine.”

All of a sudden, we forget that there is a whole world out there that's lost. When's the last time you brought somebody here? When's the last time you packed up people and came on a Sunday night because you knew the Word of God would be given to you because you knew Jesus was going to speak through His Word. You say, “Ah, you know, I'm kind of tired. I had a big lunch and something on TV.”

What are you talking about? What would you think of a person on an athletic team who didn't show up for a game because he felt a little bit like that? What would you think of a soldier in an army who didn't show up for the battle because he just felt so good lying down in the barracks? Just really so comfortable. “I had such a wonderful meal today. I think I'll just flake out, and somebody else can go fight the war.” That doesn't make any sense.

You know, we try to provide the resources, but in the very provision of the abundance of resources is the delusion latent that this is the beginning and the end. And all of a sudden, Grace Church becomes an end in itself instead of a means to an end. You know why I preach to you on Sunday morning and Sunday night? Do you know why people teach you the Word of God? Because we want you to win the war. We want you to have the principles to get the armor on and live the life and be victorious. We want to cut a swath through Satan's kingdom that'll make a difference. We want to lift up and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, and unless we keep that vision in perspective, we forfeit all the things we gain.

Now, what is the object of our warfare? What is our part? What are we supposed to do? Verse 13 – and we're just going to talk about this for a minute: “Wherefore – “ and that's the word you need to notice. Listen. If the strength is in the Lord, verse 10, and if we have all the available armor, verse 11, and if the enemy is this strong, if the enemy is this comprehensive, if the enemy is this powerful, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God...”

I mean you better get it on if it's this serious. If God is so powerful and armor is so necessary, and the enemy is so formidable, then get it on. That's what he is saying. You can't be indifferent. You can't lose. Put your armor on so that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

You say, “When is the evil day?” Today. Today is the evil day. That's right. What is this – April 29, 1979? This is the evil day. So will tomorrow be. And so has every day been since Satan usurped the throne of the world. This is the evil day, from the time the usurper took over until he is cast into the bottomless pit. It is the evil day, and evil assaults the kingdom of God, and he says that you may be

able to withstand. You must have the armor and having done all to stand. Oh, I like that – to stand. Well, you know, I like to see, when the shock of battle is over, and the dust settles, and the smoke clears, that somebody stands.

I was in Scotland, a man came to me in Fraserburgh, and he had on a backwards collar, as some of them do up there in the church, and he introduced his name. He said, “My name is Mr. Reverend Cecil Mills.” He said, “I am a minister, and I have been for many years.” He said, “Is your father named Jack MacArthur?” And I said, “Yes.”

He said, “Your father came to Ireland at least 30 years ago,” and he said he came with two other men to hold a revival in Ireland, in Belfast and all around Ireland. And he said, “At that meeting, I went to hear your father, and I received Jesus Christ and dedicated my life to the ministry.” And he said, “I am a pastor now because of the Lord using your father, and I just wondered if it was indeed your father. And would you do me a favor and tell him that when you see him?”

And I said, “I will.” And he said, “Let me ask you a question.” He said, “Where is your father, now?” I said, “Oh he’s pastoring, ministering, teaching the Word, like he always has.” He said, “Is he still faithful to the Word?” And I said, “Yes, he’s still faithful to the Word, still carrying on, still standing.” He said, “Good.”

He said “What happened to Chuck?” I said, “Oh, he became an apostate, denied the faith, forsook the truth, denied the Word of God.” He said, “Oh, oh.” He said, “That’s so sad. He had so much potential.” He said, “What ever happened to Jack?” I said, “Oh, he died an alcoholic.” He said, “Oh no.” I said, “Yes, he did.”

I don't relish telling you that, but you want to know something? Three men went to Ireland 30 years ago, and they did it all. And lots of people have done it all, but when the battle is over and the dust clears, they're not all standing, you see? They're not all standing.

Now, there are people who do it all. I got a letter this week from a lady. She said, “You know, I've been to Grace Church for several years, and I've been very involved,” but she said, “I'm leaving because I've decided to marry a non-Christian.” Having done it all, she is not standing anymore.

Paul says, “You know, I'm willing to preach. I'm willing to fight. I'm willing to run to win this race,” 1 Corinthians 9. “I'm willing to do everything I can for the cause of Jesus Christ, but down deep in my heart, I have one gnawing fear – that at preaching, I myself might become a – “ what? “ – a castaway.”

Listen. There are lots of people who did it all – did it all – pastored a church, taught a class, had a bible study, led people to Jesus Christ, but when the battle got hot and the smoke cleared, they were down. You know why? They didn't have the armor on – didn't have the armor on.

I've had people in churches say, “You know, our Pastor So-and-so, terrible things happened in his life.” Why? He didn't have his armor on, didn't realize how strong the foe was. “But what about God's power? Couldn't God protect him?” God's power could protect him, but he didn't appropriate it. See?

Listen. We don't chase the devil around. It doesn't say, “Find the devil, and get him.” It doesn't say,

“You go find those demons, and you call them by name and chase them around,” send them to the pit and all that. It doesn't say that.

What it says is when they come to you, you just stand, and, by the way, the word “stand” here is the same word used in James 4:7, where it says, “Resist the devil, and he'll flee from you.” Exactly the same word used in 1 Peter 5:8 and 9, where it says the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour, and verse 9 says, “Whom resist steadfast in the faith...” Same word.

Standing and resisting is what we're called to do. Listen. Satan will be there making his attack constantly if you're living for God. You don't have to find him. Just stand against him with the armor on.

Oh, God, help us. You know, I look at all you dear people, and we pray for you, and we love you, and so many of you know so much, and you have so much of the truth of God, and there are so many resources here. And yet, you know, if you live foolishly without your armor on, and you don't live the kind of life God wants you to live, and you're not in the middle of the battle equipped and ready to be what God wants you to be – appropriating the resources – someday, you could fall.

And when you fall, it's so sad because it's such a terrible collapse, and the world sort of climbs over you and watches you lying there and gloats, you know, in your failures. And you forfeit your reward, you know? Second John verse 8, “Look to yourselves that you lose not the things that you have wrought but that you receive a full reward.” Do you know you can amass a reward to receive in heaven to place at the feet of Jesus Christ and lose the whole thing by falling?

I look at my own life, and I see all the things that God has given me, a godly heritage – all those preachers in my background. I'm the fifth generation of preachers, and I see all the godly heritage. And I see all the education God gave me and the ministry here and how He has blessed my life and enriched it with friends and people who stand by me in prayer and how He has given us fruit beyond anything we ever imagined, and I see all of this.

And yet I know deep down in my heart that this is all the grace of God, and were I to stumble and fall, I would forfeit all of those things, and I would lose in terms of victory in this life. Oh, I'd be saved because no man can snatch me out of the Father's hand. I'd forfeit the blessing and the fruitfulness and the reward, so we're standing. That's what he says.

Now, beloved, listen. If you're going to stand, you've got to have the armor on. That's the whole point of what I want you to get. You've got to have the armor on. Look at the armor with me for a minute, would you? I'm just going to read from verse 13 to 17, so you'll get it in your mind.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girted about with truth – “ or truthfulness “ – having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; on top of all that, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

What a tremendous thing. We're going to find out in the weeks to come what every single one of

those things mean, but listen to me now, and I want you to get this. It isn't easy, and I think the more we stand for Christ in the world, the hotter the battle is going to get, and the better we're going to like it because the greater God is going to be glorified. I think we need to be ready.

But there's one thing I want to add. The Lord has the strength, verse 10; verse 11, we put the armor on because verse 12 says the enemy is so strong. Verses 13 to 17 define the armor, but even when we get it on – now watch this – even when we're all ready and the armor is on, he says in verse 18 this: "Praying always." Why? Because even when we are equipped, we're dependent on God, you see?

And so, beloved, we covenant together to pray for each other. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication..." And who are we praying for? For all saints. Are you praying for each other in the battle? Are you really?

You know, when we get together for a prayer meeting, we talk about somebody's broken leg and somebody's medical treatment, all of that kind of stuff, and I wonder whether we really pray about the needful things. Instead of praying to God to repair bodies, we ought to pray to God to give strength to spirit and souls. That's what our prayer life ought to be.

We ought to be picking out people, first, in your own family. Do you pray for your children that they'll win the battle? Husband, do you pray for your wife that she'll win the battle, that she'll have her armor on? Wife, do you pray for your husband? Instead of nagging each other, why don't you pray for each other? I mean, maybe that's the solution.

If we would begin a network of prayer for each other, that we would stand firm in the strength of God, I believe God would hear and answer our prayer. If we're willing to fight the battle the way God wants it fought and willing to pay the price, I think God will give us victory that will absolutely give us an ecstasy that we've never known. Greatest joys come in the greatest victories.

Well, I've just kind of unbearably my heart to you this morning. I just have fears, you know. I come on Sunday night to preach, and I see empty seats. And yet on Sunday morning, I don't see any, and I say, "What level are people committed to?" I realize some of you live far. You can't come – you know, you've got problems, but I think, down in my heart, there are so many people who just don't understand that this is a war. This a battle, and you only got one shot at it. It's just one game. When the final gun goes off, it's all over, and what you did is in the record. And so I ask God to give us His strength to win. Let's pray.

Father, just preserve us from the stupidity of the flesh, the rouse and deceit of Satan, the subtlety of his demon hosts, the line the world pumps at us. God, help us to come out and be separate. Help us to have our armor on. Help us to live with boldness according to Your principles. Make us a great army, oh, Lord. A great army. Raise us up to fight. May the old hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers" not just be an old hymn, but may it be a right-now marching order, "Onward Christian Soldiers" going on to face the foe.

We recall the words of the hymn writer who said, "Shrink not, Christians. Will ye yield? Will ye quit the painful field? Will ye flee in danger's hour? Know ye not your Captain's power." God, help us to dedicate ourselves to live for You at all costs.

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