

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Ephesians 6

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing and powerful letter that the Postle Paul – under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – writes to the saints in Ephesus and by extension – to you and me here this morning – about who we are and what we are in Christ – right now.

Paul has laid out for us – these powerful principles –

The fullness in the glory of God that has been given to us – through grace and fellowship and then the challenge to walk in it faithfully.

The challenge to walk in His wisdom

His love

His light

Serving and submitting to one another –

And we have seen this over the past two months as we looked at chapter 5 and the beginning of chapter 6

We started with wives

Then husbands

Then children and parents

And the relationship between slaves and masters – or employees and employers –
what it means to be a bondservant

And each one of these areas – has the opportunity for great conflict in our lives.

For some of us – it is in one or two of these areas that we land in and for some of us –
it might be all these areas.

And therefore, we are challenged in the light of God and in God – how He has called
us to where He has called us –

to love the way He asks us to love

to stand and show this beautiful model of what it is like to be surrendered to God as we
learn how to submit to each another.

[Eph 5:21 NKJV] 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

It is a fear and trembling of who we serve – that leads us to submit and love one
another

And in the midst of submitting and loving each other – there will be conflict.

These are things that are going to happen because

Our flesh gets in the way

Our pride gets in the way

Sin gets in the way

And that it when the enemy and his minions – fan into flame our own flesh, our own sin, our own brokenness and cause conflict right where we are.

Spiritual warfare –

Paul wants us to understand that walk of the believer is going to lead to warfare of the believer

What Jesus has united in His glorious life, in His atoning death, in His glorious resurrection – Satan seeks to divide and deceive and destroy

But the amazing thing loved ones – is that we have a God that extinguishes that wind as we stand in Him.

And this what we are going to be looking at over the next few weeks as we look at spiritual warfare and what it means to stand in Him

And my prayer for us all – is that as we go through this section – we might fully understand the resources that are available to us – in Christ.

Let's pray...

Read Text – Ephesians 6:10-17

Keep one finger in Ephesians 6 and now turn to Psalm 62

[Psa 62:5-8 NKJV] 5 My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation [is] from Him. 6 He only [is] my rock and my salvation; [He is] my defense; I shall not be moved. 7 In God [is] my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, [And] my refuge, [is] in God. 8 Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God [is] a refuge for us. Selah

Throughout the scriptures –

We have this consistent challenge for God's people to stand in Him

Not to stand in the things of the world or the best practices of the world.

But to stand in Him

We are to stand on His grace

We are to stand on His mercy and His power and on His authority

And it is in Him alone that He allows us to have victory in trials.

Every single one of us – we are here this morning facing some type of turmoil.

Family issues

Relationship issues

Financial issues

Health issues

Issues at work

There are trials and circumstances that we encounter everyday – and little by little – whether we like to admit it or not – they begin to wear us out.

And for the believer, if you and I are not firmly planted.

We are going to be tossed to and fro

Once again - if you and I are not firmly planted. We are going to be tossed to and fro

The key to being firmly planted is this –

In Him and by Him – and not our own strength

You see, our flesh tries muster it up –

We do it with our Christianity

But we have to understand that we have nothing without Him – it is in Him

It is all about being Spirit filled – day by day, hour by hour

A Spirit filled life leads to a Spirit filled walk (Everything we have read from chapter 4 – until last weeks study) – which leads to a Spirit filled warfare-

Let's look at our text -

[Eph 6:10-17 NKJV] 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

We've come a long way from chapter 1, verse 1.

Paul took us from eternity past to eternity future.

He's described where we've been and where we're going.

He talked about the spiritual wealth we have - the grace and the power and the protection and the enabling.

We are redeemed and loved and adopted and filled the goodness of God by His Spirit

He just finished describing day-to-day Christian life in the home, in the workplace, in our relationships.

Now he says, "Finally."

It's a term that can mean "for the remaining time," or "from now on."

Think about the context –

Jesus has been crucified

He has risen from the dead

He has ascended into heaven

He is seated at the right hand of the Father

From the time that Jesus left to the time that Jesus will return –

Until that time comes –

From now on – your Christian life is going to include unceasing conflict

These are marching orders.

We are in a battle – a spiritual battle

And for the believer - If we are ignorant – we don't fully understand spiritual warfare or simply ignoring the fact that we are in the midst of spiritual warfare, the truth is that there is a very good chance that we are not winning the battle.

There is a pretty good chance that the enemy is tossing us around –

We ignore the source and focus on people, on relationships, on circumstances – that's the problem!!!

I remember hearing a story of a mental hospital – that had a test to see if their patients were good enough to be discharged or if there was progress being made in their treatment.

They would put a patient in a room – with a plugged up sink and a mop.

The faucet would be left open –

If the patient shut the faucet off – progress.

But if the patient focus was grabbing the mop and mopping the water that was overflowing from the sink – they knew that more work was needed.

And I think this is a very good illustration of the walk of the believer.

Because many times – we don't go to the source

We spend a lot of time battling in spiritual things on our own.

Trying to rely on the flesh and our own strength

Without power and authority from above.

And so – we spend our Christian lives mopping up the water without turning off the faucet.

Spiritual warfare is real and it is true.

And so Paul exhorts us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might

Paul doesn't say to the believer– “You need to cultivate strength and power”

He is saying exactly the opposite –

The Christian must not trust in his or her own power.

Because if we do – the enemy will succeed in overwhelming and overcoming you and me

Once again – you have heard me say this many times.

God's commands are God's promises.

God is not going to command us to do something if He doesn't enable us and empower us to do them.

The moment that Paul writes, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might

The believer can rest assured that His strength and His power is available to him or her.

This is not something we are going to have to beg for or cry out for

He wants to give it to us.

In the Old Testament –

As the Children of Israel are about to enter the Promised Land

The Lord tells Joshua - Be strong and of good courage

Because it was going to be Joshua who was going to lead them into the promised land and they were going to have to conquer the people who didn't want to leave.

"I will give you the strength. I will impart the power to you"

So the first thing we have to understand in spiritual warfare is that God's strength and God's power are available to us by the Holy Spirit.

Life is difficult. We face hazards and challenges.

The believer – is supposed to be strong - spiritually strong, mentally strong, emotionally strong - more and more capable as a believer.

That doesn't mean we don't struggle, but God's plan for you and me is strength.

And He's the One Who does it.

We don't strengthen ourself.

Be strengthened by the Lord and His vast strength - the strength that Paul said is working in us back in chapter 3, verse 20.

We're made strong by walking with God.

As we walk worthy, God is able to fortify us and do His powerful work through us in the city and the home, where we work.

Isaiah says, "Those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength." It happens as we exercise faith.

We're also made strong, the Bible says, in our weakness. As we surrender to God's will, as we allow His grace to operate in us, we become stronger and stronger.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

The prepared believer – knows that God is the source of power and that God is the source of protection.

And so when Paul says – put on the whole armor.

He is saying, “Take and use everything that God has made available to you”

We are to put it on – once and for all.

Unlike a police officer who might take off his or her vest after the shift is over –

The believer never takes his or her armor off

This is something that we wear at all times

The implication being – once we put it on – it stays on

Because spiritual warfare is not temporal

Spiritual warfare is combat

And the armor of God is supposed to be our lifelong companion

Because the armor of God gives us supernatural protection

It is the armor of God that protects us from falling and presents us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

I had you make a note of the phrase – that you may be able to stand

“Standing firm requires effort. It does not automatically happen.”

We have to understand what’s going on - on the spiritual level and take our position and duty seriously.

We need to recognize that the Devil’s plan is to devour anyone he can.

His life goal, his job, his hobby, his side-gig, his five year plan is to destroy your life if he can.

And he has lots of resources at his disposal.

But we have more.

We have greater.

We have the splendid armor of God

- the very armor He wears Himself.

But it will not help us if we don’t put it on.

Standing firm means we hold a critical position in a time of attack

We do it now

Until Jesus comes back – we are in a critical position and we must stand our ground.

[Rev 2:24-25 NKJV] 24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 "But **hold fast what you have till I come.**

This is the same expression that Paul is using in his letter to the saints in Ephesus.

Hold fast / stand your ground – how long? Until I come

Once again – I want to make sure that we don't lose the context of where Paul is writing this from –

He is in a Roman prison

He is chained to a Roman guard

He is awaiting his trial before Nero

And there is a very good chance that as Paul is watching this Roman guard – he is observing his armor.

And the Holy Spirit uses it as an in dept bible study on how to stand against the methods and the schemes of the enemy.

Satan schemes are built around two broad things

Deception and stealth

He is a promotor of lies

If God loves you – how do you explain what you are going through right now

How do you explain the disease

How do you explain the setbacks

Satan want to make the believer ignorant of God's will – we see this with his lies

Satan wants to make us impatient with God's will – we see this with suffering

Satan wants us to act in a way that independent of God's will – we see this with pride

"I don't want God's way – I want my way"

The moment we don't want God's way and we want our way – we know it is an issue with pride

Satan wants the believer to lose sight of who and what we are in Christ – remember, that is what this letter is all about.

This is why understanding God's will is so important for the believer

Because His will is that we be saved

His will is that we walk with Him

That we walk in His love, light and wisdom

That we have abundant life in Christ

That we may understand that His grace is sufficient – even in times of suffering.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places].

This is a very important verse to grasp.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood – even when we think that this is who we are wrestling with.

It is my husband

It is my wife

It is my boss

It is my pastor

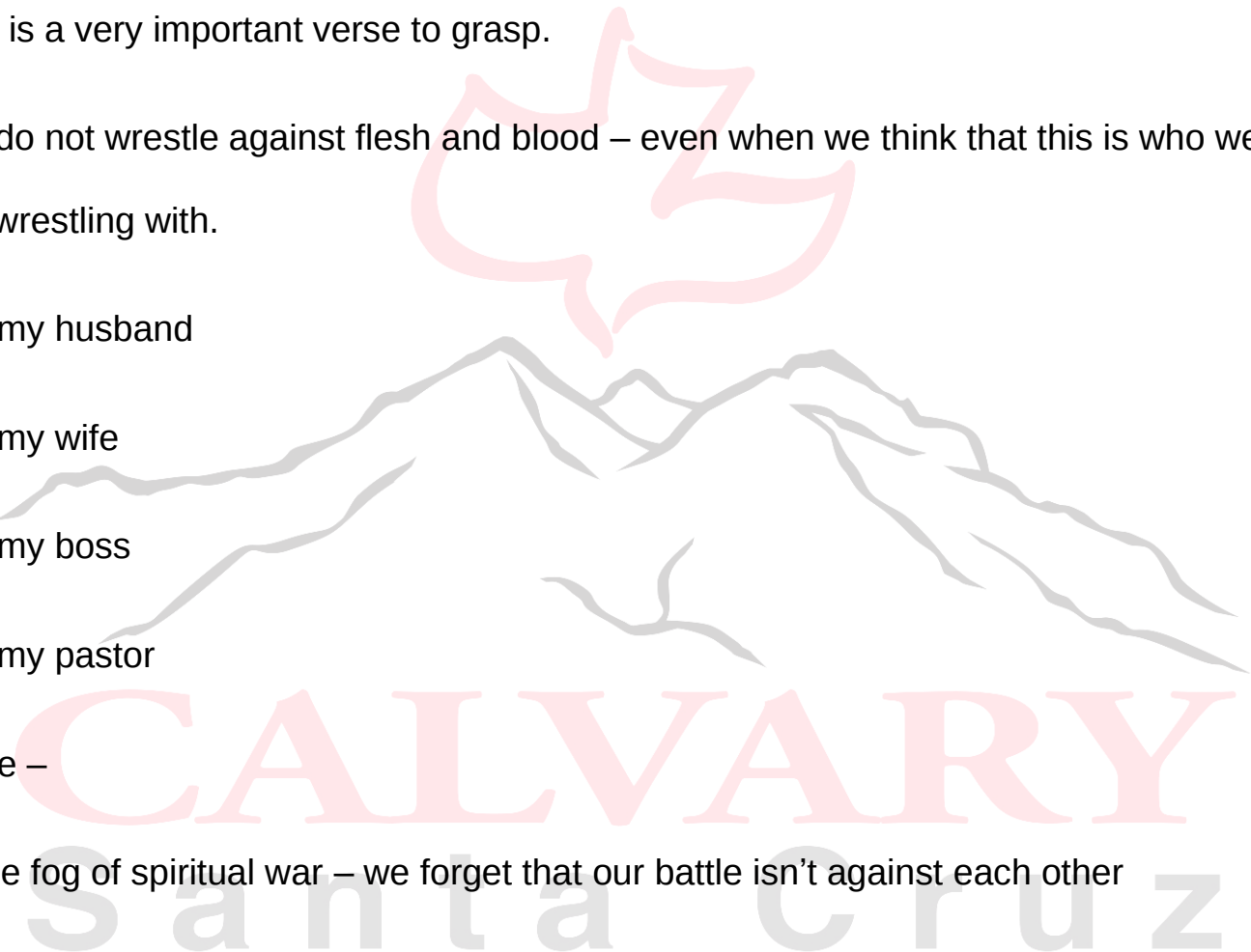
Nope –

In the fog of spiritual war – we forget that our battle isn't against each other

It isn't against human beings

We don't just start wrestling against flesh and blood

We have One who holds us and keeps us and protects us eternally –



[2Co 10:3-5 NKJV] 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Paul wants us to understand that if we stand strong in the Lord – in the power of His might

We can pray to our King for His work of deliverance and redemption and healing

He is the one who can pull down those strongholds

Our most powerful weapon is the Word of God and the Spirit of God

And over the next few weeks – as we look at the weapons that Paul is going to mention in this chapter – most of them are defensive

In other words – almost everything that God gives us to wear –

It is so that we can mount a campaign against the enemy – it is to defend against the enemy

And the one offensive weapon that we are given in our arsenal – is His word.

It was Jesus' weapon of choice

This spiritual battle is supernatural

This spiritual battle is personal - the word "wrestling" means this is a personal contest

the word means a face to face struggle

"mano a mano," hand to hand combat

It's the picture of two locked in each other's grip, swaying back and forth as they push against one another looking for an opening

And the text makes it clear that all believers are in the fight

We are all in the struggle

And we are not going to make it – unless we put on the armor of God

Paul wants to help us understand that the stakes are high

Apart from Christ, apart from His Spirit, apart from His word – we are no match for Satan and his demons.

Because the bible says – that apart from Christ, everyone lies in the lap of the wicked one. 1 John 5:19

For nonbelievers – Satan wants them to stay nonbelievers.

For believers – Satan wants us to live miserable defeated Christian lives.

Principalities

Powers

Rulers of darkness

Spiritual hosts of wickedness

They are all around us.

A new Christian might say, “Hey, I’m not ready for the front lines.”

But we are ready because it’s the Lord’s strength, the Lord’s equipment, the Lord’s strategy, the Lord’s power working through us.

We don’t have to be afraid of spiritual warfare.

But we should be realistic about it.

Christian: Are you ready to get in the fight? Put on your gear, go where you’re commanded, stand in strength and victory and confidence that the Lord will do what He has promised in you and through you.

His power and His might gives us victory over those things that we begin to fall prey to

Strength comes in Him

AMEN

Let’s pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

- No satanic assault is stronger than God
- No satanic attack can penetrate God's armor
- No satanic force – can defeat God's work
- No satanic evil cant prevail over the prayers of the saints

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

