

Today's Message: **THE REALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN "WALK": Thoughts on the Armor of God**
Ephesians 6:10-12
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Review: Up until now, Paul has discussed the ideal situation of being a Christian – benefits abound for those who are “in Christ”, with a focus on “walking” in the Spirit. Paul now drops the ideal and addresses the reality of evil as an active force and seeks to motivate his readers to make real – even in the midst of evil – all that the letter has been saying about their identity in Christ.¹

Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Introduction: Paul attempts to arouse to action by using battle imagery and language. The OT and the book of Revelation are full of battle imagery and the majority of this in Ephesians is from Isaiah – But there is also one other famous statement is in the “War Scroll” found in Qumran – A battle plan for the end time in which a priest chosen especially for the occasion is to give the speech. The language of this scroll is not metaphorical, for the Essenes believed that a literal war would occur in which their own camp would be besieged, but God and his angelic hosts would join them against the nations and the devil and his hosts. The sons of light – the Essenes- would defeat the sons of darkness.

“Be strong and valiant; be warriors!... Be brave and strong for the battle of God! For this day is the time of the battle of God!... The God of Israel lifts his hand in his marvelous might against all the spirits of wickedness... For the God of Israel has called the sword against all of the nations, and he will do mighty deeds by the saints of his people. (1 QM 15.8-16.1)

We are going to observe the three imperatives in this text –

Be strong, put on the full armor of God and stand – the what, how and why...²

WHAT?

1. *Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might* (vs. 10)

Translation: “Finally be strengthened in the Lord, that is, in the might of His strength.”

Paul wants to motivate Christians for the battle with evil.³

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength (Eph. 1:18-19)

Knowing must move to using – “knowing is half the battle.” – G.I. Joe

The “knowing” of this power comes from the first half of the book – Doing the best we can to be good theologians – following the process of good sound theology

1. **Be strengthened** – The idea of becoming capable – to be made strong – passive

¹ Snodgrass, Klyne. The NIV Application Commentary, p. 335.

² Hoehner, Harold. Ephesians - 822

³ Ibid. 336.

Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, **but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,** ²¹ **being fully persuaded** that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:18-21)

This power does NOT come from the believer but an external force – As does salvation come from the LORD so is our ability to succeed and live a life abundant "in Christ".

2. In the power of His might –

This is supernatural power that is found in the inherent strength of God Himself no you or I.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength (Eph. 1:18-19)

HOW?

II. Put on God's Armor (vs. 11a)

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:20-24)

The full armor of a Roman foot soldier – Paul's vivid description of the armor may stem from the fact that while writing this letter he was in prison being guarded by Roman soldiers. (Acts 28:16, 20)

This is not a physical battle but a spiritual one.... I cannot help but think that the proper armor must be worn for the proper battle – DAVID.

Israel's issue with armor and weapons – PHYSICAL ARMOR vs. SPIRITUAL ARMOR

Samson becomes Judge 1083/ Saul Becomes King 1050

When new gods were chosen, then war was in the gates.

Was shield or spear to be seen, among forty thousand in Israel?(Judges 5:8)

*And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. **16** And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. **17** And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual; **18** another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.*

*Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears." **20** But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle, **21** and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads. **22** So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them. **23** And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash. (I Samuel 13:15-23)*

Israel was in no condition to conquer anyone. The army had no iron weapons, and there were no facilities for turning their tools into weapons. In fact, if an Israelite wanted to sharpen his tools... (not weapons just tools for farming) he had to pay a Philistine blacksmith to do it because the Philistines had a carefully guarded monopoly on iron and blacksmithing. And they charged high prices for sharpening farm implements. The Philistines tight control over the technology, along with their surprise raids, demoralized the Israelites and kept them in subjection.⁴

The Plot Thickens

⁴ NIV Life Application Bible - Judges

David and Goliath – I Samuel 17: 4-9

⁴And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. ⁵He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. ⁶And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. ⁷The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. ⁸He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. ⁹If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants.

1. Focus on the Technology of Goliath's Weaponry
2. Assumption that Israel are already servants of Canaan

David and Saul's Armor... I Samuel 17: 38-40

³⁸Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, ³⁹and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David put them off. ⁴⁰Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.

David's Speech to Goliath... I Samuel 17: 45-47

⁴⁵Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."

The Tables Turn... I Samuel 17: 50-51

⁴⁸When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

⁵⁰So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. ⁵¹Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

David and Goliath's Sword... I Samuel 21:9

The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one." David said, "There is none like it; give it to me." THE POINT: The full armor of God has been tested – but not by you or I, but by God himself.

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. (Isaiah 11: 1-5)

Awake, awake, Zion, clothe yourself with strength! Put on your garments of splendor, Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again. Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, Daughter Zion, now a captive. For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed." For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them. "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD. "For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock" declares the LORD. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I." How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns! Isaiah 52:1-7

The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm achieved salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and

wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak. According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due. From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along. "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD (ISAIAH 59: 15-20)

WHY?

III. STAND! (vs. 11)

The one that stands is not pushed around, but firmly holds his or her position – This is different than “walking”. Stand – to denote that which lasts and is stable, no subject to change or decay.⁵

Stand against the schemes of the devil – this word represents, “procedure, process, method, strategy”. The enemy has a plan to ruin your life here on earth. God promises to finish in you what he started (Phil 1.6), however, the enemy wants to physically kill you in the meantime.

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood – “struggle” – our wrestle – this is up close and personal combat – but also denotes the idea of holding one’s place. We don’t go looking for the battle – the battle will come to us. The devil prowling around is compared to our being ready for his attack by holding our place – we are on the DEFENSE not the offense.

It is a struggle with reference to us – but is not a human struggle but a spiritual one. That is why we are called to stand and NOT attack.

Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:6-7)

We are standing against

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

“the cosmic potentates of this darkness” – Only used here in the entire Bible – appears in Jewish literature in the second century as world rulers of the darkness (T. Sol. 8:2, 18:2)

“Spiritual wickedness in heavenly realms” – not a new foe but a further description of the enemy

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.” (Luke 22: 31-34)

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

Last thoughts:

Whose power and might are you attempting to be strong in?

What are we actually putting on? We are putting on the character of God?

Are we realizing that we are called to STAND – not necessarily attack anything – Hold our ground.

Who are you standing for?

We understand the imperatives of what the responsibilities are to address the spiritual war – we also know that God and his character are actually the pieces of armor we are to stand in.

So what equipment are we to STAND in.....?

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⁵ Hoehner, Harold. Ephesians, 822.

[ONWARD CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2021](#)

1. LIVESTREAM ON FACEBOOK LIVE—We will continue to livestream our service on Pastor Gary's Facebook Live and it will be available on our website (www.onwardchurch.org) and our YouTube channel (see below for link)

Gary's FACEBOOK LIVE link: <https://www.facebook.com/gary.stump.3>

Onward Church YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSHetYKObsv3tYGbNtwgnOg>

2. YOUTH GROUP—TONIGHT 6-8PM at the Hartman's

3. WEDNESDAY LADIES BIBLE STUDY—9:30-11:15am @ Kathy Stump's (12928 Whitehaven Lane, Fishers, IN 46038). Ladies will be studying *Gideon* with Priscilla Shirer. The study books will be able to be purchased for \$13 at the first meeting. For more info contact: Kathy Stump 317-292-7632 or Laurie Abell 317-432-6851.

4. 2022 ONWARD TO JERUSALEM BIBLE STUDY TOUR—OCTOBER 18-29, 2022. Our 2021 tour has been rescheduled to these new dates. Cost of the tour will be approximately \$3,800 per person (double occupancy). A deposit of \$500 will hold your spot. For more information, please write Pastor Gary at gary@garystump.org.