

Same Old You Week 5

Engaging and Winning The Daily Battle

READING THE TEXT

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NIV)

The Armor of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 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. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

PREACHING THE TEXT

Paul begins this closing section of Ephesians with the word; ***“finally.”*** In other words, Paul has one more thing to communicate before he closes this letter. Paul warned the readers that Satan was going to attack them and he told believers how they could withstand Satan's attacks. He opens this section by stating;

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

This was not the first time Paul spoke about being strong in God's mighty power. Listen to how Paul begins this letter.

Ephesians 1:19-21

19 ... (God's) incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

This power for us who believe...this power that raised Christ from the dead...this power that is far above all rule, authority, power and dominion is the same power that Paul tell us to be strong in when he says in 6:10 "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. So Paul begins and ends Ephesians by imploring us to be strong in God's power.

Verse 11 tells us that we are to remain strong in The Lord so that we can take a stand against the devil.

THE BASIS FOR FIGHTING AND WINNING

If we want to win the battle against Satan and his demons we need more power and more authority than Satan. We do not have this power and authority to defeat the devil apart from God. But because the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work inside of every believer we have enough spiritual power and resources to win the spiritual battle.

1 John 4:4

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world,"

We have overcome the power of Satan not because we are so awesome. We have overcome the power of Satan because the one who lives inside of every believer is greater than all the demons of hell

combined. We win the battle by bringing the power of The Holy Spirit to bare

ILLUSTRATION: WEARING THE GENERAL'S UNIFORM

Are any of you familiar with the original A-Team series? It is a chick-flick from the 80s. Kidding! It is an action series in which a team of former military people go all over the world helping people in crisis.

In one episode the team needed to break into an army base and take a look at some files in order to get the goods on a crooked military officer. They could try to barge their way onto the base and into the office, but they would not have the power to get past all the firepower on the army base.

So one of the team members snuck the uniform of a General and put it on. When he wore the clothing of the general with the war decorations hanging from his chest this guy suddenly had access to all the military power of the base and he had access to anything he needed. They had access to the base because they wore the rank of someone greater than themselves.**end illustration.**

We are in a battle with a greater power. But when we clothe ourselves with Jesus Christ we are able to get things done that could not otherwise be accomplished apart from him.

That is why Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6:11 that we must;
¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

If you reverse engineer this statement we realize that if we do not put on the full armor of God we will not be able to take a stand against the devil's schemes. Thus the difference between winning the spiritual battle

and losing the spiritual battle is whether we are strong in the Lord. And to be strong in the Lord means that we put on the armor of God.

THE FULL ARMOR IS GOD'S OWN POWER

What is the full armor of God that allows us to be strong in the Lord? It is God and His own power that is at work in us. The passages that follow tell us how that power of God is expressed and used and applied. But make no mistake. If we do not use God's own power and authority against the devil, then the devil will outrank us and win the battle. We can not use weapons of the flesh. We can not argue philosophy or appeal to the devils feelings or normative principles in the world. And we can not rely on techniques.

¹² **...our struggle is not against flesh and blood,**

PEOPLE ARE NOT THE ENEMY

One of Satan's strategies is to make us think people are the enemy. Some consider people who do not do things the way I like them done as the enemy. Others think of those who do not know Jesus as the enemy.

If we are fooled into believing that other people are the enemy, then we are going either turn against a fellow Christian or hate our mission field.

SATAN'S PROPAGANDA WAR

Think of someone with whom you hold a grudge. If that person is a Christian and if the issue does not involve heresy or intentional sin against you, then you have been hit by Satan's propaganda war or perhaps your own pride. The devil has tricked you to believe in your heart that one of your fellow soldiers who is on your side and wears the same uniform is your enemy.

Additionally, If you have no love or urgency for the lost, the Devil may have tricked you into hating both the sin and the sinner.

The lost are not the enemy, the devil who holds people captive is the enemy. We need God's power to break the hold that Satan has on our minds. Satan has us fighting the wrong enemy so that he can remain unseen and unchallenged. We need the power of Christ to free our minds so that we don't see other people as the enemy.

Our war is not with people. Our war is:
...against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

These are the same ***rulers and authority, power and dominion*** listed in 1:18 over which Jesus Christ has more power and authority.

1 John 4 reaffirms this idea that the reason we have the victory over Satan is because God himself through Jesus Christ has the victory over Satan. And the Holy Spirit lives inside of us in order to walk out that victory.
¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Because our enemy is the devil and the only power and authority that can beat Satan is God himself put on the full armor of God. I want to remind you that this call to put on the full armor of God is simply a reminder to put on the power of God himself.

Put on God's own power because the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead lives in you and also has more authority and power

than Satan. Therefore the greatest weapon we have in fighting Satan and his forces is to put on God as our armor. It is not that God has armor for us to put on. This is really a metaphor or word picture for what it looks like to clothe ourselves with Christ himself.

God is our armor. God himself is our strong tower and refuge. God himself is our covering and protection. He is our help in our time of need.

Techniques are useless unless they are backed up by the power of God. There is not right way of praying against the devil unless you have the power of God with you as you pray. There is no way to quote scripture to Satan unless the Holy Spirit makes that scripture come alive and make it effective for us and for chasing off the devil.

The difference in the spiritual war that we all face is the difference between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh. When we walk in the Spirit we are clothing ourselves with God's own power.

QUID PRO QUO WITH THE DEVIL

Some people believe that if they just leave the devil alone and don't think about him then they will not be attacked. But here is the truth according to God's own words.

1 Peter 5:8

Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ for salvation then like it or not, Satan hates you and will make war against you. The only decision is

whether you want to win or lose the battle. If you don't take a stand, you will lose ground.

So today we want to make this very practical. What does this war look like? What do the attacks look like? And what is it like to walk in God's own power to win the victory?

THE BATTLE IS FOR THE MIND

The battle is for the minds of men and women. Much of Satan's time and energy in my opinion is spent on influencing the thinking and mindset of people. If you control the minds of people you control the whole person.

We know the devil is out to get us and the primary way that he will attack each of us is to get us to think the way he wants us to think. That is why Paul told us to take captive every thought. That is also why we must have the mind of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

2 Timothy 2:26

22 Flee the evil desires of youth (flesh) and pursue righteousness,

faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments (worldly mind) ,because you know they produce quarrels.

From these passages we can see that the two most common means of temptation and attack are the battle of worldly vs. godly philosophies and temptations of the flesh other wise known as body appetites.

These are both an attack on the mind. Our mind controls both our thoughts and our actions. If Satan can get control of our thinking and our mind then he can defeat us or move us out of his way.

Let's briefly talk about three strategies that Satan uses to control our mind. Satan's three playing fields are the word, the flesh and demonic powers.

THREE STRATEGIES OF SATAN

World

The strategy of Satan is to get people to buy into philosophies that make people doubt or disobey the word of God. So when people in this world say that you need to *"do what is right for you."* That is an example of a worldly philosophy and propaganda war of Satan. It sounds kind of like a moralism and something good. Yet God destroyed the world with a flood because people did what was right in their own eyes.

The only way for a Christian to make an ethical decision is to discern what will please the Lord. It is not about what is right for us. It is about what is right for God. When Satan has millions of people including all the movies and shows and news programs repeating the phrase; "do what is right for you," his strategy begins to take hold of our minds. And instead of taking

the time to discern what God wants in every area of our lives, we do things Satan's way by doing what is 'right for us.' The fall out of just this one propaganda lie is that if followed, millions of people will simply do what is comfortable when God might be calling us to do something that is hard or requires suffering or sacrifice.

Flesh

The strategy of the flesh is fought when Satan takes that which is pleasurable and good and tempts us to use the pleasures of this world outside of God's plan and guidelines.

Alcohol, medicine, sex, recreation are misused and turn into addictive behavior or used in a way to replace God and His work in our lives. So when we need peace instead of seeking the peace of God we go to the bottle to take the edge off. When we need companionship instead of waiting for God's perfect plan and taking advantage of God's presence to meet our needs, we damage our soul by throwing ourselves into sexual bonding which will damage our soul. We are not designed to bond so deeply and then just move on.

The devil makes sure everything that is a craving of the flesh is easily accessible and their misuse is seen as morally neutral in our society.

Devil

Lastly there is the strategy of occult activity and direct attacks from the enemy of any kind just because Satan hates you.

Some people are tempted to use the occult for a feeling of power. They believe they will be able to use occult powers to get what they want. But in the end all those in the occult find out they were played by Satan.

They do not have power, they actually have been walking on Satan's flypaper. And now they are really stuck.

ANSWER IS OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST (The General's Clothing)

The answer to this battle for the mind is two fold. First we must have right power and rank. When we clothe ourselves in Christ and walk in the Spirit we use the rank of Jesus Christ to fight the spiritual battle. And we know that Jesus always wins that fight.

The second answer to the battle is the know your identity in Christ. Satan lies about who you are and why you are here. We must know our identity in Christ in order to stand against Satan's lies. Knowing and walking in truth will set us free.

(John 8:32)"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

According to the Freedom in Christ Ministry; It is Jesus' promise to you — the promise that you live triumphantly. But what keeps you from really walking in the joy of the Lord? The powers of darkness attack us daily. But,... you can have the power to conquer them by knowing who you are in Christ.

HOW TO GET RID OF THE DEVIL

James 4:7 (ESV)

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

2 Corinthians 10 (ESV)

vs 5 and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Doing things God's way and trusting Him to meet our needs as well

as taking captive thoughts that satan puts in our mind....these are the two practices that most often will defeat the schemes of Satan. Further, clothing ourselves with Christ and walking in the power of The Spirit will give us the inner strength to resist the devil and flee from that which is evil.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Do you have the right power for the battle that you will face?
2. Are you wearing the generals clothing and walking in your identity in Christ?
3. Are you taking captive thoughts that come into your mind that might have been placed there by either the world's philosophies or by Satan himself?
4. Do you believe in your heart that people certain people are your enemy? If so, how does that affect the way you minister to others?

SAMPLE PRAYER

Personal Prayer of Protection and Warfare:

Heavenly Father, in Jesus name I pray that you will fill me with your Spirit, your strength and your truth. Allow me today to consider life according to the mind of Christ. Alert me when that which I read, hear, and consider do not line up with the word of truth.

Grant me the righteousness of Christ so that I can live in the holiness that is honoring to Jesus Christ and possible because of what Christ imputed to me. Keep me alert and help me to see when an ambush of the enemy is underway and give me the grace and wisdom to respond well.

Grant me the faith so that I walk in confidence, knowing that what you have called me to is never too great for Jesus Christ, who lives in me through the Holy Spirit and who alone by His power promised to build His church against which the gates of hell will not prevail.

Remind my heart that I have been saved from the grasp of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and I have been adopted through Christ and transferred to the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Grant me a thirst for the word of God and a great hunger to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the humility to do things God's way. Bring to mind the things that you want me to pray about and take action upon.

Grant me to the grace and strength to walk out my salvation in fear and trembling to the very end. And cause me to care about my fellow brothers and sisters in the faith who undergo trials for their faith all over the world.

Advance your kingdom today through your church and through me and may your will be done today just as it is done in your presence in the heavenly realms.