

Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6: 10 - 14

12/8/02

Intro

- Thank you to everyone who helped with the landscaping. So much was done so quickly. There is only a little more to do.

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In these verses today we begin the last section of the book of Ephesians, and Paul begins with the summary of all that he wants us to know about spiritual victory, and then gives us the way to be victorious spiritually.

Life is a struggle; that much we know. And though we dream of a life free of problems, difficulties, and challenges that sometimes go to the very core of our being,

How do learn anything? We learn through struggles.

Illus – How do we learn math, or how do we learn piano? We learn by struggling. Without struggles, we stop growing.

But our most important struggle is spiritual. This is an area it seems that little is known about, but in these verses we gain a great insight into spiritual warfare and the keys for spiritual victory.

I. Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might.

A. That is the focus of spiritual victory.

- Some like to focus on demons and darkness. But God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.
- The enemy would like nothing more than to keep the focus on him, that suits him just fine.

B. Be strong in the Lord.

- In many ways, we live in a sissified culture. The Alan Aldas of the world have taught is that we should be sensitive and get in touch with our touchy, feely side.
- The result is that it's all about me, me, me. How are you feeling? Are you comfortable?
- The next result is a theme of whining and complaining that permeates our lives.

Illus – Oh, can I have a latte macchiato with slim milk; made from the Black Tiger coffee beans from the 3,500 foot elevation of the NE mountains of Costa Rica, light on the foam, and a dash of cinnamon? Oh, I'm sorry; you didn't drip that espresso in the steamed milk right.

C. There are people who are strong.

- They know their calling and know that challenges are part of victory.

Illus – Caleb, whom the Lord honored because of his courage, was given his choice of land for him and his descendants. "Behold, I am 85 years old and as strong as the day I spied out the land. Give me the hill country where the Anakim live..."

D. How can we be strong in the Lord?

- Put on the full armor of God.
- So you can stand firm in the evil day.

Illus – What if those in special forces were only given long johns to ear into battle? The armor is vital to victory.

II. We need to know against whom we are fighting.

- A. If you find yourself battling against flesh and blood, you're fighting the wrong battle.
- B. Our real battle is against the forces of the enemy.
- At the same time, Jesus said, "In this world you will have many troubles, but let your heart take courage. I have overcome the world." John 16:33
 - Many people like to focus on the demonic world. We should not be ignorant of its nature, but nor should we give it undue credit.

Illus – Some people think there is a demon behind every problem. I knew a man once who seriously believed that his carburetor had a demon.

Illus – In Africa, almost all problems are explained as being the result of a demon. But the problem with demons is that they are too convenient.

- **If everything is about demons, then we are not accountable for our actions.**
- **Let no one say when he is being tempted ...**
James 1.

C. Jesus is the strong man now.

- When Jesus was casting out demons, the Pharisees accused him of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub.

Illus – Matthew 12:24ff Who is the strong man of my house now?

III. The enemy is well organized.

A. Our battle is against principalities.

- These are powers over regions.

Illus- Daniel 10 The angel was sent by God to Daniel, but was resisted until Michael came to his aid.

B. Our battle is against powers.

- This refers to the power to keep people in bondage, the power of oppressive sin.
- Some people wonder if they are saved because they have long-term battles with sin.
 - The key is that it is a battle. You haven't given your self over to it.
 - Paul is saying that there is going to be a battle over our spiritual well being.
 - We know that it is a long-term problem; we need to make longer term decisions.

C. Our battle is against rulers of darkness.

- There is a world system that is influenced by darkness, or forces of spiritual evil.

D. Our battle is against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

- Those who would name the name of God and yet intend to destroy and deceive.

Conclusion

**Stand firm. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
The greatest weapon is the truth.**