

Introduction:

- Review
 - We are in a fight. A spiritual fight. It is not against each other but against spiritual power. Therefore I have to be vigilant and alert to the spiritual dangers that are around me.
 - We must remember we are learning to fight this spiritual battle as we go. When you have an enemy you learn to fight or to live as a slave. Learn to fight or to live defeated.
 - Last one standing wins.
 - All who overcome are heroes. No one who is in the fight thinks of himself as a hero, just doing his part.
- The Apostle Paul understood that we are in a spiritual fight.
 - *"We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ."* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5, NLT)
 - *"A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike."* (Ephesians 6:10-19, NLT)
 - Peter taught: *"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."* (1 Peter 5:8, NLT)

I. The Battle is Real And The Battle Is Spiritual

- A. The battle I am speaking of today is spiritual and our enemy is real.
 1. The enemy's goal is to destroy the image of God in humanity, in us. So anything in us or in others that does not look like God is the result of influence sin on our fallen world. And it is a reflection of demonically influenced or occupied places in our lives, families, cities or regions.
 2. Our job as the church is to reverse the curse. We do that with a heart of love using the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus the conflict/war. Hell is not

accepting of God's ways in the earth. Therefore our adversary seeks to own the gates of our lives, our cities and our nation.

3. Check out his promise to Abraham just after preparing to sacrifice Isaac. *"blessing I will bless you, ... and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies."* (Genesis 22:17, NKJV)

- a) Gate, Heb. "The šā'ar "gate" was of course the means of controlled access to a walled city. The city gate was extremely important in the life of the people, for social, administrative, and business intercourse took place there." ¹ Take note of what is controlled at the gate. I.e. Samson tore off Philistine gates. Absalom - took the gate before leading his rebellion against David.
- b) Abrahams descendants are to possess the gates. It is important that we control the gates to our lives, our homes, city, nation.
- c) Heroes are born in the fight to control the gate of their influence.

B. The strategy of the enemy:

1. 2 Cor 10:2-6 *The world is unprincipled. It's dog-eat-dog out there! The world doesn't fight fair. But we don't live or fight our battles that way—never have and never will. The tools of our trade aren't for marketing or manipulation, but they are for demolishing that entire massively corrupt culture. We use our powerful God-tools for smashing warped philosophies, tearing down barriers erected against the truth of God, fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ. Our tools are ready at hand for clearing the ground of every obstruction and building lives of obedience into maturity.* Message They demolish stronghold.

Strongholds start with.

- a) Imaginations - spiritual arrogance, pride, human reasoning or thoughts. These come about by a way of life, traditions, life experiences.
- b) Arguments - philosophies, arguments. These are mindsets that keep truth out and lies in. Come by way of education. What we are taught. I.E. Mindset of the south, inner city, the wealthy educated, etc.
- c) Stronghold - fortified place of human reasoning. Keep people from truth or from a knowledge of God-ignorance. Prevent people from obeying the truth – rebellion
 - (1) Mind set is a mind already settled on a set of beliefs. Therefore it resists change.
 - (2) Mind set – is a thought process of a group of people. It requires a strong anointing to break defensive barriers and overcome PRIDE associated with a way of thinking.

2. The Goal of the Strategies:

¹ Austel, H. J. (1999). 2437 שַׁעַר. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (electronic ed., p. 945). Chicago: Moody Press.

- a) Guard the territory from Christ's truth – void of truth
 - b) Keep people in spiritual ignorance – void of the Word
 - c) Influence the governing leadership – void of righteousness
 - d) Oppose Christ's ministers
 - e) Turn the hearts away from Christ and His Truth
- C. Our enemies as listed by Paul. There is a hierarchy. They rule illegally and have a direct effect on the people living in their assigned areas. Most people are totally unaware of this. Therefore they unknowingly give in to the influence of these demonic spirits and moral decay begins to set in.
1. Principalities and powers of the unseen world
 - a) Arche - dominion. These spirit are often assigned to governmental leaders. Once the leader is conquered the evil spirits get right to work to enact laws that prohibit any further advance of the Kingdom of God.
 - (1) Ie. Dan. 10:12 and 13. Angel was opposed for 21 while trying to respond to Daniels prayers. Prince of Persia influence Nebuchadnezzar (three Hebrew children) Darius (Daniel in lions den).
 - b) Exousia - authority. Carries both the connotation of supernatural and natural government.
 - (1) These would be the spirits that work through men
 2. Powers of this dark world
 - a) Kosmokrato - mighty powers in the dark world. "This rare and late word is used for the gods, and in astrology for the planets, as heavenly rulers. In Eph. 6:12 it is one of the terms used to describe the evil forces with which believers have to contend. It denotes the force and comprehensiveness of their designs." Ie. they commonly afflict people: deception, fear, rebellion, infirmity, lust, etc.
 - b) These "world-rulers" are limited to "this darkness" here on earth.²
 3. Evil Spirits in heavenly places
 - a) poneros pneumatikos – evil spiritual breath in heavenly places.
 - b) Eph 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*NKT
- II. **Jesus Has Won And We Are Spiritually Armed**
- A. Jesus won the victory!
 1. *"In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross."* (Colossians 2:15, NLT)
 2. One of the aspects of the mission of Jesus was to destroy the works of the devil 1 John 3:8 "... *But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.*" (1 John 3:8, NLT)

² Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Eph 6:12). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

- B. He has armed us! Ephesians 6 with spiritual armor. 2 Cor 10 with spiritual weapons. 1 Peter 5:6 and James 4:7 humility to God.
1. Truth - *alétheia* is "that which has certainty and force": *alétheia* is "that on which one can rely": a. as trustworthiness We put on the belt of truth. It is the foundation of our armor.
 - a) *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.* NKJV Jn 17:17
 - b) Holy Spirit called Spirit of truth. Jn 14:17, 16:13
 - c) Ps 85:11 *Truth shall spring out of the earth, And righteousness shall look down from heaven.* NLT Hell is getting hammered from both sides. Jesus sprang up out of the earth and The Throne of Righteousness and Justice preside from above. We have been raised up with Jesus and made to sit with Him in heavenly places.
 - d) Truth is opposite of lies. Lies put one in bondage but the Truth is what sets us free.
 - e) Lies manifest the demonic realm truth ushers us into a life and life abundantly.
 2. Righteousness- Breastplate.
 - a) Ps 89:14 *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.* NLT
 - b) Prov 13:6 *Righteousness guards him whose way is blameless, But wickedness overthrows the sinner.* NLT
 - c) When Abraham believed it was credited to him as righteousness (James 2:23). NOTE: connection between righteousness and faith.
 - d) *The Messiah as the Righteous.* The Messiah is righteous because his whole nature and action conform to God's will. He is often called "our righteousness." Applied to him are Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 9:9,
 - e) Ro 4 Abraham made righteous by faith. So are we.
 - f) Out of the heart come all the issues of life. So we make the heart good the whole man will be good. That is why it is the breastplate the condition of the guards the whole of the man. We must know that we are the righteousness of God in Christ.
 3. Peace - Gospel of peace.
 - a) Our Kingdom is ruled by the Prince of Peace.
 - (1) Peace has to do with confidence.
 - (2) Peace has to do with the overthrow of fear. If you know in whom you have believed you live in peace. 2 Tim 1:12
 - b) Peace as fruit of spirit. Erine - the state of peace, the absence of war.
 - (1) Shalom - basic sense is not the narrower one of "peace" but the wider one of "well-being."³
 4. Faith - Shield of faith. Faith extinguishes the fiery darts.
 - a) Formally in the NT, as in Greek usage, *pisteúō* denotes reliance, trust, and belief.

³ Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

- b) 1 Jn 5:4-5 *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* NLT
- c) 1 Peter 5:9 *Stand firm against him (roaring lion), and be strong in your faith.*
- d) Faith was key to Abraham, Hebrews 11, Mark 11:22-24.
- 5. Salvation - helmet of salvation
 - a) Sozo - to keep, to save, to free, to heal, to deliver.
 - b) Ps 3:8 *Salvation belongs to the Lord.* Salvation is Yeshua! Deliverance!...from what ever you need saving from.
 - c) Rev 7:10 *Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*
- 6. Word - it is our sword
 - a) Will not return void, but accomplish what it was sent to do. Is 55:11
 - b) God watches over His word to perform it. Jer 1:12
 - c) We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Ro 12:1-3.
 - d) Eph 5:26 we are washed with the Word.
- 7. Prayer
 - a) Praying all kinds of prayers all the time. Eph 6:18 *Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.* NLT
 - b) IE. Father Nash, intercessor to Finney, when he died, Finney's ministry ended four months later.

Conclusion:

- Heroes are born in the fight. It's not that we are looking to be heroes. We are looking to be overcomers, winners for Christ! Our families! Our community.
- Who wants to get into the fight today? Make Jesus the Lord of Your Life.

From Charisma Magazine - David Ireland *The Weapons Against Your Warfare.*

C. Disinterest in the Fight

1. This person is bored or disinterested in the fight. He is no longer passionate for the fight so he disregards the fight and in so doing he disregards the outcome. The fight is not just a necessary action it is a loving action because you are joining God in the winning of the lost. You fight because you love.

D. Disbelief in the Fight

1. This person does not see or believe that there is a spiritual war going on around them.

2. Jesus did not teach that Satan and demons are metaphorical. He taught them as real beings who are 'hell bent' on destroying humanity. If you don't believe that demons are real beings then you have see Jesus in the wilderness as having a mental breakdown. Ie. Elisha's servant. 2 Kings 6:17
- E. Discouragement in the Fight
1. Some believers are discouraged because of the fight. It is a lifetime battle that began when you were born. Do not let yourself become decommissioned by discouragement.
 2. When the wall was half built the people got discouraged.
- F. Disdain for the Fight
1. It means to look on Spiritual warfare with disdain and scorn. Somewhere the warrior gets wounded and his thinking shifts to this: "If God wants this to happen it will happen. If it is meant to be it will be." The fighter no longer believes that fighting makes a difference. His disdain makes him a weaponless warrior, a 'dog soldier' without teeth. His prayers will not take him into the war room.

War is top picture of the enemy at work. War is about controlling the resources of another. It is about death. Ie. If I can get you to hate your enemy (image of God is marred) you will kill, (image of God marred) War leaves people hungry, naked, homeless, in fear, broken. Father's who do not build the image of God into their marriage and into their children are submitting to the enemy living as puppets letting the devil pull their strings making them dance his dance.