

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
SPIRITUAL WARFARE
PART 1

This morning in our series Foundation of Faith we are going to be looking at spiritual warfare or the spiritual battles we face. Our study will come out of Ephesians chapter 6 and I truly believe we need to understand who the enemy is and how to fight against this enemy. That truly is Paul's point in Ephesians chapter 6.

We have just finished looking at angels and demons and we saw that the Scriptures speak very clearly that there is a spiritual realm out there! C. S. Lewis wrote in his preface to the Screwtape Letters, "The demons hail with delight the materialist who disbelieve their existence." And yes, there are many out there today who negate this spiritual battle we are in or they just are blind to what is going on behind the scenes you might say!

On the other end of the spectrum is the person who is overly consumed with the spiritual world. There is this spiritual confusion and because of it they are tossed to and fro by the bizarre doctrines that come blowing into the church. They are casting out demons from everyone and everything that is around them. And as you will see, that is not Scriptural, not that a person can't be demon possessed. They can but a believer can never be demon possessed! God would never allow it!

This morning, as we begin this series on Spiritual Warfare, I hope to clear things up for you and give you a healthy, a Biblical picture of what Spiritual Warfare is all about and what God has given to us to combat these demonic attacks that come against us. Now some of you may have a hard time with this and you may even deny that there are these spiritual battles that are taking place and if you do, you need to read your Bible. In the very first book of the Bible, in Genesis chapter 3 we see Satan deceive Eve. That was a spiritual confrontation. And that continues on today as the demonic world tries to deceive the people of this world, including Christians!

Now, we also see in Genesis chapter 3 the promise that God would send the One to come and redeem man from the curse that came upon them through their sin, inherited from Adam and their own personal sin. And here is what many negate as they move into this area of spiritual warfare. Paul, in Hebrews 2:14-15 reminds us, **“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”**

In other words, Jesus is the conqueror over sin and death and Satan! He accomplished that on the cross of Calvary for us and because of His victory we as Christians are partakers of His victory as well. Thus, we are in this battle! And make no mistake about it, Satan is at war with God and he does battle with God by assaulting man! He hates the Lord and he hates God’s creation and thus, we see this warfare being manifested in the lives of people today!

We don't know how long Adam and Eve walked in the Garden before they sinned but we do know that Satan was bent on destroying their lives, destroying their relationship with God and that is very true even today! He can't take away our salvation, but he can destroy our witness, remove our joy, see us placed on the shelf and not used by God! And for the unsaved, he wants to keep them that way and when they are not worshiping the true and living God, guess what? They are worshiping Satan! Many would not see it that way and be outraged at that, but it is true. You may not be a Satan worshiper with your Satanic Bible but by rejecting God you are worshiping something and thus, as we saw last time, any false teaching or religion is of the Devil!

Now let me give you some insight to this spiritual warfare that is taking place and then we will look into Ephesians chapter 6 this morning. Turn to Daniel chapter 10 and let's begin reading in verse 12, "**Then he said to me, 'Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.'**" Daniel 10:12-13.

Daniel has been fasting and praying for three weeks, 21 days and there seems to be a delay before God spoke to him. Why was there this delay? What was going on that held up this angel, who I believe was Gabriel, from getting to Daniel? We don't have to guess because the Lord shows us. And what we are seeing here is God lifting up the curtain and giving to us a glimpse of the spiritual warfare that is taking place around us. John Calvin wrote, "Whenever the ungodly cause us trouble, they are fighting under the banner of Satan, and are his instruments for harassing us." And I will add to that, that we as Christians can also be pawns in his games, we must be wise of his schemes, and resist him steadfast in the faith. There is a spiritual battle out there!

And what I want you to notice here is that this spiritual battle is not only against individuals but nations, leaders, political parties and-so-on. Here in Daniel we see the demonic forces over the nation of Persia! Many are blinded to this fact of spiritual warfare but the Bible is very clear on it.

And think about our government, look at all that is going on in Washington D. C. and I think you can clearly see that there must be a large number of demonic forces that are involved in our government. That may offend some of you but when you see all the evil that they are promoting, don't think they came up with this on their own. Yes, their hearts are evil, but they are also being influenced by these demonic forces behind the scenes and they are pulling the strings of those politicians, getting them to do and pass all kinds of evil laws! Look at Iran, look at Russia, and look at other wicked nations and how their leaders are bent on evil!

Leupold summarizes this by saying, “Bad angels, called demons in the New Testament, are, without a doubt, referred to here. In the course of time, these demonic powers gained a very strong influence over certain nations and the government of these nations. They became the controlling power. They used whatever resources they could muster to hamper God’s work and to thwart his purposes. . . . We get a rare glimpse behind the scene of world history. There are spiritual forces at work that are far in excess of what men who disregard revelation would suppose. They struggle behind the struggles that are written in the pages of history.”

Make no mistake about it; there are demonic forces over nations, cities and-so-on. And they attempt to destroy the lives of men and women and to hinder the work of God. First of all they can’t do anything without God allowing them to. Before Satan could even touch Job he had to go to God for permission and God allowed it for the strengthening of Job’s faith.

Secondly, as strong as these demonic forces are, there are a host of heavenly angels that are there to watch over us and protect us. If you remember the story of Elisha in II Kings chapter 6, you will see another glimpse into the spirit world. It was during the time when the Syrian’s were at war with Israel. And Ben-Hadad was making surprise raids into Israel but God was informing Elisha of what was going to happen and he passed that information on to the king of Israel, Joram. We talked about this last time but I think it is important that we understand this.

Ben-Hadad was enraged with his continual failure and he thought there was an informer with-in his troop's who was tipping off their enemy. One of the officers spoke up and said that Elisha was the one who had supernatural powers and revealed these things. In fact, we read of this servant saying in regards to a secret informer that there are, "**. . . 'None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.'**" II Kings 6:12. In other words, there are no secrets that you can keep from God!

So Ben-Hadad ordered Elisha to be captured and thus sent his troops to Dothan, which was 12 miles north of Samaria, where Elisha was staying, so they can sneak up and take him into custody. If you think about it this is kind of funny, they were trying to sneak up and take Elisha by surprise!

Early in the morning Elisha's servant awakened and became terrified at what he saw. The whole city was surrounded by the Syrian's and he nervously asks Elisha "**. . . What shall we do?**" Elisha's response was "**. . . 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'**" II Kings 6:16. Now I don't think this calmed this man down, for no matter how many times you counted, there were only 2 of them against the whole Syrian army.

But Elisha's eyes had seen something that his servant did not see and thus, we are told, "**And Elisha prayed, and said, 'LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.'** **Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**" II Kings 6:17.

God's angelic agents were there ready and waiting. They were there to protect the servant of God. That is why Elisha could be calm when the enemy surrounded him. And I love the way God took care of this enemy. He blinded them, then they were led by Elisha to Samaria, and he brought them before King Joram. But instead of destroying them he laid out a feast which was symbolic of a peace covenant which lasted for a time with the Syrian's.

You see, spiritual warfare is real and we must be prepared for it. That is why we are doing this study, to have a correct perspective on spiritual warfare, to understand what the Scriptures have to say about it.

Now some of you may be thinking, "Hey, I did not sign up for this. This is not for me. I don't want anything to do with it!" First of all if you are a Christian, you signed up for it. Paul said in II Timothy 3:12, "**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**" It is not that you might suffer persecution, or it could happen, you will! And that persecution comes from the spirit world, the demonic forces and it is manifested in the lives of people who come against us! The Christian life is not simply believing in Jesus and then living happily ever after! There will be tribulation, there will be opposition because of our faith in Jesus and what we stand for and that opposition comes from the demonic world, like I have said!

For those that don't know the Lord, they are spiritual pawns for Satan to use and he does a great job. But we also must be wise because we can be used by Satan and his demonic forces if we are not walking in the Spirit, if we are not obedient to the Lord. We will fall prey to the devils schemes!

That brings us to our study in Ephesians chapter 6 this morning and we will read through this section and then I will expound on it. Let's pick up in Ephesians chapter 6, starting in verse 10 where Paul tells us, "**Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.**" Ephesians 6:10-18.

This morning we are going to be focusing on verses 10 through 13 of Ephesians chapter 6 as we lay down the foundation of what we will be discussing in our next studies, the spiritual armor that God has given to us to fight these spiritual battles that are before us! Listen again to what Paul is saying here in verse 10 as we break these verses down, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”**

Paul starts out in verse 10 by saying, **“Finally.”** Paul is summing this letter up and he is saying that with the time he has remaining, this is what it all boils down to. You see, in the first 3 chapters of Ephesians Paul speaks of our place in Jesus and all we have in Him. Then, in the last 3 chapters of Ephesians he talks about our Christian walk, how we should live out our faith because of all the Lord has done for us.

What I find very interesting here is that Paul just finished up speaking of walking in the Spirit, submitting to each other in the fear of the Lord. And then he talks about relationships. He speaks of how wives are to treat their husbands. He speaks how husbands are to treat their wives. He speaks how children are to obey their parents. He speaks of how parents are not to provoke their children. He speaks of how employers are to treat employees and how employees are to treat their employers.

And what is the next thing he talks about? It is spiritual warfare. Where does Satan love to attack us? He loves to attack families, put the wife against her husband and the husband against his wife! We see it with children, how they come against their parents and how parents then come against them. We see it in work relationships and for that matter in relationships in general. There is a spiritual battle out there and this is being played out in the hearts and lives of people today. That is how it is manifested! So it is very important that Paul now sums this all up by speaking of putting on the armor of God, to be ready to fight against the enemy!

Now the key to fighting this spiritual warfare is found in verse 10 and who or what we are strong in. And this is important. We are not strong in ourselves or in what we have obtained, but our strength comes from the Lord! That means every believer has this power to stand against the enemy because the Lord is with us! In other words, we are to continually strengthen ourselves in the power of God's strength that is available to all of us!

Why do we struggle so much with our family? Why do we struggle so much in relationships? Why do we struggle so much at work? Maybe the reason is that we refuse to surrender to Him and allow God to develop in our lives this power that He has made available to us so we can win these battles we are facing!

So here is the key, our strength does not come from our power, our might, our ability but it is from the Lord, it is found in the Lord! And as Paul speaks of the armor of God keep in mind that he was chained to Roman soldiers and as he saw these men day in and day out the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to make a comparison of the Roman soldier to the soldier of the Lord who was going to battle against the enemies of God, and thus, he penned these words for us. Thus, the first command is to **“be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.”**

As we move into verse 11 we come to the second command as Paul tells us, **“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”** Now this second command, not an option for us but a command, is that Paul tells us to **“put on the whole armor of God”** not just part of it, not just what you want to put on, but all of it because the enemy is going to use all the resources that are at his disposal to fight against us. The Greek word that Paul uses for **“put on”** is ENDUO, (en-doo'-o) and it carries with it the idea of permanence.

In other words, the armor of God is not something that you take on and off but you wear it all the time. This is not a game or something to joke about. Paul wants us to understand this. The armor of God is something that we need to have at all times because who knows when the enemy will attack. You can't say, “Hey, wait a minute, let me get my armor, I left it at home!” That would never happen and thus, you will be unprepared for the battle that is coming against you.

Too often Christians are like the Iraqi man who was captured during Desert Storm and he was found wearing a Cub's tee shirt, jeans, and sandals on his feet. He was an American that went to visit family in Iraq and then the war broke out and he was drafted but not given the equipment he needed to do battle. If we are not prepared, when the Devil comes with his schemes we will not be able to stand against his onslaught! We need to stand firm against his attacks and the idea is to hold a critical position while under attack!

When the battle comes we don't have time to figure out where we put our spiritual armor, where we left it or what it is! We need to be prepared. Why is this so important? Because Paul tells us that the Devil has his "wiles" or "schemes" that he uses upon us and if we are not ready, he will take us by surprise and we will fall, we will stumble because we are not prepared!

Paul uses the Greek word METHODEIA, (meth-odi-i'-ah) for "wiles" and it means "to lie in wait." I think that is very interesting because Peter tells us to "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**" I Peter 5:8. You see, a lion lies in wait to seek out his prey and then when the opportune time comes, he goes after his prey to devour him. Satan does the exact same thing!

Do you really think that the temptations you face are random, back luck, just some haphazardly thing that happens in our life? If you do you are wrong! There is a plan of Satan to bring as many down, destroy as many lives as he can in this invisible war he is perpetrating upon humanity! What are some of these things that he uses against us? Listen carefully and this is not an exhaustive list but it will give you an idea of what he is capable of doing and maybe make you aware of what you need to do – take this battle seriously!

- **Deceit** – Satan will use all kinds of lies to deceive us. You see, it is his natural tongue; it is what naturally flows from his life. Jesus said in John 8:44, **“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”**

As we have seen in our previous studies, every false doctrine, every false teaching and false religion has its origins in Satan and his demons. He is so deceptive in what he does that Paul reminds us that he does not run around in red underwear and a pitchfork in his hand but is an angel of light. He fools people by making them think he is of God and he is not! He truly is the father of lies!

- **Temptation** – Satan will use temptation to cause people to sin. He wants them to be disobedient to God and in doing so they bring destruction upon their own lives and the lives of those around them. God will use the temptations that Satan brings into our lives as a test of our faith. The issue is not if these things will come upon your life, they will. The issue is how will you respond to them? Will you let Satan tempt you to sin or will you allow God to test you and help your faith to grow by being obedient to Him?
- **The influence of the world** – If you doubt this one then you truly need to open your eyes and look! Satan, called the prince of the power of the air has truly lived up to his title. Look at his influence upon our television programs, the movies, the radio, the news programs, the Internet, music, styles of clothes, different fads and-so-on. In fact, if you still doubt that listen to what Jesus said about Satan and his influence upon this world. In John 14:30 we are told, **“I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.”** He is called **“the ruler of this world”** and we see that in John 12:31 and John 16:11.

And listen to what he has done upon the people of this world. In II Corinthians 4:3-4 Paul tells us, **“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”**

He has blinded the eyes of people all over the world and the only way they can be open is by the power of God. That is why we pray for them as we are witnessing to them about Jesus! This is a spiritual battle!

- **Malicious accuser** – Think about this for a minute. The word “devil” means false witness or malicious accuser. Not only does Satan accuse believers before God but he is also, through his demonic servants, telling people that right is wrong and wrong is right so that they may live lives that are ungodly, destructive.

Now here’s the thing. Don’t fret or become afraid because even though Satan will try, he cannot hinder our walk with the Lord if you put on the full armor of God. You do need to put on the armor, to be ready, to walk circumspectly because the days are evil and if you are not watching where you are going, you will stumble!

Paul says that we can **“stand”** against these attacks from the Devil. He uses the Greek word HISTEMI, (his’-tay’ mee) and when this word is used in a military sense, it carries with it the idea to hold a critical position while under attack! You wonder why we have so many Christian self-help books, so many programs to help people do this and do that? The reason is simple, we are not ready to fight, we are not ready to take a stand, we are not ready to be immovable in the strength of the Lord as we stand strong in the power of His might with our full armor on!

So the second command that Paul is giving to us is that we need to “**put on the whole armor of God**” because the Devil is coming up with his strategies, his plans, his schemes to bring us down and if we are not prepared, we will not be able to stand! But God wants us to stand and not give up territory to the Devil, not fall prey to his schemes, his devices!

As we move into verse 12 of Ephesians chapter 6 Paul tells us who the enemy is in more detail. Listen again to what he is saying, “**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.**”

Think about this for a minute. What is the reason we need to be strong in the Lord? What is the reason why we have to put on the whole armor of the God? Paul tells us here the reason we need to, why it is so important for us to do these things. We are not in a fight or struggle against flesh and blood; this is a spiritual battle that we are facing!

Please understand this is not some girly fight that Paul is talking about. Sorry ladies, don't beat me up after church, you know what I mean here when I say girly fights. Paul says that we “**wrestle**” or “**struggle**” in these battles with these demonic forces. And the word that he uses here is EIMI, (i-mee') and it is a word that is used for hand-to-hand combat and primarily but not exclusively for wrestling.

When they wrestled they would use trickery or deception to win the battle and keep in mind that in Rome these battles were many times to the death. You win the battle you live and if you lost, well, it is because you were killed! And again, Paul is stressing the intensity of this battle. Yes, Satan and his demons can't take away our salvation as I have said, but they can truly destroy our witness and our service for the Lord. And for those that don't know the Lord, they will try to keep them blinded to the truth so in the end they lose and they will die apart from the Lord!

Keep in mind that Satan is a created being and he is not all powerful and he is not present everywhere, he can only be in one place at a time. Then how in the world does he accomplish all this evil? He has his demons that serve him and there are billions upon billions of them I believe. When Satan rebelled against God he took one-third of the angels with him and I believe those are the demons we see today, fallen angels!

And Paul lists the rankings of these demonic forces, Satan being in charge, followed by principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness. The Scriptures don't elaborate much more on these and we really don't need to know more about them. What we need to know is our armor, how to protect ourselves, and that is what Paul is going to give to us.

As we have seen, these demonic forces use humans to play out their strategies. We have seen that our battle is not against flesh and blood but it is a spiritual battle. But what we do see in this world is what they do to people. They use them as pawns and thus, it is played out through the flesh because Satan and his forces use man as he tools but it is truly a spiritual battle. Make no mistake about that, we can't use physical weapons to win this battle!

And yes, Paul does not go into any great detail about the demonic hierarchy or what these rankings are. That was not his intentions. What he is doing is showing us that there is order, they are sophisticated, it is not haphazardly actions on their part, but planned chaos you might say!

In fact, we have no idea what is going on behind the scenes, what we do see is what is being manifested in the lives of the people of this world! I am very uncomfortable when Christians start getting into unscriptural practices regarding the demonic world. We don't have to go looking for the enemy, they will find us. We are to be doing the work of the Lord and as we do, they will try to stop us. But, as John said, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”** I John 4:4. And Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, **“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”** Thus, we need to put on the full armor of God that we might be able to stand against the schemes of the Devil!

Now let's look at this battle a little closer before we close with verse 13 of Ephesians chapter 6 this morning. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 10:3-5, **“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 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.”**

Look over the many battlefields where all that is left behind is the wreckage of very courageous soldiers but ill-equipped soldiers! We have talked about this before but remember the battle of Little Big Horn. George Custer led his men in battle against a much larger force of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors. He was not prepared for the battle and in the end, he and all 210 men who were under his immediate command were killed!

When Germany came into Poland, they used a tactic that they called Blitzkrieg which means “lightning war.” What this means is they came in with speed and surprise upon the enemy and that is what they did here in Poland. There was a brigade of Polish cavalry that gallantly and yet foolishly charged a formation of German tanks. All they had were lances and swords and obviously they were no match for the German cannons and machine guns. They were all slaughtered.

That is why we, as Christian soldiers need to be prepared at all times for the battle! We need to take it seriously! The enemy does! And as I have said, all believers are soldiers in this spiritual war against the kingdom of darkness. There are no exceptions, there are no deferrals, you are not going to retire until you go to be with the Lord from this service and there are no discharges. If you are a Christian, you will be at war with the kingdom of darkness or I should say they will be at war with you and you need to be ready!

And Paul is very clear here, this spiritual battle cannot be fought with physical weapons, with human ingenuity, with human ideology or human methodology! These things will not be able to help us in this battle. And the problem for Christians is that they see a temporary victory, a superficial victory, and that is very deceptive. These carnal weapons will not give to us the victory that we need. If we chose to fight with carnal or human weapons we are going to lose. And I am not talking about guns and bullets for physical weapons as I have said, not at all. We use human wisdom, reason, our own strategies, our own skill and these will not win the battle we are in.

Remember, we are to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. We must put on the whole armor of God and thus, we are talking about spiritual weapons here, weapons that God has given to us! We need a heavenly arsenal! Yes, we walk in the flesh in the sense of living out our lives, but our warfare is spiritual and must be fought that way!

Paul tells us that these spiritual weapons we have are for the “**pulling down of strongholds.**” In other words they are for the destroying of the enemies’ fortresses, their fortified places. Now what are these fortresses that Paul is speaking of? We do not need to guess because Paul tells us in verse 5 of II Corinthians chapter 10, “**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 tells us that these spiritual weapons are for the pulling down, the destroying of “**arguments**” or “**imagination**s” of the unsaved that are being used as pawns in this spiritual battle. Paul uses the Greek word LOGISMOS, (log-is-mos’) and it is a word that refers to any and all human or demonic thoughts, opinions, philosophies, theories, psychologies, viewpoints and even religions! And thus, fleshly weapons, physical weapons cannot successfully win this battle, they can’t bring down these strongholds in which the unsaved have entrenched themselves in!

It is not that we are having direct confrontation with demons as some like to teach. Yes, there is this battle with demons every day but that is not what Paul is speaking of here. And yes, there are those that are demon possessed and they need to be delivered, but don’t be foolish and enter a domain that God has not called you to be involved in!

Christians who verbally confront demons waste energy and demonstrate ignorance of the real war. We are not called to convert demons, but sinners. The battle is rather with the false ideologies men and demons propagate so that the world believes them. Doomed souls are inside their fortresses of ideas, which become their prisons and eventually their tombs - unless they are delivered from them by belief in the truth.

And make no mistake about it; every person who is not saved has these fortresses in which they hide themselves in from psychology, to evolution, to philosophy, to world religions, to apostate Christianity and-so-on. Listen to what James Sire speaks of the fortresses he has hid himself in. He writes,

1. Matter exists eternally and is all there is. God does not exist.
2. The cosmos exists as a uniformity of natural cause and effect in a closed system.

3. Human beings are complex “machines”; personality is an interrelation of chemical and physical properties we do not yet fully understand.
4. Death is the extinction of personality and individuality.
5. History is a linear stream of events linked by cause and effect but without an overarching purpose.
6. Ethics is related only to human beings.

- James Sire, *The Silence of Finite Space: Naturalism*, in
The Universe Next Door, pp. 61-83

Do you see the fortress that has him bound! It is naturalism and because of his beliefs of this false idea he is shutting God out of his life and people outside of Christ are doing this every day! And thus, we are in this battle to change the way people think! We are to take every thought they have and not make them captive to it any longer!

My brother, who is an evolutionist, wrote on FaceBook the following,

“So we, and everything we see, result out of quantum fluctuations in what is essentially nothingness near the beginning of time, namely during the inflationary expansion of the universe.” From “A Universe from Nothing.”

This means that the song got it wrong. “Nothing from nothing leaves nothing” should be “Everything from Nothing is Everything.”

Do you see the battle we face? Everything came from nothing and we are to believe that! And many do and we are pulling down those strongholds. What about those that think sin is not sin but it is a result of our genes and I am not talking about the pants we wear! Another stronghold that people run to and hide themselves from God! And thus, we are to help change the way people think. And really, we need to make them think about what they believe because if they truly do, they will see the foolishness of it! And in the process, incarcerated sinners are rescued!

You see, we are destroying their arguments, their beliefs, which are foolish and yet they hold on strongly to them as they try to deny God, the Living God, the Only God! And thus, our spiritual armor is important because it not only protects us from the assault of the enemy, but it also helps us to destroy the false beliefs of those that don't know the Lord!

We truly need to know who we are fighting, who the battle is against because if we don't, we will be in trouble as this story illustrates for us. We are told,

When World War I broke out, the War Ministry in London dispatched a coded message to one of the British outposts in the inaccessible areas of Africa. The message read: "War declared. Arrest all enemy aliens in your district."

The War Ministry received his prompt reply: "Have arrested ten Germans, six Belgians, four Frenchman, two Italians, three Austrians, and an American. Please advise immediately who we're at war with."

- Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, 7163

Funny story but we do need to know who the battle is against or we will take it out upon the wrong people and that happens very often! Now that leads us to the last verse we will be looking at this morning found in Ephesians 6:13 where Paul tells us, **“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

Paul starts out with the word **“Therefore”** and the idea here is that because of all he has said, because of this spiritual battle that is taking place, you need to be wise and take up the whole armor of God. Don’t be foolish and neglect what God is saying here. I think many times in our society we become complacent and even oblivious to the seriousness of the battle that is around us. They don’t care about the armor of God because they don’t feel that they are in a battle. But they are mistaken!

Look at what your children are being taught. Look at what you are being taught. We live in a world where right is wrong and wrong is right and we are silent about it. And if we are not trying to pull down these strongholds then the enemy wins. Look at how homosexuality is promoted everywhere you go. I just read that the comic book with the superhero The Green Lantern is coming out of the closet and he is gay! Now this is another Green Lantern but he is being promoted as gay!

That is just one issue and folk’s, this war will continue on until the Lord comes back! We have what we need for this battle, but we must be willing to take it up and use it in our lives! You see, our responsibility is to not only put on the armor and use the armor but to stand firm, not to give up!

When Martin Luther stood before the Diet of Worms he was accused of heresy. After being condemned for declaring that men are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, he declared, “My conscience is captive to the Word of God. . . . Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.” Make no mistake about it; every believer who is faithful to God’s Word cannot do otherwise than stand firm.

And this is serious as John MacArthur tells us. He wrote,

Some forty years ago three men conducted evangelistic campaigns together in Ireland and saw much fruit from their labors there. Years later an Irish pastor who was converted in those meetings asked about the three men. He was told that only one was still faithful to the Lord. Of the other two, one had become apostate and the other had died an alcoholic. Some believers have done everything well in the Lord’s work, but they do not continue to stand firm. The issue is not in what a believer has done, but, when the battle is over and the smoke clears, whether he is found standing true to the Savior.

John warned, “Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward” (2 John 8). Paul’s one great fear was that, “possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified” (1 Cor 9:27). He was not afraid of losing his salvation but his reward and, even more importantly, his usefulness to the Lord. Countless men and women have faithfully taught Sunday school for years, led many people to Jesus Christ, pastored a church, led Bible studies, ministered to the sick, and done every sort of service in the Lord’s name - only to one day give up, turn their backs on His work, and disappear into the world.

The circumstances differ, but the underlying reason is always the same: they took God's armor off and thereby lost the courage, the power, and the desire to stand firm.

In the great spiritual warfare in which we do battle, we are only called to resist and to stand firm. . . .

- John MacArthur

Next week we will begin looking at the specific armor that God has given to us to fight these spiritual battles, so that we may stand strong in this fight we are in. As I bring this study to a close, let me leave you with this to think about. How we have the victory in the Lord. We are told,

On June 6, 1944, General Dwight David Eisenhower made a pivotal decision when he said, "Let's go." At 4 A.M., over 155,000 made their way across the English Channel in the greatest single military invasion in world history. Having been told that only one in three would likely return from the morning excursion, they landed on the beaches of France that were code-named Utah and Sword, Juneau and Gold, and, most famously, Omaha.

As they landed on the shores, the enemy, already entrenched, began to fire round after round on those 155,000 brave soldiers. Ten thousand men lost their lives at Omaha Beach on that bloody, brutal day. Yet the allied soldiers kept coming – wave after wave – until they took the strongholds, the high towers from which the Nazi soldiers fired. Had the allies failed, Germany would have dominated Europe, indeed the world militarily. But their success ensured eventual victory.

The greatest military invasion in the history of the world took place on D-Day. But an infinitely greater invasion took place the day God invaded this world in the Person of Jesus Christ. Monumental were the repercussions of the sacrifice and bloodshed on the beaches of Normandy. But they were nothing compared to the results of the sacrifice and blood shed at Calvary.

Satan's plan of nailing Jesus to the Cross backfired totally because the only foothold Satan has on humanity is getting people to succumb to sin and thus turn over the authority of their lives to him. Therefore, because the blood Jesus paid the price for the sin of all men, Satan's foothold is obliterated. Yet even though the victory has been won, the battle goes on because the Enemy will not give up that which we do not take.

When the Allied invasion succeeded, Hitler and the boys in Berlin knew their days were numbered. They knew they didn't have a chance – but they continued fighting to the bitter end. This explains the reason that although the outcome of the war was determined on June 6, more blood was shed in the year following the victory at Normandy than at any other time in history.

So, too, Satan knows he doesn't have a chance. He knows that the one grasp he had on man is gone. He knows his time is running out. Yet so deep is his hatred of God that he continues to hang on to the territory he knows is no longer his. And he fights to the bitter end.

- Jon Courson

It is as Paul said, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”** Ephesians 6:10-13. May you be willing to stand strong in the Lord and in the power of His might as you put on the whole armor of God!