



4/23/26

*You know, we can read the stories of demons being cast out of those they possess as we did this week. And those are really important to read... especially to recognize the authority and power of God to cast out those demons. But as far as we can tell, we don't see a lot of demon possessed people in our daily lives. But one thing that IS happening regularly in our daily lives, whether we see it or not, is the unrelenting schemes of the devil to render us ineffective for the gospel. The good news is... God has authority and power over those attacks as well. We just need to stay close to Him. That's what today's passage is about. God shows us the generosity of His love as He promises to strengthen us and help us resist the devil's schemes. I pray that you and I will take this word to heart and experience the grace and strength of our living God.*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*Ephesians 6:10-20*

*As I've looked at the different stories of how demons impacted people's lives, and the fact that Jesus has authority over those demons, I find relief in knowing that I belong to Him. 1 Peter 1:8 says that I haven't seen Jesus, but I love Him and rejoice in Him. Well, I haven't seen demons either. But I know they're there. One of the ways I know they impact my life, aside from using manipulation and with deception to get me to fight for my own "rights" instead of pursuing unity... is in my thoughts. I will get scary thoughts that come out of nowhere. These thoughts cause immediate fear to grip me. I evaluate... where did that come from? It's certainly not anything I WANT to think about. I KNOW from God's word that it's not anything HE wants me to think about. I believe these are the whispers of the demons. They usually focus on something bad happening to someone I love. They almost NEVER come true. I'm asking the Lord to wash my thoughts and purify them... and to give me wisdom to know how to throw them out of my mind.*

*Interestingly, one of the first thoughts that follows the fearful thought is, "God will let this bad thing happen." Boy, that sounds an awful lot like what the serpent said to Eve in the Garden of Eden... "God lied to you. He's withholding good from you." That's just NOT TRUE!!!*

*Today's passage gives me insight into how to handle these thoughts. I think there's a ton more spiritual warfare going on in our lives than what we recognize. James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore (in humility) to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Why resist the devil? 1 Peter 5:8 says he's "like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour." He's NOT a roaring lion, and because I'm a believer, he CAN'T devour me. But he sure wants to look like one and he sure want to try to hurt me. 1 Peter 5:9 reiterates what James said, "Resist him, firm in your faith." Now, as I go through Ephesians 6 about the armor God gives me in order to resist the devil, I pray that I will see it in a whole new light so I know how to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

*Vs. 10-12 ~ "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."*

*It's so important that I don't read over these words quickly and miss the fact that I have no power within myself. In Psalm 40:17, David said, "As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!" David, a warrior, understood the call... My strength is NOT in myself. It's IN THE LORD. It's NOT in MY power, but in HIS.*

*God is so faithful. He gives me HIS armor so that I can stand against the schemes of the devil. I have God's armor ALWAYS, but I have to decide to put it on. That's my responsibility... NOT to put on my own armor which is like the plastic toys kids use for Halloween, but to put on His supernatural armor... SO THAT I can take my stand against the devil's schemes... so that I can resist him... NOT so that I can be like the sons of Sceva who thought just speaking with authority would give them power over the demons who humiliated and pummeled them. The devil is NOT afraid of me. He IS afraid of God. Most of the armor God gives me is so that I can stand... not so that I can go after the devil. Exodus 14:14 tells me that it's the LORD who fights FOR me, and I just have to be still... secure in the Lord.*

*In case I'm not sure about this, God lets me know how serious this spiritual fight is. Satan and his demons are not like mere men. They are not like flesh and blood. They're much more powerful. They are "the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." There is no Marvel character strong enough to fight against them. That's why God so graciously gives me HIS armor.*

*Some may say, "Yes, but look at David! Saul's armor was too big for him, and he just had a sling and stone to take Goliath down." True. But Goliath was still a mere man, and I KNOW that God was surrounding David with His armor. David knew it was the Lord who helped him take down Goliath, even though he couldn't see the Lord. The spiritual is often unseen. But it's more real and more powerful than anything I can see with my eyes.*

*This is also a really big statement for me... My wrestle is not against flesh and blood. So... when I'm in conflict with another person, let me never be deceived. There is something supernatural and evil behind that conflict. I need to submit to the Lord and take His armor and humble myself so that He can help me stand against the schemes of the real enemy. The deception Satan tries to use against me will be effective only when I refuse to humble myself before the Lord in submission. I can't control what others do or say, but "as far as it depends on me, I can live peaceably with all." And leave the rest to the Lord. That feels impossible sometimes... and it is... if I don't put on the WHOLE armor of God.*

*Vs. 13 ~ "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 firm."*

*Yes, I need to put on the armor of God because His armor is the only armor strong enough to withstand the evil schemes of the devil. His armor is the only armor that can discern the devil's lies and take my stand. God's armor holds me up so that I CAN stand. O Lord, please help me to grasp how massive this is!!!*

*Vs. 14-18a ~ What is this armor and how does it help me stand???*

*"Stand therefore..."*

- "Having fastened on the belt of truth." This is what holds me together... truth. Jesus said to the Father in John 17:17, "Sanctify them in Your truth. Your word is truth." The devil schemes to make me doubt the truth and give more credibility to my feelings and emotions. Yikes! My feelings and emotions change with the wind! More than the wind!!! O Lord, please sanctify me in Your truth!*
- "Having put on the breastplate of righteousness." God wants to protect my heart (the control center of my feelings, desires, and decisions) with what He says is right. He wants me to love what He loves and hate what He hates. The devil schemes to make me think that loving what God loves will hurt me and loving what God hates will withhold good from me. O Lord, let me not be deceived! "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes from YOU ALONE!!!" (James 1:17).*
- "As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace." This amazes me. In what war can man battle where he has peace in the midst of the fight???* Only in the war where God is my commander and strength. He gives me shoes that allow me to walk in peace and to bring peace because He fights FOR me!!! The devil schemes to make me think I'm alone, that God has abandoned me. It's a lie. The harder the battle, the more God will be my peace IF I put on His shoes! O Lord, You never withhold those shoes. I just let fear and anxiety keep me from putting them on. Please help me to put them on!!! "Out of my distress I called on the Lord. The Lord answered me and set me free. The Lord is on my side. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:5-6). The LORD is on my side. What can the schemes of the devil accomplish if I'm continually seeking the Lord???

- "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one." In ALL circumstances. There is no circumstance too big OR small for the Lord. Sometimes it's in what I view as the small circumstances that the devil gets his opportunity... because I think I can handle it on my own. I can't! I need to hold up my shield of faith... my confidence in the Lord. I need to ask the Lord to make my shield bigger and bigger. And He will. He does. The devil schemes to whisper doubts into my mind... to make me think God is annoyed with me or ashamed of me, that God doesn't want to have to deal with this issue yet again! When will I get it through my head to my heart? But that's not what God says! He says in Isaiah 40:28-29, "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength." O Lord, please help to hold that shield high!!! And remind me that You don't even expect me to hold it up alone. Your word says in Psalm 145:14, "The Lord upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down." Praise Your name! Let me not miss this. It's not my words that stop the devil's fiery darts. It is my confidence in my Lord and all He is.*
- "Take the helmet of salvation." The helmet of salvation protects my mind... the place where I take in information. Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:19 tell me that the Holy Spirit transforms me by the RENEWING of my mind. This is so cool. Science has proven that our brains are not static, meaning that the brain can't be changed. They are neuroplastic, meaning that new pathways can be made in our brains. Yet another example of how science has come to understand what God put in the Bible thousands of years ago.*
- "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This is the first of only TWO offensive weapons. The sword is my first offensive weapon. I take my stand against the devil's schemes by saying, "It is written..." This is why it's so important that I know the word of God, not just for information but for transformation! The devil knows the word of God, too. Just having the words without letting them impact my heart and mind and soul will only grow arrogance in me... I mean, think of how arrogant the devil is and he knows the word. I actually have TWO offensive weapons. What's the second?*
- "Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication." Wow. Let me not miss this... the word is called the sword of the SPIRIT. I'm called to pray in the SPIRIT. The offensive weapons I have are only effective when I'm allowing the Holy Spirit to control my hands and words. Paul said in Galatians 6:16, "But I say, walk by the SPIRIT and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." The devil works really hard to make me ignore the armor and gratify the desires of my flesh. Whoa! What do believers struggle to do more than anything in their lives? Read the word and pray. The devil schemes to make us think it's just about a checklist to appease God so that He'll give us what we want. And then the devil schemes to whisper lies calling God unfaithful when our rituals don't work. Reading the bible and praying were never meant to be just rituals!!!*

*But how do I pray in the Spirit??? John 15 tells me that it starts with abiding in the Lord... dwelling with Him, letting His word dwell in me, and letting His love dwell in me. John 15:8 tells me that I'll know when I'm truly praying in the Spirit when my motivation is for the Lord to be glorified and for me to bear fruit for Him. Wow. If I truly do that in all my prayers, my prayers drastically change.*

*Vs. 18b-20 ~ "To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak."*

*Over and over in scripture I'm called to keep alert and persevere. Why? Because the devil does scheme and he tries to distract me and lull me away from seeing that this time on earth IS a war!!! If it wasn't, I wouldn't need the armor!!! So I need to KEEP putting on the armor of God. I always have it. Sometimes I prefer taking it off. Everybody say, "That's a bad plan!"*

*This passage also reminds me that I'm not in this fight alone. I can hold up my brothers and sisters in Christ by praying for them. My power to fix their problems is just as weak as my power to fix myself... I am poor and needy. But God gives me this great opportunity to pray for them... and to pray for leaders like Paul who boldly proclaim the gospel without fear. What does the devil do to scheme against me in that? He tries to whisper how I deserve better and how I should judge people rather than pray for them. O Lord!!! I AM POOR AND NEEDY and so are my brothers and sisters!!! Please help me to pray for them faithfully and not be deceived into thinking I'm better or worse than them. There is no second place at the foot of the cross.*

*Praise You! You ARE stronger than the devil and his demons! I will stay with You, and I know You will fight for me as You help me to stand strong in You, with Your armor protecting me.*