



Stand and Fight

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Ephesians 6:10-14

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*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,*

*(Pastor prays)*

The truth is, all of life is a struggle. From the time you draw your first breath until the day you breathe your last, we are at war. And in this war, there's not one decisive battle. There is no Yorktown, Waterloo, or Gettysburg to point to. Beyond Christ's victory at the cross, you don't ever just wake up one morning and not have a fight on your hands. We live in a fallen world system, a system that moves further away from God, not closer to God. Satan is the Prince of the power of the air, so the very air we live in is tinged with sin. On top of that, each of us has within us a continuing sin nature that keeps us stumbling over the same old things. Even Paul said in Romans 7:15, *<sup>15</sup> For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.* And verse 19 says, *<sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I*

*do not want is what I keep on doing.* Job says in Job 14:1, “*Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.*” Our bodies are fragile, our minds are burdened, our hearts are broken, and sometimes even our spirits get crushed. It’s hard; life is hard. The Christian life is hard. Ours is the way of the cross, and the cross is painful.

Too many professing believers have forgotten we are called to a wartime mentality where the mission is paramount, our objectives are clear, and pettiness can’t exist. And so, as people of the cross, we take up our position under the banner of the Lord Jesus and sing, “Though this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear for God hath willed his truth to triumph through us.”

That’s through us, weak as we are. And Paul closes his letters to the Ephesians with the hard “finally.” In other words, pay attention to this last little bit because here’s the truth...

### **Your Life is a Death Match for the Glory of God**

You live not to see how long you can live, how much money you can make, or how many friends you can acquire. You are created for God’s glory, and you’ve got to fight for it. Paul tells us how to win the fight right here.

### **You need to develop real strength**

Notice what Paul says in verse 10. <sup>10</sup> *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.* The way Paul phrases this is a command: be strong. He has written it in an imperative but middle voice. What that means is that it is better translated to say, be strengthened in the Lord. That is not in your own ability or in the affection of someone else, or in the confidence of your good health or financial stability. You need strength that comes from the Lord to fight the battles we have to face. Your health, your spouse, your job, your friends, and your children will all let you down. You must find your joy and your strength somewhere else. You need to learn to say with Nehemiah, this

day is holy unto the Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

When I face the struggle, I want to say with the Psalmist in Psalm 28:7, *The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.* That's the kind of God honoring, Christ centered, glory focused strength I want. I don't want a pretend, hollow Christianity that wears its feelings on your sleeves and is easily offended. I want to be like the apostle Paul when he writes to his protege in the ministry, Timothy. In 2 Timothy 4:17 Paul says, <sup>17</sup> *But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me.* And in our passage today, Paul says to be strengthened in the Lord and in the power of his might. Now, you might be saying, I just don't think I can make it through. That's when the Lord says to you. My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.

You need to develop real strength for the battle, and real strength begins when you come to the cross and surrender your life with Christ. Your life is a death match for the glory of God. You need to develop real strength.

### **You need to take decisive action**

There are two commands in verse 11. The first one is to put on the whole armor of God. And the second one is to stand against the schemes of the devil. Let's deal with the first one. Put on the full armor of God. Whatever issue, trial, or temptation you face, God has made provision for you. Notice that the armor is God's armor. In fact, it's the word *panoplia*. That is the entirety of his armor. Next week, we will talk about the belt, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, and sword, but this is the whole armor. It is God's provision, but you must take it up. You must put it on. One of the Christian cliches that needs to be thrown out is, "God will not put more on you than you can handle." Friends, that's just not true. Many of you are right now under the strain of more than you can bear and more temptation than you can withstand. That's why you put on the armor. You have an active role in discipleship. You pick up your Bible, and you fall down on your knees. God

takes the initiative, and God sets the agenda, but you must respond and take decisive actions. Quit playing games.

The next imperative is to stand against the schemes. Verses 13 and 14 say,<sup>13</sup> *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.* <sup>14</sup> *Stand therefore.* The command to stand firm is a military term that means to hold your position against heavy attack. This is saying, by God's grace and with his armor, I will not yield to temptation, I will not listen to Satan's discouragement, and I will not budge on my beliefs. Verse 11 tells us that we are standing against the schemes of the devil. This means the method of the devil. The devil seldom attacks openly, preferring darkness to light. He is a dangerous wolf but enters the flock disguised as a sheep. Sometimes, he roars like a lion; sometimes he sneaks like a snake. He seeks to seduce you into compromise and deceive us into error. And a wobbly Christian with no firm foothold in Christ is easy prey. So put on the full armor of God, standing firm. To do this means that you know the gospel, you have a steady diet of God's word, you are filled with the spirit, you worship with the body of Christ, and you made God honoring, Christ centered decisions. Satan uses many schemes or methods like dissension in the church or a family. He may use the shame of your own personal hidden sin. He may use false teachers who have familiar language that sounds like the gospel but, it's not. He will use discouragement and hurtful words, broken relationships, and bad news. These can take the wind out of our sails. He can use apathy. He will use this when there is no real spiritual excitement in your life. He will use that, and in that spiritual silence, Satan will make you ask the question, why does it even matter?

Satan will use suffering. He uses this one quite a bit. We have worked in our minds a mathematical formula that says if I do good and I follow Jesus, I will be healthy, wealthy, and wise. But when suffering comes, we feel cheated, like it's unfair. And Satan, one of his methods is to use suffering to harm you and dishonor Christ and cast a shadow on the gospel. Verse 12 says, <sup>12</sup> *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.* The word wrestle means that we struggle in hand-to-hand combat to the death. Wrestling is personal business, and to wrestle successfully with Satan, we must fight like Jacob in the Old Testament. We must take hold of a holy God and, through faith in Christ, yield to the crucified life, the life of the cross.

Your life is a death match for the glory of God, and the battle is won at the cross of Christ.

*(Pastor prays)*