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God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing

The Book of Ephesians

Alive In Christ: Discovering Our Identity & Purpose

Pt 8: "The Church's Final Orders: Stand, Pray, Go"

Ephesians 6:10-24

Today we continue our historical and chronological journey through the New Testament with Part 2 of The letter to the Ephesians. This Letter was written by the Apostle Paul during his first Roman imprisonment, around AD 60–62. Paul composed four letters now known as the Prison Epistles: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians.

"The Church's Final Orders: Stand, Pray, Go"

Text: Ephesians 6:10–24 | November 15, 2026
Series: *Alive in Christ: Discovering Our Identity & Purpose*

INTRODUCTION: FINAL ORDERS

Every soldier knows what final orders are.

They are not suggestions. They are not recommendations. They are not options to consider when convenient.

Final orders are the commanding officer's last word before the mission begins.

And when the Apostle Paul — chained to a Roman guard, awaiting trial before Caesar, writing from a prison cell in Rome — reaches the end of this magnificent letter to the Ephesians, he does not close with a gentle farewell.

He issues final orders.
Look at the Ephesians chart we have carried through this entire series. Chapters 1–3 declare our position in Christ — what God has done *for* us, *in* us, and *between* us. Chapters 4–6 call us to our practice on earth — our new unity, our new walk, our new strength. And right here — at the very end of that great movement — Paul brings it all to a point.
Six weeks ago we sat in the graveyard of Ephesians 2 — dead in sin, without hope, without God in the world.

Today we stand at the threshold of the mission field. And the commanding officer has three final orders for His church:

Stand. Pray. Go.

ORDER I: STAND (Ephesians 6:10–17)

Hold the Ground Christ Has Already Won

Ephesians 6:10-17… ***10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. 11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 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. 13 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. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. 16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.***

This is not a motivational suggestion. This is a military command. The Greek word *endunamoo* — to be empowered from within by an outside source — is the language of a soldier being equipped by his commanding officer before battle. This is not self-generated strength. This is received strength — drawn from the inexhaustible reservoir of the One who raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him far above every ruler and authority in the heavenly realms.

And then Paul tells us why we need it. Verse 12:

"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."

Here is the great tactical failure of the church in every generation:

- We consistently fight the wrong enemy.
- We fight our spouse.
- We fight our neighbor.
- We fight the person who hurt us, the politician we disagree with, the colleague who undermines us.

And all the while, the real enemy — the one orchestrating every conflict, whispering every lie, fanning every flame of division and despair — goes completely unaddressed.

Paul says: **WAKE UP. THE BATTLE IS REAL**. The enemy is real. And he is far more strategic than you have given him credit for.

So, what are the orders?

Put on the full armor of God.

Six pieces. Every one essential. No soldier goes into battle missing a single one:

The Belt of Truth — holds everything together. Without it, the breastplate sags, the sword has nowhere to hang, and the soldier is off-balance. Truth is the integrating center of the Christian life. When you lose your grip on truth — about God, about yourself, about the enemy — everything else begins to fall apart.

The Breastplate of Righteousness — covers the vital organs. This is not your own righteousness. This is the imputed righteousness of Christ placed on your account at the moment of salvation. When the enemy accuses you — and he will — you do not defend yourself with your track record. You point to the cross.

The Shoes of the Gospel — give you traction and readiness. A Roman soldier's boots were studded with hobnails so he could stand firm on any terrain. The Christian's footing is the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. You can stand anywhere — in any conversation, any conflict, any crisis — because your feet are planted on the solid ground of the Good News.

The Shield of Faith — extinguishes the fiery arrows. The Roman *thureos* was a large, door-sized shield soaked in water to put out flaming projectiles. Faith is not the absence of doubt — it is the active choice to trust God's Word over the enemy's whispers. Every arrow of accusation, temptation, and despair is extinguished when you hold up the shield.

The Helmet of Salvation — protects the mind. The enemy's primary battlefield is your thought life — your identity, your worth, your future. The helmet says: *"I know whose I am. I know where I am going. And nothing the enemy says can change what God has already declared."*

The Sword of the Spirit — the only offensive weapon in the list. Every other piece is defensive. The Word of God is what you use to attack — and it is the same weapon Jesus used in the wilderness when Satan came to tempt Him.
Three times the enemy came. Three times Jesus answered: *"It is written."*
Now notice something remarkable about Paul's battle instructions. He does not say *"charge."* He does not say *"conquer."* He does not say *"advance."*

Paul says **FOUR** times in this passage — "**STAND**."

1. ***"Stand firm against all strategies of the devil."*** (11)
2. ***"You will be able to resist (stand against) the enemy."*** (v. 13)
3. ***"Then after the battle you will still be standing firm."*** (v. 13)
4. ***"Stand your ground."*** (v. 14)

This is reminiscent of ***Exodus 14:13***

"Moses answered the people, 'Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you.'"

Why are we told to stand?

Because in Christ, the victory has already been won. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was not the beginning of the battle — it was the end of it. Satan is a defeated enemy fighting a rearguard action. He cannot take your salvation. He cannot reverse the resurrection. He cannot undo what God has declared over you.
Your orders are not to win a victory that has not yet been achieved.

Your orders are to hold the ground of a victory that has already been secured.

"God does not send His soldiers into battle unprotected. He has dressed you for victory. Put on the armor. Take your ground. And stand."

ORDER II: PRAY (Ephesians 6:18–20)

The Weapon That Activates the Mission

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. 19 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. 20 I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for Him, as I should.

You can follow Order I perfectly — put on every piece of armor Paul has described — and still fail the mission — if you neglect Order II.

Look again at verse 18:***"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere."***

Look at verse 18: ***"Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere."***

Wiersbe makes a striking tactical observation: the armor Paul describes covers the front of the soldier — but nothing covers the back. A Roman soldier was never meant to retreat. And the weapon that keeps him from retreating — the weapon that activates every other piece of armor and sustains the soldier through the long campaign — is prayer.

Prayer is not the warm-up before the mission.
Prayer is the mission.

Paul gives us **Four Dimensions of Prayer** in verse **18** — four standing orders for the praying church:

1. **Pray at all times** — not just Sunday morning, not just in crisis, not just when you remember. *Continuously.* The armor is worn all day — and prayer is the posture that keeps it in place and the power that keeps the soldier alert.

2. **Pray on every occasion** — no situation is too mundane for prayer and no crisis is too large. The Spirit-filled soldier brings everything to the commanding officer.
3. **Stay alert** — spiritual drowsiness is the enemy's greatest tactical opportunity. The disciples fell asleep in Gethsemane on the very night they needed to be most awake. Paul says: stay alert. The enemy does not announce his attacks.

4. **Be persistent** — the Greek word *proskartereo* means to stick to it, to not give up. Prayer is not a vending machine. It is a relationship with the commanding officer — and that relationship requires persistence, patience, and trust.

The church that stands in the armor of God and prays in the Spirit is not a church that is waiting for the world to come to it.

It is a church that is ready to go.

ORDER III: GO (Ephesians 6:19–24)

Carry the Good News to a Watching World

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19 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.

20 I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for Him, as I should. 21 To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along.
He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord's work. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. 23 Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. 24 May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul is in chains. He is under house arrest in Rome. He cannot go anywhere physically.

And yet — look at what he is doing. He is writing letters that will shape the theology of the church for two thousand years.

He is sending Tychicus as his personal ambassador to encourage the Ephesian believers. He is praying for boldness to preach the gospel to everyone who comes within earshot of his prison cell.

Paul in chains is more missionally active than most Christians who are completely free.
Because Paul understands something that we must never forget: The mission does not stop when circumstances get hard.

Look at verse 19:*"**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**."*

That is the mission. Not a program. Not a building campaign. Not a denominational initiative.

Warren Wiersbe reminds us: *"You and I must live to make the message of reconciliation personal. God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. We are His ambassadors of peace."*
You are God's ambassador. You may not be in chains — but you are surrounded by people who are. People chained to sin, to fear, to hopelessness, to the same spiritual death Paul described in Ephesians 2:1.

Paul closes this magnificent letter with three gifts found in verses 23, 24:

[23] Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. [24] May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace. Love. Grace.

These are not merely polite closing words. They are the summary of everything Ephesians has declared.
Peace — because Christ broke down the wall of hostility and reconciled us to God and to one another.
Love — because God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in our sins.
Grace — because it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not your own doing — it is the gift of God.
And notice: Paul says grace will be ***"eternally"*** upon all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.
Not temporarily. Not conditionally. Not until you fail again. **ETERNALLY.**

The same grace that found you in the graveyard will carry you all the way home.

Now look back at the Ephesians chart one more time.

Chapters 1–3 — declares our position in Christ. Key Word = 'Chosen'. The Direction is Vertical – God to Us. It is a Declaration of What God has done *for* us in sovereignty. What Christ has done *in* us by grace. What Christ has done *between* us through reconciliation. The Tone is Doctrinal and Doxological (Praise Focused)

Chapters 4–6 — calls us to our practice on earth. Key Word: 'Therefore'. Direction is Horizontal – Us to the World. Our new unity. Our new walk. Our new strength. The Tone is Practical and Missional.

And the theme that runs through the entire chart — top to bottom, left to right — is this:

"The holy community God is creating and how it is to live out its calling."

	Position (Ch. 1–3)	**Practice (Ch. 4–6)**
Key Word	*"Chosen"* (1:4)	*"Therefore"* (4:1)
Direction	Vertical — God to Us	Horizontal — Us to the World
Movement	Declaration of What God has done *for* us in sovereignty. What Christ has done *in* us by grace. What Christ has done *between* us through reconciliation.	Application – Our new unity. Our new walk. Our new strength.
Tone	Doctrinal / Doxological	Practical / Missional

You cannot have the practice without the position. You cannot walk worthy of a calling you do not yet understand.

CONCLUSION: We come to the end of the Letter to the Church in Ephesus (but also to us today.)

Chapters 1–3: ***This is who you are***. Chosen. Redeemed. Sealed. Raised. Reconciled. Built. Filled.

Chapters 4–6: ***This is what you do***. Walk. Grow. Put off. Put on. Love. Shine. Worship. Stand. Pray. Go.
This is the holy community God is creating — and how it is to live out its calling.

This is your story.

- You are no longer dead — you are alive.
- You are no longer a stranger — you are family.
- You are no longer walking in darkness — you are light.
- You are no longer unarmed — you are equipped.
- You are no longer without purpose — you are commissioned.
- You are alive in Christ.
- You are chosen before the foundation of the world. Raised from the graveyard of sin. Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Built together as one holy temple.

Today we received our three final orders:
STAND — in the armor God has provided, on the ground Christ has already won. Hold the line. Do not retreat. Do not go back to the graveyard.

PRAY — in the Spirit, at all times, persistently, boldly — for one another, for the lost, for the boldness to carry out your orders when the mission gets hard.

GO — as ambassadors of the sacred mystery, carriers of the Good News, living proof that the gospel changes everything — in your home, your workplace, your neighborhood, and to the ends of the earth.

These are your final orders.

<u>Our Response</u>?
Orders received. Identity secured. Purpose clear.
Stand strong. Pray boldly. Go faithfully.
And never forget who you are.
Now let's move out on Mission!

(Closing Prayer)
"Father, we leave this series not as spectators but as soldiers. Not as the defeated but as the commissioned. You have shown us who we are. You have dressed us for the battle. You have given us the weapon of prayer and the mission of the gospel. Send us out of this place armed, praying, and going — for Your glory, in the name of Jesus, who is above every ruler, every authority, every power, and who fills all things everywhere with Himself. Amen."