

Ephesians 6:10-24

2/24/18

United We Stand

If the letter to the Ephesians builds upon itself then it is interesting that Paul's conclusion ends in a discussion of spiritual warfare. Chapters 1-3 discuss what God has done on our behalf in Christ, and what it means to be in Christ. In chapters 4-6 Paul progresses to a discussion of the practical and relational implications of what is true for those who are in Christ. Paul concludes the relational section with what it means to be ready to do battle.

Spiritual warfare is inevitable for all Christians. We tend to think of it as failure or a result of sin. To some extent the exact opposite is true. The closer we are following Christ and the more influence we have on others in their walk with Christ the more intense the battle will become. It is good for us to recognize the message of the book of Job. Satan was allowed to torment Job precisely because he was a righteous man.

The Bible speaks about three great enemies that we battle on a constant basis if we choose to honor God by following Jesus.

1. THE WORLD

In [John 15](#) Jesus talks about the world hating the disciples because it hates Him. There are many passages that talk about our battle with the world system that is at war with God's system.

2. THE FLESH

Our sinful flesh wars against God's Spirit for control of our lives. ([Romans 8:1-17](#); [1 Corinthians 3:1-4](#); [Galatians 5:16-24](#))

3. THE DEVIL

We have an enemy that seeks to destroy us. ([1 Peter 5:8](#))

The extent of this blog does not permit an in-depth discussion of each of those enemies nor strategies to be used in each case. I would encourage you to take some time and do a word study on each of the three enemies that we must regularly do battle with. The strategies for each are different. Just like a good wrestler understands and studies his opponent or a great general does all he can to understand his enemy, we would do well to understand our opponents and biblical strategies for dealing with them. Dr. Karl Payne has written an excellent book entitled "Spiritual Warfare" in which he does an excellent job of discussing each of the enemies and strategies for fighting the battle with each.

In Ephesians 6 Paul is specifically talking about fighting against the schemes of the devil. It is interesting that we don't talk much about the devil or Satan in our day and age. It is as we feel that He has retired or something. But the Bible is very clear. We have an enemy who is out to destroy us. By us I mean as individuals, but I also mean as a body of Christ. I think it is this latter perspective that Paul is concerned with in Ephesians 6.

As noted above these verses are contained in the section of Ephesians that deals with relationships. Satan comes from a word that means adversary. Devil comes from a word that means slanderer. Satan is the adversary of God and of His people, and he is the slanderer of God and His people.

Paul's declaration in Ephesians has been that the manifold riches of Christ are declared through the multi-faceted nature of His body, the church. The church is the place where the grace of God is both declared and demonstrated. It declares God's glory to people who see it and to those in heavenly realms who see it work as it should. If that is true, then it makes total sense that one of Satan's greatest points of attack is the church.

Ephesians 6 is an admonition for the church to be prepared for Satan's schemes and attack strategies. That is God is so adamant about not creating disunity amongst His people. (Proverbs 6:16-19; Titus 3:10) It is why Paul said in Ephesians 4, "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". When God's church is dishonored, God is dishonored.

Our enemy is one who stands opposed to God and His people and one of his key strategies is accusing God and us. He accuses us individually and He accuses others in the body that we might cease to become God's ministers of grace and demonstration of His grace for all of His people.

Questions to consider:

1. How does this section on warfare summarize many of the ideas from previous chapters in Ephesians?
2. From where do Christians derive strength in order to stand in the battle? How do we do so?
3. Explain the nature and work of the enemy based on this passage?
4. What are the corporate aspects of this challenge and how do we participate corporately in the battle?
5. How significant is prayer in the use of the armor which God provides for us?
6. Does it encourage you that Paul asked for prayer for himself in the battle? Why or why not?
7. What encourages you and challenges you most in these final words of Paul to the Ephesians?