

Christ – Our Victorious Champion

Winning the War for Your Soul

PBC Fall Series

Text: Eph 6:10-13; Is 11:1-5; Is 59:16-20; Is 42:13; 2 Chron 32:7; Rom 8:37; Rom 8:31

Ephesians 6:10–13 “Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might**. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” (NASB95)

Isaiah 11:1–5 “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.” (ESV)

Isaiah 59:16–20 “He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. **He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head**; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the LORD drives. “**And a Redeemer will come to Zion**, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the LORD.” (ESV)

Isaiah 42:13 “The LORD goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, **he shows himself mighty** against his foes.” (ESV)

2 Chronicles 32:7–8 ““Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, **but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.**” And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.” (ESV)

Romans 8:37 “No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**” (ESV)

Romans 8:31b “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (ESV)

Introduction

Last week we began a series on the topic of spiritual warfare entitled “*Winning the War for Your Soul.*” The backdrop for this series has to do with the theme set forth in the book of Ephesians – **the stunning peace/shalom that God has re-established through the ministry of His Son, Jesus Christ.**

*Eph 1:2 "Grace to you and **peace** from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

*Eph 6:23 "**Peace** be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."*

- This peace was **predicted** in Is 9:6-7
"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this."
- The **cosmic scope** of this shalom is revealed in 1:9-10:
"making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."
- The **means** by which this peace was established is revealed in 2:14-16:
"For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility."
- Christ **extended** this peace to both Jew and Gentile in 2:17-19:
"And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,"
- As this new creation (the church) we who are members of the household of God are the present display of the shalom that God will one day bring to the whole earth under Messiah's rule (3:10):
"so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places."
- Therefore, we are to preserve the unity created by God's Spirit by holding it together with the mortar/glue of peace in 4:1-3 in our personal relationships:
"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."
- We are to be ready and eager to take this peace to those who need it in 6:15:
"and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace."

Paul has given us detailed instructions about two important things we are do with regard to this peace/shalom God has entrusted to us:

- We are to display its stunning beauty through how we live our lives (“walk worthy passages” 4:1,17; 5:2,8,15).
- We are to protect and guard it in the relationships of our lives (4:1-3; 5:21-6:9).

So it should come as no surprise when Paul alerts us that God’s ancient enemy, Satan is determined to shatter and destroy this shalom and has marshalled the massive spiritual forces of darkness to attack those who have been called to display and protect this peace (6:10-13).

We who are members of God’s household and who are the recipients, guardians, displayers, and proclaimers of this peace are under ruthless and relentless attack by a powerful spiritual enemy who has many forces and multiple battle plans/schemes to achieve our demise and destruction.

Paul ends his letter to the Ephesian church by informing them of the spiritual conflict facing them, and the provision God has made for their security and spiritual victory – and that provision is a marvelous armor that God has provided for them. (We looked at this in our last message together)

However, before we take a detailed look at the armor God has provided for us – we need to ***dispel three common misconceptions believers have about the Spiritual War*** Paul is talking about in this passage (Eph 6:10-20).

1. Misconception #1: The war going on is far away and distant – *Out of Sight, Out of Mind.*

- Many believers know the war is real and that there are casualties, but the war seems far enough away that we don’t need to worry about its immediate personal impact on us – at least not right now.
- Note the focus of the imperatives – Paul’s instructions are stated as imperatives – commands – that stress urgency and immediacy. This is something we are to do now and it is urgent/important.
- Note the up-close and personal nature of the battle – the term wrestle indicates hand to hand combat that is up close and personal.
- Note the use of the “evil day” terminology – Paul seems to point to the fact that there are specific occasions where Satan will do all in his power to throw us down from the ground God has told us to hold.

2. Misconception #2: The enemy is either innocuous or occupied with other things in other places and we have escaped his notice.
 - Paul states that there are in fact many powerful, wicked forces, and they are right now contending against us.
 - Peter reminds us that our enemy, the Devil, is like an enraged lion who is actively seeking to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8) just like sin destroyed and devoured Cain (Gen 4:7) therefore we are to be sober and vigilant.

3. Misconception #3: We must fight this battle ourselves (stuck on an outpost with the general back at HQ) and in our own strength (we have to figure out how to strap on the armor and use it effectively).
 - This misconception is totally contrary to the instruction of this passage – *be strengthened in the Lord's strength* (passive voice of the verb).
 - This is totally contrary to the grammar of this passage – use of second person plural speaks to the collective nature of the church – we are in this fight together with other believers (not alone or isolated).
 - This misconception is totally contrary to the biblical promise found in Romans– God Himself is fighting for us!
Romans 8:31b “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

So ... as we consider this marvelous armor – even before we talk about how we put it on and use it effectively, we need to realize that there is something even more important and foundational that we may not have initially considered – God Himself is described as wearing this armor!

- Belt of truth – Is 11:5
- Breastplate of Righteousness and Helmet of Salvation – Is 59:17
- Shoes of Gospel Peace – Is 52:7
- Shield of Faith – Gen 15:1; Dt. 32:9; Ps 33:20
- Spirit's Sword – Is 49:2; Dt 32:9

And if God is wearing this armor, there can only be one reason – He Himself is fighting for us and with us in the battle.

I. What Does God Do For Us? (He Fights For His People)

Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

1 John 4:4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome. them, for He who is in you is greater than He who is in the world.

A. Scriptures Tells Us This Directly

- **Deut 3:22:** “You shall not fear them, for it is the LORD your God who fights for you.”
- **2 Chronicles 32:8:** ... but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles

B. Scripture Reveals God as the Leader of an Undefeatable Army

- Seen in His name “*Lord of Hosts*” – literally Lord of Armies!
- Occurs in OT more than 200x
- Best seen in Ps 46:7,11 “The Lord of Hosts is with us”

C. So, who exactly are these armies and where are they located?

1. A Spiritual Army in the Heavenly Realm – Angels who fight for God and for His People.
 - Angels are described as divine warriors (Dt. 33.2; Ps 68.17)
 - They are myriad in number (Heb 11.22; Rev 5:11)
 - They are mighty in power and strength (Ps 103.20)
 - They fight for the Lord against His enemies (Rev 12:7-8 in Heaven; Daniel 10:13 – war on earth).
 - They are called to serve God’s people (Heb 1:14)
 - They protect God’s people (Elisha, 2 Kings 6:17; Israel against the Assyrian army, 2 Chron 32:21; Daniel in the lions’ den, Dan 6:22; Peter in prison, Acts 12:7-11)
 - They are led by and will appear with Christ as His army (2 Thess 1:7; Rev 19:11-16)
2. A Spiritual Army in the Earthly Realm – His redeemed people (Israel in the OT and the Church in the NT).
 - Angelic army fought for God’s People in the days of Hezekiah when Sennacherib and the Assyrian army (2 Chron 32:7; 20-22)
 - OT Israel was an army who fought against God’s enemies in God’s strength – Gideon’s 300 against the Midianite army (Judges 7).

II. How Does God Fight For His People? (Through a Divine Warrior)

- Through an anointed, appointed champion – a divine warrior.
 - ⇒ Who is endued by His Spirit and Enabled by His Power
 - ⇒ Who fights for God’s People
 - ⇒ With the Power of God’s Spirit
- It is not unusual for God to elect a champion to fight for His people

⇒ David did this for Israel – against Goliath
⇒ Now, a descendent of David (one greater than David) is fighting for His people against one greater than Goliath (Satan).

- So... who is this Divine Champion Who Fights for His People in such remarkable ways with such amazing success? He is introduced in Isaiah 9 and Isaiah 11.

A. His Identity – Gen 3:15; Is 9:6-7; 11:1

Gen 3:15 “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.””

Is 9:6-7 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

Isaiah 11:1 “There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.”

B. His Enablement – Is 11:2-3a

“And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.”

- The secret to His amazing success is that the Spirit of God rests upon Him
 - He is endued with the presence of the Spirit
 - He is enabled by the Power of the Spirit
1. Which gives him **remarkable wisdom and understanding** – insight into the truth about people and circumstances. (Satan’s main tactic is deception – this champion knows and has insight into the truth).
 2. Which gives him **amazing counsel and might** – the ability to formulate and execute sound strategies. (Satan has schemes that he is executing against God’s people – this champion also has tactics and strategies that he executes over and against those of his enemies).
 3. He has **intimate knowledge and reverent devotion** to God – personal, intimate relationship with God marked by joyful reverent delight in God! Like Abraham of old, this champion is the “friend of God.”

C. His Conduct and Character (11:4-5)

“but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.”

1. His conduct will be marked by justice and equity for all (v. 4)
2. His character will be marked by righteousness and faithfulness to truth! (v. 5)

D. His Mission – to restore the earth to the shalom of Eden and to fill up the earth with the knowledge of the Lord until the glory of the Lord rests on the land! (11:6-10)

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.” (Isaiah 11:6–10, ESV)

- Note the strength that empowers Him is the Holy Spirit (11:2) – that same Holy Spirit indwells and empowers us!
- Note the armor He wears belted around his waist – righteousness and faithfulness to truth (11:5) – that same belt is available to us – the power and might and direction and enablement of the Spirit.
- Note that his mission to bring shalom to the earth has already been initiated and we are the first fruits (11:6-9).
- Note the nations are inquiring and His present resting place (the church) is indeed glorious (11:10).

III. Where and When Does God Fight For Us? (Eph 2:13-19)

What did our Champion win for us when He tore down the wall of hostility between God and us and between us and others?

A. In the Past – Salvation (Romans 3:24-26)

- B. In the Future – Glorification (Romans 8:30)**
- C. In the Present – Sanctification (Romans 15:16)**

By this act he redeemed us from our sins, adopted us into God’s family with all rights and privileges, dwells in us through God’s Spirit, and leads us as a victorious army!

IV. Why Does God Fight for His People?

A. For the Performance of a Master Plan – Shalom (Eph 1:9-10)

“making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

B. For the Protection and Preservation of His People (Rom 8:37-39)

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

C. For the Powerful, Permanent, Public Defeat of God’s Foes (Col 2:15; Rom 16:20)

Col 2:15 *“He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”*

Rom 16:20 *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.”*

D. For the Praise of God’s Glory (Eph 1:6,12,14)

CONCLUSION – So, what does all of this mean for us in our every-day lives?

As our Divine Champion --

- 1. Jesus fought for us** – He already fought and won the war! So, no matter what happens in the daily battles around us, we already know the outcome – and it is gloriously good!
- 2. Jesus fights in our place** – all through Ephesians Paul reminds us that we are “in Christ” – theologians refer to this as “union with Christ.”
 - we are in Christ (1:1)
 - God has given us all blessings in Christ (1:3)

- We were elected/chosen in Christ (1:4)
- In Christ we have redemption (1:7) and an inheritance (1:11) and in Christ we are sealed by the Holy Spirit (1:13)
- We have been raised with Christ and seated with Him in the Heavenly realm (2:6) and in Him we have been made members of God's household and are being built up as His holy dwelling place/temple (2:18-20).

So, because we are in Christ – when He fights against the enemy of our soul – we are the beneficiaries of that fight! When Satan comes against us – He actually encounters a powerful warrior, our divine champion, Jesus, who has already defeated him.

3. Jesus fights alongside us in our daily battles with sin, the world, and the devil!

- Because His Spirit is in us – we have access to His strength
- Because we are in Him – we have constant protection from His armor
- Because He fights for us, in us, and through us – we have a sure path to victory

- Because He is our champion – we can fight to win
- When we put on the armor – we can actually use it effectively
- When we meet the enemy in battle – we can actually fight effectively
- When we are knocked down, we know we are not knocked out of the fight for the battle has already been won.

God has done an amazing work of recreation in you – and as part of that new creation, you are the personal dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

This is the same Spirit that rested on the Messiah in Is 11! This means that you have the same wisdom and insight from Him. You have the same counsel and strength available to you! And you have the same intimate, experiential knowledge and devotion to God the Father that this champion had to God!

In one sense, you are fighting the battles and engaged in the conflict – but in a very real sense – your battle is being fought by a champion who fights with you and whose power, strength, wisdom, and devotion you share by means of the Holy Spirit that rests on you!