

We Stand Together in Spiritual Battle

August 30, 2020 Bible Studies for Life

When have you been surprised by the unexpected?

- woke up to a big snow storm
- another car moves over into your lane and causes a wreck
- get in the car to go to work and find a flat tire or a dead battery
- the pandemic interrupts the whole world
- a call that someone you know is sick

We can easily be surprised by an unexpected problem. However, we need not be destroyed.

The Point: We stand strong with God's armor and the support of others.

This world is in a spiritual battle. As believers we can stand in Christ and against Satan. God has equipped the believers and we can triumph over the enemy.

Paul wrote Ephesians while he was in prison and in chains. After being arrested in Jerusalem, he spent 2 years in prison in Caesarea and another 2 years in Rome. He was guarded by a Roman soldier. Paul had firsthand experience about armor and soldiers.

Ephesians 6:10 – 13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the ^[b]wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of ^[c]the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places.

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.

Paul began verse 10 with “Finally.” He was ready to wrap up his letter. The final major topic was the discussion of the spiritual battle they would fight and how they did not need to fight with their own strength and resources, but God would protect them.

What is your responsibility in the spiritual battle?

Put on the whole armor of God. Learn to depend on God. Paul used the imagery of a soldier's armor, but probably meant that God would provide the armor we need to stand against the devil. The devil tries to keep Christians from developing a deep relationship with God. Be alert at all times because the devil is looking for our weaknesses to discourage us from believing. Paul knew that Christians would face temptations from Satan. Unbelievers are blinded by the devil. They are focused on self and what makes them happy. The Ephesians as well as us today can be victorious in the spiritual battle when we stay strong in the Lord.

How would you describe the struggle between good and evil in our world?

Paul identified several types of spiritual enemies: rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and evil spiritual forces in the heavens.

Paul says we should take on the full armor of God so that we can resist the devil. Christians are facing a lot of evils today. Ephesians 5:16 says “the days are evil.” Then in Matthew 6:34, Jesus taught that “each day has enough trouble of its own.”

We must be prepared and ready to take our stand. Paul probably knew the account of the devil tempting Jesus (Matt.4:1-11) and he understood the devil would tempt others. We are in a spiritual battle and we need to be prepared. God has provided the equipment we need to fight this battle.

Next, we will see how Paul described the full armor of God

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

For each of the pieces of equipment, what part of the body does it protect, what ability does it provide?

Armor	Physical area protected or capability provided	Spiritual protection or capability
belt of truth	strap on armor, hold everything in place	truth holds everything in place
breastplate of righteousness	the chest, the heart	the emotions
shoes of the gospel	feet protected, ability to advance, good footing	enable attacks, advancement against Satan’s territory
shield of faith	overall, all around protection	protection from whatever angle Satan attacks
helmet of salvation	the head, the brain	the mind
sword of the Spirit (Scripture)	protection, stab, slash, close in fighting	use God’s word in teaching, preaching, witnessing

What would happen if we left out one or more of the elements of *spiritual* armor?

Spiritual armor element	Problem when missing
Truth/scripture/gospel	absolute necessity; enables preaching, teaching, encouragement, promises
Faith	absolute necessity; only way of salvation
Righteousness	God's righteousness protects our heart/emotions Unprotected emotions can get us down, allow Satan to discourage
Salvation	God's salvation protects our minds, our intellect Unprotected mind can cause confusion, misdirection, allow Satan to easily fool us

How do we consciously “put on” this spiritual armor?

- choose to read, study, apply God's word
- daily declare our faith in what God is telling us
- thank God for His righteousness, confess our inability to live a righteous life in our own strength
- daily tell God that we are receiving and applying His armor for our spiritual victories over Satan's attacks

Next, we see the importance of prayer.

¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

In these verses, Paul focuses on prayer. He asks the Ephesians to pray that he would know the right things to say, for God's help in his preaching and teaching, not to be afraid to speak, for wisdom, and to be a representative for the Lord to the people.

We need to pray for one another as we face spiritual warfare. Paul urges us to pray in the Spirit. Let our prayers be guided by the Spirit, allow God's spirit to direct us what to pray about, pray over true Spiritual issues, not just selfish wants and pray concerning the spiritual battles.

Our prayers should be grounded in our relationship to God. We should avoid hypocritical prayers.

“praying always with all prayer and supplication” – Paul urges us to pray at all times, to stay alert, and not just pray when we have a need. We should not depend on ourselves or just turn to God when all else fails.

“being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints and for me” – Paul’s chains and confinement may have tempted him to be discouraged, but he asked several times to speak boldly for Christ. Paul continued his ministry even while he was in prison.

We do not have any written evidence that the church at Ephesus responded to Paul’s prayer requests. Paul was probably confident of their support. Paul expected the members of the church to help each other as they faced temptations from the devil.

As the church, the body of Christ, we are an army that needs to face the forces of evil together. We need to pray and support each other. We can pray for others’ physical needs, spiritual struggles, to make the right choices, and wisdom. We need to work together to be unified. Our desire should be to do what God wants us to do and what glorifies Him.

Application

Take your stand.

- Through prayer, commit yourself anew to standing firm in the strength of the Lord in spiritual battle.

Stand with your church.

- Take spiritual ownership of your church by praying regularly for your pastor(s), teacher(s), and fellow church members.
- Begin a prayer journal as a guide to help you pray.

Stand with the nations.

- Research missionary needs, unreached people groups, and persecution.