

## THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE OF THE CHURCH AS THE NEW MAN

Message Two

### The New Man as the Corporate Warrior of God with Christ as the Constituents of the Whole Armor of God

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:10-20

Ephesians 6:10-20 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength. Put on the **whole armor** of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil, For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies. 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. Stand therefore, I having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace; Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God, **By means of all prayer and petition**, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints, And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

#### Six words to highlights our fellowship on the burden of this message:

**Warfare** - The general subject of the message is regarding warfare. The spiritual warfare as the one new man. I hope that we can have these realization and awareness of our part of this warfare.

**I. Ephesians 5 reveals that the church is the bride to satisfy the desire of Christ for His expression with His image, and Ephesians 6 reveals that the church as the new man is a corporate warrior fighting the battle for God's interests on earth for His dominion (thus fulfilling God's eternal purpose in Genesis 1:26):**

- A. In Ephesians 5 and 6 we see the church as the bride and as the warrior; in Revelation 19 we also have these **two aspects** of the church.
- B. In Revelation 19:7 and 8 we see that the bride is clothed in "fine linen, bright and clean"; then in verse 14 we see that the armies that follow the Lord into battle are "dressed in fine linen, white and clean"; these verses indicate that the bride's wedding garment will also be the uniform that **she** wears as God's army to fight against His enemy.
- C. As the bride, the church needs **love and light**; as the warrior, the church needs **might** and the whole armor of God.

**Christ** - Christ is the constituent of the whole armor of God. Every item is Christ. The whole armor is Christ! Christ is the constituent and the content of the new man. Hence, the new man lives a life that is not only like God but even is God. This life is the righteousness and holiness of the reality. As we live out this righteousness and holiness, we live out God. In this way we express God on earth and accomplish His will on earth for the fulfilling of His original purpose in creating man

**II. Ephesians 6:10-20 reveals that Christ is the constituents of God's armor for the church, the one new man, as the corporate warrior of God:**

- A. "Finally, **be empowered** in the Lord and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil"— vv. 10-11:

**The Body** - The armor of God is not for any individual but for the Body of Christ.

1. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that we cannot fight the spiritual warfare in ourselves; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
2. The whole armor of God is for the entire **Body of Christ** as the corporate warrior, not for any individual member of the Body; we must fight the spiritual warfare in the Body, not as individuals—vv. 10-13; James 4:7; cf. Phil. 1:19; Rom. 13:12-14; 16:20.
3. In Ephesians 2 we sit with Christ in the heavenlies; in chapters 4 and 5 we walk in His Body on the earth; then in chapter 6 we stand in His power in the heavenlies.
4. To sit with Christ is to participate in all His accomplishments, to walk **in His Body** is to fulfill God's eternal purpose, and to stand in His power is to fight against God's enemy.

**Man's will** - The source of conflict is the addition of another will. In Genesis 2 we see that man was free to exercise his will to eat either of the tree of life or of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These two trees represent the divine will and the satanic will, respectively. Hence, in the garden there was a triangular situation, with the tree of life representing the divine will, the tree of knowledge representing the satanic will, and Adam representing the human will. Actually, the tree of life denotes God Himself, and the tree of knowledge denotes Satan. Therefore, there were three persons—**God, Satan, and man—each one with a will.**

- B. “Stand therefore, having **girded your loins** with truth”—v. 14a:
1. Truth in Ephesians 6:14 refers to God in Christ as the reality in our living, that is, God realized and experienced by us in our living; this is actually Christ Himself lived out by us—4:15, 21, 24-25; John 14:6.
  2. The truth with which we are girded is actually the Christ whom we experience; because Paul’s living was conformed to the pattern of Christ, he had the strength to face all opposition and adverse circumstances—Eph. 4:20; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- C. “Having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**”—Eph. 6:14b; 1 Cor. 1:30; Jer. 23:6:
1. Christ as the breastplate of righteousness covers our conscience, signified by the breast; in fighting against Satan, our accuser, we need a blood-purified conscience, a conscience void of offense—Heb. 9:14; 10:22; Acts 24:16.
  2. “They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 12:11); our response to Satan’s accusations should be, “I overcome Satan, the accuser, not by my perfection and not even by a conscience void of offense but by the blood of the Lamb; I am defended against his accusations by the breastplate of righteousness.”
- D. “Having **shod your feet** with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace”—Eph. 6:15:
1. Christ has made peace for us on the cross, both with God and with man, and this peace has become our gospel; the gospel of peace has been established as a firm foundation, as a readiness with which our feet may be shod—2:13-17.
  2. We fight the spiritual warfare by standing in peace; if we lose the peace between us and God or between us and other believers, we lose the standing to fight—Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:6-7.

**Faith** - Of all the items in the armor, there is a definite burden on this. Every morning you have to lift up this faith before God. Then you will withstand temptations without even being conscious of it. Very few Christians know what the shield of faith is. We need the shield of faith even before temptations come. If the first thing you do in the morning is to believe, you are holding up the shield of faith, and the darts from Satan will be knocked down. If you lift up your faith in this way to withstand the enemy day by day, you will find one day—that glorious day—that many darts were knocked away from you.

- E. “Besides all these, having taken up the **shield of faith**, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one”—Eph. 6:16; 2 Cor. 4:13; Heb. 12:2; cf. Phil. 2:13:
1. The flaming darts are Satan’s temptations, proposals, doubts, questions, lies, and attacks; we need to take up the shield of faith **to quench** these flaming darts.
  2. We need to exercise our spirit of faith with our subdued and resurrected will to believe that the Lord’s manifestation is to **destroy the works** of the devil—2 Cor. 4:13; 1 John 3:8; Matt. 16:22-23; Luke 4:39; Matt. 12:28; Luke 10:17, 19.
  3. We need to exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord’s death has **destroyed Satan**—Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:54-58; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:3-6.
  4. We need to exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord’s resurrection has **put Satan to shame**—Col. 2:12-15, 20; 3:1; John 14:30; Phil. 3:10; Isa. 61:10; Zech. 3:4-5.
  5. We need to exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the ascension of the Lord is far **above Satan’s power**—Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6; 6:11, 13.
  6. We must have faith in **God, who is real**, living, present, and available—Mark 11:22; Rev. 1:18.
  7. We must have faith in God’s heart; **God’s heart toward us is always good**; He has no intention to punish us, to injure us, or to cause us to suffer loss—Rom. 8:28-39.
  8. We must have faith in **God’s faithfulness**; God cannot lie but is always faithful to His word—1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:9; Titus 1:2.
  9. We must have faith in **God’s ability**—Eph. 3:20.
  10. We must have faith in **God’s word**; God is bound to fulfill all that He has spoken— cf. 1 Thes. 5:24; Eph. 6:17-18.
  11. We must have faith in **God’s will**—1:5, 9, 11; Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 10:5-10.
  12. We must have faith in **God’s sovereignty**; under His sovereignty even our mistakes work for good—Rom. 9:19-29.
- F. “Receive the **helmet of salvation**”—Eph. 6:17a:
1. The helmet of salvation is for covering our mind, our mentality, against the negative thoughts shot in by the evil one; such a helmet, such a covering, is God’s salvation.
  2. Satan injects fear, threats, worries, anxieties, and other weakening thoughts into our mind; God’s salvation is the covering that we take up against all of these, and this salvation is the saving Christ whom we experience in our daily life—John 16:33.
- G. Receive “the **sword of the Spirit**, which Spirit is the word of God”—Eph. 6:17b:
1. Among the six items of God’s armor, the sword of the Spirit is the only one for attacking the outward enemy and the inward adversary; with the sword we cut the outward enemy and the subjective, inward adversary to pieces.
  2. Christ as the Spirit and the word furnishes us with a sword as an offensive weapon to defeat and slay the negative elements in our being; as we pray-read the Word, eventually the self, the worst foe of all, will be put to death.

3. When the logos (the constant word in the Bible) becomes the rhema (the present, instant, living, and personal speaking of the Spirit) to us, this rhema is the sword that cuts the adversary to pieces:
  - a. The more we take in the word with its killing power, the more our pride and all the negative elements within us are put to death; by pray-reading, the inward adversary is slain.
  - b. In Ephesians 5 the word is for nourishment that leads to the beautifying of the bride (vv. 26-27), but in Ephesians 6 the word is for killing that enables the church to engage in spiritual warfare (vv. 17-18).

**Prayer** - The way we apply the whole armor of God.

- H. “By means of all **prayer and petition**, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints”—v. 18:
  1. Prayer may be considered the seventh item of the armor of God because it is the means by which we apply the other items.
  2. Prayer is the unique way to apply Christ as the armor of God; it is prayer that makes the armor available to us in a practical way.
  3. We need to persevere in prayer because prayer involves a battle, a fight; two parties, God and Satan, are hostile to each other; the third party consists of God’s chosen and redeemed people—Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18; Matt. 26:41; cf. Eph. 5:14; Rom. 13:11-14.
  4. In order to fight on God’s side against Satan, we need to persevere in prayer; this perseverance is needed because the course of the whole world is away from God—1 John 5:19; cf. John 14:30; 16:33.
  5. Before we try to persevere in prayer, we should first make a vow to the Lord concerning our prayer life; we need to say to Him, “Lord, I am desperate about this; I offer myself to You so that I may have a prayer life; Lord, keep me in the spirit of prayer; if I forget this or neglect this, I know that You will not forget it; remind me again and again about prayer.”
  6. Persevering in prayer has many benefits:
    - a. Prayer is the only way that we can set our mind on the things above—Col. 3:2; Heb. 7:25; 8:2; cf. Acts 6:4.
    - b. Prayer is the way to enter into the Holy of Holies and come forward to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to meet our timely need (Heb. 4:16); when we pray, approaching the throne of grace, grace will become a river flowing in us and supplying us—*Hymns*, #770.
    - c. The more we pray, the more we experience being one with the Lord, enjoy His presence, and have fellowship with Him; what a marvelous reward!