

SERIES: Living In Love
SUBJECT: Soldiers For Christ.
READING: Eph 6:10-24

Introduction:

Occasionally one would never think I remember things; this morning might lead you to think I was a candidate for Exelon, Razadyne therapy (Alzheimer's therapies) but I do remember things people say catchy my thoughts; this morning Brother Shumaker said the phrase "professions of faith" instead of saying so and so got saved. But tonight I am reminded of the number of times I have heard brother Dutch say that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground. And sooner or later we all discover that we face an enemy who is much stronger than we are **apart from the Lord.**

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. In verse 10 Paul tells us to put what we have strength (Courage and bravery) and power which both enable us in the battle and destroys the enemy in our service for Christ.

Being in the Roman empire during his lifetime, chained to a Roman soldier part of that time would tend to lead Paul to use the military to illustrate the believer's conflict with Satan!

That Satan is a fierce adversary is clearly revealed in the bible as Peter called him when he warned his readers; "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" 1Pe 5:8

Paul's readers were certainly familiar with soldiers and the equipment they used. **As Christians, we face three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3).**

- **"The world"** refers to the system around us that is opposed to God, that caters to **"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"** (1 John 2:15-17).
 - **"Society apart from God" is a simple, but accurate, definition of "the world."**

"The flesh" is the old nature that we inherited from Adam, a nature that is opposed to God and can do nothing spiritual to please God.

By His death and resurrection, Christ overcame the world Joh 16:33 **These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**

Gal 6:14 **But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**

We overcome the flesh Gal 2:20 **I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

And through our relationship with Christ we overcome the devil (Eph. 1:19-23).

In other words, as believers, we do not fight to gain the victory—we fight from a position of strength and victory !

The Spirit of God enables us, by faith, to appropriate Christ's victory for ourselves.

In these closing verses of the letter, Paul discussed four topics so that his readers, by understanding and applying these truths, might walk in the victory we have already gained.

- 1. The armor we have available begins with intelligence on the Enemy** *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*
Eph 6:11

- a. The intelligence corps plays a vital part in warfare because it enables the officers to know and understand the enemy.
- b. Unless we know who the enemy is, where he is, and what he can do, what his secret weapons are we will have a difficult time defeating him.
- c. **Satan is the commander in chief of the demonic legions but his foot soldiers are identified throughout the entire Bible,**
 - i. **Devil means "accuser," because he accuses God's people day and night before the throne of God;** Like so many in the battle for places of power in the political realm they have no compunction about making up lies and twisting truth to make things appear different than they are in reality!
 - ii. **Satan I have already said he was the "adversary" because he is the enemy of God.**
 - iii. **He is also called the tempter (Matt. 4:3), and the murderer and the liar (John 8:44). A snake; the god of this age, and even an angel of light (),**

2Co 11:13-15 *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (14) And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. (15) Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

There are many mysteries connected with Satan, but what he is doing and where he is going are certainly no mystery!

- d. Since he is a created being, and not eternal (as God is), he is limited in his knowledge and activity. Unlike God, Satan is not all-knowing, all-powerful, or everywhere-present!**

Then how does he accomplish so much in so many different parts of the world?

- a. The answer is in his organized helpers.**
 - a. Satan's helpers are called out by Paul as "principalities... powers... rulers... spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).**
 - b. Charles B. Williams paraphrases it: *"For our contest is not with human foes alone, but with the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark world; that is, with the spirit forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest."***
 - i. This suggests a definite army of demonic creatures that assist Satan in his attacks against believers.**

- ii. The Apostle John hinted that one third of the angels fell with Satan when he rebelled against God (Rev. 12:4),
- iii. and Daniel wrote that Satan's angels struggle against God's angels for control of the affairs of nations.

Dan 10:12-20 *Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.*

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. (14) Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. (15) And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. (16) And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. (17) For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. (18) Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, (19) And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. (20) Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

- iv. A spiritual battle is going on in this world, and in the sphere of "the heaventies," and you and I are a part of this battle.
- v. Knowing this makes "walking in victory" a vitally important thing to us—and to God.

c. The important point is that our battle is not against human beings. It is against spiritual powers.

- i. When Satan attacks I believe he has the power to use people even good people if he can get them to focus on peripherals instead of on the main thing of winning souls and training servants!
- ii. We are easily deceived when the devil can distract us from the bigger picture of our battle by focusing on the isolated skirmishes!
- iii. Unless we remember that when we are doing what God has revealed in our heart and confirmed in His word is right Satan will use people and circumstances as distracters!**
- iv. The devil will have us waste our time fighting one another when we ought to be fighting the devil who seeks to control people and make them oppose the work of God.

b. Satan's abilities are often underestimated.

- a. Never underestimate the power of the devil. He is not compared to a lion and a dragon just for fun!
 - i. The Book of Job tells what his power can do to a man's body, home, wealth, and friends.
 - ii. Jesus calls Satan a thief who comes "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10).

b. Not only is Satan strong, but he is also wise and subtle, and we fight against "the wiles of the devil."

- i. Wiles means "cunning, crafty arts, stratagems." *It is not always the one with the most powerful team that wins the game! IT IS THE ONE WITH THE BEST STRATEGY!*
- ii. The Christian cannot afford to be "ignorant of his devices" as Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 2:11.
- iii. Some men are cunning and crafty as Paul reminds us; Eph 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

- iv. **Behind their *cunning craftiness* is the arch-deceiver, Satan.**
- v. The fact that Paul uses the word "**wrestle**" in Eph 6:12 indicates that we are involved in a hand-to-hand battle and are not mere spectators at a game.
- vi. Satan wants to use our external enemy, the world, and our internal enemy, the flesh, to defeat us. **His weapons and battle plans are formidable.**

Next week Lord willing we will discover that we have better weapons and a superior battle plan!