

Ephesians 6:10-20 ESV

Do You Know about the Devil's Scheme to Devour You?

Sunday, August 30 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, August 31 at 7 PM

14th Sunday after Pentecost / 13th Sunday after Trinity – 2015

No Service on Labor Day – Monday, September 7

Introduction: Dear friends in Jesus Christ: We are so blessed here in America to be *relatively free* from engaging in war on *our soil*. Yes, we were attacked in 2001 *but our enemies killed themselves*. So, to *find war on our soil*, we have to go back to December 7, 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Yes, we attempted to fight back, but we also suffered many casualties (wounded and dead) *because we were unprepared*.

When a person dies in a physical battle – *it is heart-wrenching for his family*. But *when a person dies in a spiritual battle*, it is even more heart-wrenching – *he is lost for eternity!*

Today, in *Ephesians 6:10-20*, God wants us to see that – even now – we are engaged in a *spiritual battle!* **In Revelation chapter 12**, ♦the devil tried to devour Jesus (4), but failed; ♦then, *twice*, he tried to destroy *all believers* (13-16), but failed; ♦¹⁷ **“Then the dragon became furious... and went off to make war... on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus”** (ESV).

Therefore, today, let us learn more about our spiritual enemies; then, let us ♦*put on the full armor of God*, ♦*receive the Sword of the Spirit*, and ♦*be faithful soldiers of Christ!*

1. **We Need God's Strength Against the Devil:** So who is the devil? **He** has been sinning from the beginning; **he**

tempted Eve—*and she fell*; **he** tempted Jesus—*but He did not fall*; **he** prevents the seed of God’s Word from taking root unto eternal life; **he** is the father of lies; **he** prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour; **he** is the deceiver of the whole world; and **he** will be thrown into the lake of fire.¹

- a. ¹⁰ **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might**. [How?] ¹¹ **Put on** [*clothe yourselves with*] **the whole armor of God**, [Why?] **that you may be able** [*powerful*] **to stand against the schemes of the devil**. // Since our enemy is so tough, it is *essential* for us to *ever-continue*
 - ◆ in the Lord’s strength *and* ◆ in the Lord’s armor! Think about David against Goliath, he went against him *in the name of the LORD!*
- b. ¹² **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but** [*against spiritual enemies*] **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over** [*or world rulers of*] **this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places**. // Note that our fighting is wrestling, *thus up close*, hand-to-hand combat! Furthermore, it is **not** against the *lower evil powers*, **but** against those which are *very high* – so we *desperately* need our Lord JESUS CHRIST!
- c. ¹³ **Therefore take up the whole armor of God**, [Why?] **that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm**.

2. **We Need God’s Armor Against the Devil**: Not only each piece of armor, *but the ability to use each piece!*

¹ 1 John 3:8; Gen. 3:1-8; Matt. 4:1-11; 13:19; John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8; Rev. 12:9; 20:12

- a. ¹⁴ **Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth [Bible], and having put on the breastplate of righteousness [Christ], ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace [assurance]. // As a belt goes all the way around, so we are to surround ourselves with God's truth! As a breastplate protects the vital organs, so we have God's vital gift of righteousness in Jesus Christ! As boots enable soldiers to step forward without fear, so the gospel – forgiveness through Jesus – enables us to go forward with assurance!**
- b. ¹⁶ **In all circumstances ~~take~~ [having taken] up the shield of faith, with which you ~~can~~ [will be able to] extinguish all the flaming darts [arrows] of the evil one; ¹⁷ and ~~take~~ [receive, δέξασθαι] the helmet of salvation, // Salvation is never taken or earned, but received by grace through faith!**
3. **We Need God's Weapons Against the Devil:** So part 2 described our *defensive protection*; now, in part 3, we focus on our *offensive weapons*!
- a. ^{17b} **and [receive] the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. //**
- i. So the Word of God is also *received*; Jesus said to Peter: “...flesh and blood has not revealed this to you [thus you didn't take it or figure it out], but my Father who is in heaven [enabled you to see or receive it]” (Matt. 16:17 ESV). So we never change God's Word; instead, we receive it, believe it, and apply it!

Dr. Luther wrote: “Here it is not enough that we defend ourselves against the devil with faith and hope..., but we must also draw the sword and go for him [*for the devil*]...” Since the Word of God is this weapon, it behooves us to... become acquainted with it both by means of public preaching and by earnest Bible study at home. [Brief] reading must be supplemented by careful memorizing of proof-texts and strong passages. Only in this way shall we be able to make the proper use of the Word of God as a true weapon of offense at all times (Kretzmann, NT II:292).

- ii. Also, as good soldiers, we pray – *not just in times of difficulty and not on our own*, but at all times **and** with the help of the Spirit!
- b. **To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication** [*earnest prayer*] **for all the saints** [*believers*],¹⁹ **and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,**²⁰ **for which I am an ambassador in chains** [*under house arrest*], **that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.** // I also ask for your prayers!

Conclusion: Finally, since our enemies are so fierce, let us be faithful soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Prayer of Response: Dear Lord, now that I am more aware of the spiritual battle raging around me, cover me with Your armor and fortify me with Your Word and prayer. Amen!

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