

Sermon Notes, November 12, 2017

Spiritual Warfare (Part 2), Ephesians 6-10-20

Spiritual warfare. I want you to know how urgent this is, not just for you individually, but for our church, to understand and grasp this material. This is important stuff that Paul shares with us. It's real. It's timely. Paul says, "On the evil day, put on the full armor of God, realize you're struggling with more than flesh and blood, and you will stand." There is nothing more practical.

Today, let's finish what we started last week. Three things this first verse tells you. Here again are the principles:

First, *real Christianity is a fight*. Secondly, *the fight is the Lord's*. Thirdly, *the battling is ours*. These are immensely practical. They lay the basis for everything else we're going to see.

1. Real Christianity is a fight

The point is this text tells you, you can tell a genuine Christian as much from the warfare and conflict in your life as from the peace. The Bible is insistent that when you become a Christian, new warfare has started. If there's no fight to your Christian life, it's because you've been so unprepared you have not even noticed you have been taken prisoner, or you're not alive spiritually (you're not really a Christian—*Eph. 2:5*).

2. The fight is the Lord's

The second thing I want to tell you about is this proves the Devil is real. It is that concern which prompts the Apostle Paul to say, before he is finished with this book, that believers need to be aware of the context of the struggle that they are in, for their struggle, he says, is not against flesh and blood.

If there is anything that evangelical Christianity in America has been, and is, prone to, it is thinking that our struggle *is* against flesh and blood. We've got a method or a program, we've got some sort of a pre-fab human answer to every problem that we face.

The Apostle Paul's words to us are very important here because he reminds us that it's the reality of the Devil and of supernatural evil that we struggle against.

But maybe some of you struggle with the idea of the reality of the Devil and of supernatural evil. For 200 or 300 years, western civilization has pretty much been under the influence of what we call an Enlightenment consensus. The Enlightenment said, "Faith, belief in God and the Devil and so on, is subjective, but we know now the way to really find truth is through reason and through the scientific method, which is objective... if you use reason and you use science, you know there is no such thing as the Devil, the supernatural or a miracle." But to believe the universe is a closed system is a faith assumption. There's no way you can prove that.

You have your right to your belief, but it's a belief. You have your right to your religion, but it's a religion. You can't possibly doubt anything unless you do so from the stance of faith. If Jesus is who he said he is, and I don't know how else you could possibly explain who he is other than to see what he said he is, then you have to listen to what he says when he says, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning!"

The fight is the Lord's. Verse 10: Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

The Apostle Paul is telling you that your strength is inadequate for the waging of this war, that you do not have the power to wage this war. Paul is asking you if you realize that you need the Lord's strength to win this war; if you realize that you are not in and of yourself up to this particular battle. The apostle has just told us that we're in a war zone. You are going to need God's armor in order to stand against this enemy. There is nothing in God's plan that the Apostle Paul has already unveiled in the Book of Ephesians which Satan — the devil, the evil one — does not want to undo.

If you are a part of that new community, the body of Christ, if you have gathered to the people of God to live and serve and worship, then you are in the bull's eye of Satan's attack, because he desires to destroy that new people that God is building.

And you can be certain that Satan will do anything he can to ruin you, to destroy you, to corrupt you, to turn you, to break you.

The apostle is telling us here that against this kind of opposition we need the full armor of God. It's no wonder that the Apostle Paul is going to spend so much time in this passage talking about prayer. Because what is prayer but an acknowledgement that we do not have in and of ourselves what we need in order to live the Christian life?

3. The battling is ours; the battling is something we have to involve ourselves in. Scripture uses military terminology here. The power of the Lord comes as you step out. What you do is say, "I am going to trust him." You don't wait and say, "Lord, show me you're trustworthy" before you trust him. You say, "I'm going to stand up for the truth." Paul says, "... be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." That means you step out, filling your mind full of the things he has promised. You obey, and his power comes to you and in through you. You obey, trusting in his greatness.