

THE IDEAL CHILD
Eph. 6:1-3

Intro: We have spent the last six Sunday mornings examining the latter part of Ephesians 5 to see what God has to say about husbands and wives.

Now we are ready to take the next step -- and see what He has to say about children.

In doing so, let me remind you, first of all, of . . .

I. THE CONTEXT. Here we have reference to that which precedes this passage.

Just as a man and a woman cannot be the kind of a husband and wife that God wants them to be without all that precedes Eph. 5:22-33, so a husband and wife cannot raise their children so as to please God if they ignore what God has to say to them.

We often fail not because we do the wrong things as parents, nor because we have the wrong goals for our children, but because there are things wrong in our lives and wrong between us as husbands and wives.

II. THE TEXT.

Let us go through these three verses to make sure that we understand what they are saying.

A. Verse 1.

"Children" -- a term which points particularly to those years in which the child is growing up, the years that he is living in the home with his parents.

"Obey" -- a present imperative, which means to obey and keep on obeying.

The verb literally means to hear under, i.e., to listen carefully as those who are under their parents,

- lower in position,
- under their authority.

In Col. 3:20 (the parallel passage) Paul says, "Children, obey your parents in all things."

"Your parents" -- until you get married, the most important people in your life. "Your parents" are those who have given you life. They protect you. They feed you. They give you a home. They love you. They are charged

by God to care for you and to train you. They are very, very special.

"In the Lord" -- probably the most important words in the verse. This is basically a spiritual matter. The Lord appeals directly to the children, and this assumes that as time goes on the children will be instructed as to what this term, "in the Lord," means.

Not only are children the result of the oneness of their parents, but they are to be the result of their parents oneness with the Lord. This means:

1) Oneness of life with the Lord -- living union.

But it also means:

2) Dependence upon the Lord so that He:

- a) will make us willing to obey our parents,
- b) will give us the ability to do what our parents want us to do.

"For this is right." In Col. 3:20 Paul says, "for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

If a child is obedient to his parents, this is what pleases the Lord, this is what makes the life of the child what God wants it to be. A child can never be in the will of God and pleasing to the Lord if he is living in rebellion to his parents.

B. Verse 2.

At this point Paul quotes from Exodus 20:12 -- thus tying the OT and the NT together on this subject.

"Honor":

- 1) Another present imperative: honor, and keep on honoring. It is to be constant.
- 2) It points to a feeling inwardly as well as to outward obedience. God does not want us to raise hypocrites! A child is to respect his parents, to be proud of them. He is to be taught to respect the spirit of the word, and not just the letter. Such a child will not speak disrespectfully to his parents nor to others about his parents.
- 3) It means to value them highly. Parents are irreplaceable.

"Thy father and mother." The same continuing honor is to be shown equally to both of them. Parents should never let their children honor only one or drive a wedge between them.

And then parenthetically -- (which is the first command-

ment with promise)." This must mean, with a specific promise since there is a general promise in connection with the 2nd commandment.

Note: God introduces the idea of rewarding obedience. He does not buy it, but He rewards it -- and there is a difference!

The promises are given in verse 3.

C. Verse 3. There are two promises.

1. "That it may be well with thee." This is to have things turn out well. A child's obedience or disobedience affects everything else in his life. If a child is wrong with his parents, he cannot be right any place else!
2. "And thou mayest live long on the earth." Have you ever heard this used as a reason for a long life?

Note an OT illustration: 1 Sam. 2:31-34.

And so the reverse is true also. A promise is also a warning. For a disobedient child nothing goes "well," and, if persisted in, he runs the risk that God will even take his life.

Do you think that it is an accident that in these days when there is such widespread disobedience among children and young people that the death rate by suicide, accidents, and so on, is higher than at any time in our lifetime?

III. RELATED PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

In addition to Col. 3:20 to which we have already referred, there are other passages which are of great importance on this subject.

A. First and foremost is Exodus 20:12. See also Deut. 5:16.

Note two things:

- 1) That it is important enough to be in the ten commandments at all.
- 2) Where it appears.
 - a) After the commandments that have to do with God, it is the first that has to do with man in his relationships with others.
 - b) It is followed by commandments against killing, adultery, stealing, lying, coveting -- an indica-

tion that teaching obedience to our children at home is THE MAJOR WAY to prevent such crimes!

- B. To back up what we have just said, we have two significant NT passages.

Note the context of both of them.

1. Romans 1:30.
2. 2 Timothy 3:2.

When men turn from God, the children become disobedient also -- and this, in turn, leads to all kinds of ungodliness!

The final passage I will refer to is what must be the OT counterpart of what our Ephesians passage is to the NT:

- C. Deuteronomy 6.

This, more than any other chapter, is the key chapter for the life of the nation, Israel. Jewish people who do not know anything else about the OT, know verse 4. What a tragedy it is that they have neglected the rest of the chapter!

What is the main teaching of this chapter? (Read as much as time will permit.)

It is this: THE MOST IMPORTANT OBEDIENCE THAT A CHILD NEEDS TO LEARN IS OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD.

We must teach our children what we want them to be and what we want them to do, but also what we want them to believe and the place that God should have in their lives.

Concl: And so this is a passage from which both parents and children can learn a great deal.

But the main emphasis is for "children."

Next Sunday we will leave Ephesians for the Sunday because it is Easter, but the week following I want to come back to this same passage to speak especially to "children." Parents, have your children with you for that Sunday, if you want to. But in closing today, let all of us -- parents and children ask, Is this passage descriptive of what I am concerned about as a parent -- as a child? If not, then by the grace of God it needs to be. As families, as a nation, we have no greater need!

GOD'S WORD TO CHILDREN
Eph. 6:1-3

Intro: A sub-title for the message this morning could be,
Why should children obey their parents?

While this is a passage primarily for children, it is also of importance to parents.

We will get into the parents' side next Sunday, the Lord willing, but let two things be noticed at this point:

- 1) The parents are responsible to give their children the right kind of training. Discipline is primarily training, not just punishment -- although punishment is included. It is positive as well as negative.
- 2) The training of children includes all areas of life --
 - a) Things that have to do with God.
 - b) Things that have to do with themselves.
 - c) Things that have to do with others.

Where are we going to find the help that we need to train our children as we should?

Obviously there is much that has been written on the subject. BUT -- most of what has been written in our day will only help you to contribute to the destruction of your children. By far the majority of books are:

- 1) Subjective.
- 2) Permissive.
- 3) Godless.

The only reliable book is the Bible.

Any other book which disagrees with the Bible is to be avoided like you would avoid poison.

No part of the Bible should be omitted. BUT FROM A PRACTICAL STANDPOINT THERE IS NO BOOK THAT WILL GIVE YOU MORE HELP THAN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS. Most of it was written by a father for his son.

Read it through with this in mind and you will be amazed at the storehouse of help that will be found here.

But now let me talk to the children and young people who are present this morning.

I want to give you seven reasons from the Bible as to why children should obey their parents. And all of these reasons with the exception of the last one you will find right here in Ephesians.

I. BECAUSE GOD SAYS SO. Read verse 1.

Illus: I was sitting near a little girl at our Father-Daughter Banquet (or Potluck) recently when the speaker referred to this verse. She rolled her eyes back in her head as if to say, "Oh, no, not again!"

But here it is -- as clear as anything in the Bible. This is God's Word for every child who has ever been born into this world: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

The second reason grows out of the first -- and also is found in verse 1.

II. BECAUSE IT IS "RIGHT."

Col. 3:20 helps us to understand what "right" means.

"Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well-pleasing to the Lord."

It is "right" because it "is well-pleasing to the Lord."

It will probably help us also to remember at this point what the Lord said several times about creation in Genesis 1.

Do you remember the statement,

"And God saw that it was good"?

This means that it was just as God wanted it to be. In the same way, when a child obeys his parents, that is pleasing to the Lord, that is "right," because it is just the way the Lord intended that it should be.

And every child needs to realize that things cannot be "right" any place else if they are wrong here.

III. BECAUSE WE NEED IT.

This is obvious even apart from what we learn in the Scripture.

Illus: I have in my hand an article in The New England Journal of Medicine for April 8, 1976 entitled, Violence, Television and the Health of American Youth. It gives some alarming statistics about murder, robbery, child abuse, and all other forms of crime which are becoming more and more prominent among children and young people. (Read sections of it from p. 812, column 1.)

The article places much of the blame on violence which our young people and children see for hours every day on television. (Cf. p. 813, col. 1c.)

Illus: In yesterday's Oregonian on the Sports Page an article appeared telling about violence in ice hockey -- and that children who are just learning to play the game are being taught that this is a vital part of the game!

Television is obviously a major factor. But here is the biggest reason -- a reason which the world discounts, and yet it is obviously true. Read Romans 1. Or read Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:18, 19; 5:8; 6:11, 12.

Children, remember that if you go the way you are inclined to go, nothing will be right in your life. And God has given you parents to train you in the ways of the Lord so that you will be spared from the sin that is in your own heart, in the world, and the sin that Satan will tempt you to do.

You need all the help that your parents can give you.

IV. BECAUSE IT BRINGS BLESSING. See vv. 2b, 3.

Read also Proverbs 3:2, 8, 16; 4:10; 9:11; 10:27.

Notice in our text that there are basically 2 promises in Eph. 6:3.

But along with this let me mention reason #5 for obeying your parents.

V. BECAUSE FAILURE TO DO SO WILL BRING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD.

This is obviously included in the promise.

Do you think that the murders and suicides and troubles of American youth are accidental? No! Even this is a form of judgment from God.

You are laying the foundation now for your future life. There is nothing that will contribute to your joy and blessing more than to be obedient now to what your parents are teaching you about God and His Word.

There are two more.

VI. BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDATIONAL TO ALL OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

- . . . TO OTHER MEMBERS OF OUR FAMILIES.
- . . . WITH OUR NEIGHBORS.
- . . . WITH OUR TEACHERS.
- . . . WITH POLICEMEN. . . . WITH OUR GOVERNMENT.

BUT MOST OF ALL . . . WITH GOD!

Is it not significant that in these days when children are given more freedom than ever before in our society that they are the unhappiest and we are seeing the greatest tragedies?

Children, thank God if you have parents who are seeking to teach you how to live your life pleasing to the Lord.

The last reason is not in the text, but it cannot be ignored because it relates to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

When He came into the world, He was born into a family. Although He did not have a human father, He did have a mother -- and she had a husband.

Therefore, we need to see that we ought to obey our parents because . . .

VII. BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS DID.

Cf. Luke 2:51,

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them . . ."

Thus, the Lord Jesus became an Example even to children.

Concl: If conditions in our country are ever to be straightened out, it must begin in our homes.

And the Scripture this morning makes it clear that children need to see the need of this as well as the parents must recognize it.

What does it require to be obedient?

- 1) A sense of need.
- 2) A humble heart.
- 3) Faith in God. Cf. Phil. 2:13.
- 4) A determination to obey regardless of what it means or who may oppose it.

A FATHER AND HIS CHILD

Eph. 6:4

Intro: All of us in reading our Bibles should note carefully the many, many passages that have to do with the home: husbands, wives, and children. The Lord has given us everything in His Word that is necessary.

On the brighter side we have a passage like Psalm 127. (Read.)

We also have that wonderful promise for parents in Prov. 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."

But on the tragic side we have the following as a sample:

- 1) 1 Sam. 3:13 -- God's message to Eli through Samuel, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."
- 2) Or read what is said about David's son, Adonijah, in 1 Kings 1:6a, "And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? . . ."
- 3) When the Lord was talking about the one who would betray Him into the hands of His enemies, He said, "It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born." See Mark 14:20b, 21.
- 4) All of these point to that solemn passage on the purification of mothers in Lev. 12.

Even concerning the leaders of the church, Paul wrote to Timothy that "a bishop" must be

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Cf. 1 Tim. 3:4, 5.

It all boils down to four simple facts:

- 1) Children are given to us by the Lord.
- 2) Every child can be a delight to his parents, or he can go so far as to break their hearts.
- 3) Children need to be trained.
- 4) Our text this morning makes it very clear that the training is the God-given responsibility of the "fathers." BUT let every father and mother remember that the mother is the father's helper. Cf. Gen. 2:18.

To begin with this subject this morning, let us make sure with the teaching of the Holy Spirit that we understand the text. Then for another Sunday (and possibly two) I want to probe a little deeper into the subject of training children.

Three things stand out in the text:

- 1) We must notice the member of the family who is being spoken to by Paul.
- 2) We must see that there is one thing he must NOT do.
- 3) We have the positive side: a description of a father's job in raising his children.

I. THE FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS ADDRESSED: "FATHERS."

This would seem obvious from chapter 5, but it apparently has always been the tendency of husbands to leave this up to their wives.

This is one reason that Paul is directed by the Spirit of God to say specifically, "Fathers"!

A father can always use the excuse that he has so many other things to do. Sometimes this can even be the Lord's work. Probably this would have been Eli's excuse, and even David's.

But, "fathers," here it is -- in black and white. There is no doubt as to what Paul is saying. The word has been chosen by the Holy Spirit: "fathers." Your wife can help you, but you cannot turn this job over to your wife without violating the will of God for yourself.

Let this really get into our hearts. As "fathers" we have nothing to do that is of any greater importance.

II. THE NEGATIVE SIDE: "PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO WRATH."

This suggests two things at the beginning:

- 1) Your job is not an easy one. Some children may seem easier to train, but they are all sinners. If you ever have anything that will cast you upon the Lord, if anything will make you pray, this will!
- 2) It is going to be much easier for you to do the wrong thing than for you to do the right thing. If you are not careful, the result can be disastrous. It might even have been better in some cases not to have done anything than to do what has been done. BUT AGAIN -- note that you cannot just stand by and do nothing if you are concerned about the will of God.

What is the danger?

"Provoke . . . to wrath" is all one word in the Greek text.

The same verb is used in Col. 3:21 with a word of explanation:

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

The NASB says, ". . . do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart."

The verb means that a father can make his child bitter, resentful, exasperated, irritated.

How is this done?

Certainly in any one of the following three ways:

- 1) By expecting perfection. Here we need to remember ourselves and the problems that we had as children, and we need also to remember (in line with what we have learned in Ephesians) that our children are sinners -- not perfect.
- 2) By being suspicious of them all of the time. This is where we run the risk of dealing with problems which do not actually exist.
- 3) By punishment which is too severe, or unjust, or erratic, or unreasonable, or with partiality.

Therefore, we need to set out to do our work with a constant prayer that the Lord will keep us from seeking to do the right thing in the wrong way.

III. THE POSITIVE SIDE: ". . . but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

There are four things to understand here.

A. "Bring them up."

This is the way Paul describes what "fathers" are seeking to do. This is their job. They are bringing up their children.

The Greek verb means to nourish, to feed.

It is used:

- 1) In Luke 4:16 of our Lord Who "came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up . . ."
- 2) In Luke 12:24 of God feeding the ravens.
- 3) In Luke 23:29 of a mother nursing her child.

But here Paul uses that same word with the preposition attached to the beginning of the verb, making it . . . This adds the idea of utterly, or entirely. It means an all-inclusive, all-out effort and task. And

it points to the completion of a task.

And so we can say two things about what a father is to do with his children:

- 1) The goal has already been determined -- by God.
- 2) There is a procedure to follow which includes everything in the child's life.

THIS MEANS THAT YOU CANNOT START TOO SOON. AND YOU CANNOT STOP UNTIL THE JOB IS FINISHED! If you started late, don't let that keep you from your job now.

B. "Nurture."

This is the ancient Greek word for education. It is translated "instruction" in 2 Tim. 3:16. The verb form is used in Titus 2:13, "Teaching us that denying ungodliness . . ."

But in the NT we find that "nurture" also includes the idea of punishment, of disciplined living. See Heb. 12:5-13, noting that vv. 5, 6 are a quotation of Prov. 3:11, 12.

So the father is to be:

- 1) First, a teacher. (Men, remember 1 Cor. 14:35.)
- 2) Second, a disciplinarian. Punishment for wrongdoing and encouragements for doing right are Scriptural. Cf. Prov. 22:15,
"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child,
but the rod of correction shall drive it far
from him."

C. "Admonition."

This is literally to put something to mind. Trench says that it is training by words:

- encouraging,
- warning,
- reprimanding.

This is what Eli did not do with his sons!

Paul uses this word again in 1 Cor. 10:11, referring to the experiences of the children of Israel in the desert: "Now all these things happened unto them for examples (or, examples): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (or, ages) are come."

So much of a father's "admonition" for his children can come through reading and teaching them the Scriptures.

But probably the most encouraging part of this verse is to be found in the last three words -- just one word in the Greek:

D. "Of the Lord."

Will you go back in your thinking to Psa. 127:1?

This is what gives us hope for our task. It is this that makes us realize that the job can be done. "Fathers" are working together with the Lord. Note that especially -- "the Lord"! HE is in control. All of the wisdom, the training, the measures, the goal -- ALL OF IT IS:

- 1) Prescribed by the Lord.
- 2) Administered by the Lord.

Therefore, fathers, there is nothing that will cast you on the Lord more than to raise your children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Concl: We want to learn more about this, but let me close for now with one verse.

It is found in Gen. 5:22 and has to do with Enoch:

"And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years . . ."

Think of it! Here is a man who walked with the Lord 300 years!

How long have you walked with Him? OR -- are you walking with Him?

But notice also: There was evidently something about becoming the father of Methuselah that made Enoch realize that he needed the Lord -- that he needed to walk with the Lord in daily fellowship.

There is no greater lesson for every father to learn, especially in view of the tremendous God-given task we have in relation to our children. May God help us and keep us walking with Him.

A GODLY HOME
(Message 2)
Eph. 6:4

Intro: We here at Central Bible Church are a people who have been brought together by the Lord because of our love for the Lord and for His Word.

Therefore, it is our custom to study the Bible book by book.

At the present time we are going through Ephesians -- a letter which Paul wrote to Ephesus while he was a prisoner in Rome! And we happen to be in the 6th chapter, verse 4, where Paul is concluding what he has to say in particular about the home.

Although the verse is addressed to "fathers," we know from the Scriptures that mothers are to work together with their husbands in raising children, and so this is a wonderful verse to be involved with on mothers' day!

A GODLY HOME is essentially a home like God wants it to be.

This morning we trust that the Lord Himself will give us some direction and some instruction as to what this means to us on a day to day basis in our homes.

The first thing to encourage us in this verse is the obvious fact that . . .

I. GOD IS VITALLY INTERESTED IN OUR CHILDREN.

Paul says that we are to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Note those last three words.

We learned last Sunday that "nurture and admonition" have to do with:

- 1) Things that the Lord wants us our children to know.
- 2) The way the Lord wants our children to live.

In spite of all the ways that man has meddled with the birth of children, it can still be said that "children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psa. 127:3a).

One thing that Job recognized before and after the Lord took all seven of his children was this: "The Lord has given" -- that is, the Lord had given him and his wife each one of the children they had.

This is always true! You may have one boy or one girl, or all boys or all girls, or a mixture of both -- but the Lord has given you each one. Get that firmly fixed in your mind! You may not have given this a thought at the time, but it is

true.

And therefore it follows that the Lord is keenly interested in how you are bringing up the children He has given you.

More than that -- He has given you all of the help that you will need in order to do the job the way He wants you to do it.

But let me point out another very important fact that grows out of this verse:

- II. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT YOU MAY GO ABOUT YOUR TASK AS A FATHER, AS A MOTHER, AND BE DOING IT THE WRONG WAY.

Paul says to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

And don't be satisfied to put anybody else's name in there at the end of that verse. You and I as parents cannot settle for anything except the Lord's way. If we do, our children will suffer for it -- and so will we!

As we look at the situation in the homes of America this Mother's Day of 1976, our Bi-Centennial Year, this fact stands out with glaring reality and prominence: We have gone about the task of raising our children (in millions of cases) in the wrong way!

This leads us to ask the question:

- III. WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY? WHERE WILL WE LEARN WHAT "THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD" IS?

I am so glad to be able to answer those questions for you.

The only place where we can learn the right way to raise our children is in the Bible. That is the only place! All that has been written by men is right only if it agrees with what you find in the Bible.

And let me say this on this Mother's Day: No matter where you might be now in the raising of your children, if you have not sought God's will from God's Word, begin now! It is better to start on the right path late than not to start at all.

What basically do you find out about your children when you read the Bible?

You learn this bad news: Your child already has three strikes against him.

What are the three strikes?

Strike #1: He is a sinner.

Strike #2: He cannot help himself.

Strike #3: He will resist any help that others might give to change him.

Think about verses like these:

- 1) "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psa. 58:3).
- 2) "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child . . ." (Prov. 22:15).
- 3) "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5).
- 4) "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way . . ." (Isa. 53:6).
- 5) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

These ALL apply to ALL of your children.

But now let me make a shift my emphasis at this point: IF THIS IS TRUE OF ALL OF OUR CHILDREN, OF ALL CHILDREN THAT HAVE EVER BEEN BORN INTO THIS WORLD (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF OUR LORD), THEN THIS MUST BE TRUE OF PARENTS AS WELL AS CHILDREN.

Are you listening, parents?

You will only be able to direct your children in the right way if you have found the right way! The only answers you can give to your children are the answers that you have found to the needs of your own heart.

Have you realized this about yourself -- that you were a strike-out before you ever got started? Even now -- the only possibility that you can lead your children to God's way is to find that way for yourself.

And this is where the good news comes in.

The Bible does not leave us without an answer for this problem. It gives us the only answer. And that answer is CHRIST.

Think of this verse of Scripture:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Remember also John 3:16. And 2 Cor. 5:17. And 1 John 5:12. This is the truth that our children need, BUT IT IS ALSO THE TRUTH THAT MOTHERS NEED, AND DADS NEED! And it is not until the Lord changes us will we know what we are talking about

when we seek to meet the needs of our children.

Concl: Isn't it time that we really look at what is going on in our homes and in our nation? We have despised the Word of God, we have laughed at the idea of sin, we have blasphemed the Name of God and the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ. **AND WHERE HAS IT ALL BROUGHT US?**

You can answer that question as well as I can.

Even with parents who want to raise their children according to godly principles, the principles of the Bible, often the results are disastrous because we ignore this one basic truth that is found all through the Bible: **EVERY MAN IS A SINNER AND HE IS IN DESPERATE NEED OF A SAVIOR!**

What about you, mother . . . father?

You want your children to be changed. Do you know that only God can do that when your children receive Jesus Christ as their Savior? **BUT DO YOU ALSO REALIZE THAT THEY MAY NEVER TRUST THE SAVIOR UNLESS YOU DO -- UNLESS THEY CAN SEE IN YOU THAT FAITH IN CHRIST IS NOT JUST A THEORY THAT SOME RELIGIOUS PEOPLE HOLD, BUT THAT IT IS THE MOST WONDERFUL REALITY IN ALL OF LIFE?**

If you have not received Christ, will you receive Him this morning. (Quote John 1:12.)

One other word . . .

Probably most of you who are parents listening to my voice have received Christ. But are you living for Him? If your child turned out to be the same kind of a Christian you are, would you be satisfied? Or what is more important, would God be satisfied?

Next Sunday, the Lord willing, I want to speak about some of the things we as parents need to do if we are going to raise our children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." But this is surely the place to begin.

As fathers and mothers we need to be examples to our children and to say to them what Paul said to the Philippian church:

"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).

This is the only way our homes can be godly homes.

THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD
Eph. 6:4 - Third Message

Intro: We have been considering what Paul has to say about the home in Ephesians 5, 6. Let us look arefully again this morning at Eph. 6:4. (Read it slowly and thoughtfully.)

Every father, and every mother, ought to memorize this verse.

The NASB translates it:

"And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

The NIV has it:

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

So we can think of "nurture" as meaning, "discipline," "instruction."

Therefore, from our text I would like to make . . .

I. SIX OBSERVATIONS REGARDING DISCIPLINE.

A. First, discipline is needed.

This is obvious. There would be no point in the verse at all if this were not the case.

Believe the Bible on this point rather than many of our educators, psychologists, counselors, etc. For a couple of generations now we have scorned discipline, and it is leading to the destruction of our society.

Discipline is needed because every child is basically a sinner with a far greater capacity for wrong-doing than for right-doing. And far more is involved than simply teaching a child the right thing to do -- as I want to show next Sunday.

B. Second, discipline is not primarily punishment -- although it includes punishment.

The dictionary defines discipline as:

"Training that develops self-control, character, or efficiency . . . orderly conduct . . . submission to authority and control" (Webster's New World Dictionary, p. 214).

We get our word, disciple, from discipline. A disciple is both a learner and a follower. He is a disciple be-

cause of what:

- 1) He needs to know.
- 2) He needs to be.
- 3) He needs to do.

This briefly summarizes the work of a father with his children. A child should be the disciple of his father.

And -- if in the process of all of this training the child rejects the training, or rebels against it, then the father must be prepared to exercise disciplinary punishment, i.e., **punishment** that will enforce the training!

- C. Third, we must avoid extremes in discipline.

It is easy for us to do this at any time, but especially today when in many homes and in many schools there is no discipline -- no learning and no punishment.

We must not be reactionary. "~~Provide~~ not . . . but . . ."

The **wrong** kind of discipline produces the wrong kind of results.

- D. Fourth, we must always keep the child's welfare in mind.

The Lord has given us our children. The words, "in the Lord" indicate, among other things, that the Lord has told us and will show us how to "bring up" our children. We are doing this for them -- to see that God uses us to make our children what He wants them to be.

Therefore, discipline must never be an opportunity for us to express our anger, or to punish our children because they have embarrassed us, or inconvenienced us. We must always keep the child in mind.

- E. Fifth, discipline must be positive in the first place, then negative.

It is "nurture," then "admonition." There is more than just the negative in "admonition," but the negative is certainly there.

- F. Finally (with respect to discipline), the father must be disciplined himself.

He must be what he wants his children to be. He cannot live one way, and ask his children to live another. He cannot even afford to be inconsistent -- one way part of the time, and another way at other times. He must be an

example to his children. He undoubtedly will fail at times, but the life has to be there.

Now . . . let us think about the positive side of the training and discipline that we are to give our children.

We are to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

There is a wealth of meaning in those last three words.

But among all that they mean is this: We must teach our children about the Lord.

For Scriptural help on this, please turn to Deuteronomy 6.

Note that in the first 6 verses Moses is talking to parents about themselves. Then, beginning with v. 7 he tells them how to discipline their children.

I want to spend the rest of the time this morning talking about

II. THE FATHER AS AN EXAMPLE.

Here is the reason why so many of us fail. Our children hear a lot of do's and don'ts, but they often hear very little about the Lord. And many times they are unable to see too little of the Lord in the lives of the parents.

ALL THAT MOSES SAYS IN THESE FIRST SIX VERSES HAS TO DO WITH THE PARENTS AND THE LORD -- THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LORD!

What are the main things?

- A. The parents must cultivate an intimate acquaintance with the Lord. See v. 4. We need to know HIM! Cf. Phil. 3:10.

How well do you know the Lord, fathers, mothers? What can you teach your child about the Lord? What are you teaching him?

This is the most important part of being a parent.

- B. Parents need to "fear" the Lord. See v. 2.

Do you? Do your children know that you do? Solomon teaches us that this is "the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10).

- C. Parents need to obey the Lord. See vv. 1, 2, 3. We can only do this by obeying the Word of God.

We are hearing a lot about life-styles these days. What is yours? Is it all in the Word? Do your children know that you would rather die than to be displeasing to the Lord? Do they?

D. Parents need to love the Lord. See v. 5.

Our Lord said that this was the most important commandment in all of the Bible! See Matt. 22:36-38.

Do you love Him? Do your children know that you do? Do they know that you love Him so much that every day a part of your day is set aside for you to spend with the Lord by yourself? Do they?

Or, do your children know that there are things in your life that you love more than you love the Lord? Are you trying to get them to love the Lord when they really can't see from your life what you are talking about?

E. Parents need to love the Word of God. See v. 6.

Does Psalm 1 describe you? What about Psa. 119:11?

Concl: You see -- our work with our children must begin in our own hearts, in our lives.

This is often where the trouble is. We are not as devoted to the Lord as we want our children to be, and so there is a breakdown in what we are trying to do with them.

Father, mother, how are things between you and the Lord this morning? Do you really love Him? Can your children see it in your life, in your attitudes, in your way of dealing with them?

A good hymn for fathers and mothers is:

"My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
For Thee all of follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou,
If ever I loved Thee, ~~my~~ Jesus, 'tis now."

May God enable us to say this with our hearts, not just with our lips. When we can, then and only then will we be able to see our children loving the Lord the way we want them to love Him.

THE TRAINING OF OUR CHILDREN

Eph. 6:4

Intro: This is my fourth and final message on this verse. I originally did not intend to spend this much time on this one verse, but the Lord has been opening it up more and more to me.

This morning I want to talk about the actual work of training our children. I do not intend to give you so many steps to the successful raising of children. I do not know any plan that can be used with every child. In fact, I would go so far as to say that there is no plan. The Lord points us in the right direction, but every parent has to be dependent upon the Lord as to how we are going to reach that goal with our children. The task will vary with every child we have.

But the Lord is keenly interested in our children. Do you know that every true revival or spiritual awakening has either begun or has concentrated upon reaching children for Christ? Those of you who are working in our Sunday School,

our VBS,

our children's home Bible classes,

and any other work with children where

the objective is toward reaching them with the Gospel and teaching them the truths of the Word of God -- YOU COULD NOT BE DOING ANYTHING THAT IS MORE UPON THE HEART OF OUR LORD!

Dr. M + children

Now -- let us read our text again. (Read.)

And then let us turn again to the Old Testament passage we have been considering along with Eph. 6:4. It is Deut. 6.

As we saw last Sunday, Deut. 6:1-5 is for parents;

Deut. 6:6-25 is to help parents with their children.

(Read this latter section -- vv. 6-25.)

What do we need to learn from these passages of Scripture?

First note . . .

I. FOUR THINGS WHICH COME OUT OF OUR TEXT: EPH. 6:4.

A. Our children need to be brought up.

B. The Lord wants our children to be brought up for Him.

C. The Lord wants US to bring up our children for Him.

And then, though not specifically stated, it is obvious that

- D. If we do not do it, others will -- either intentionally, or by our default.

Only then it will not be, in most cases, the way the Lord wants it done.

Be sure of this: the Devil has his own children's work -- and, as of now, it is being very effective!

From the above we need to know:

- 1) That our children do not naturally know even the things that we know about the Lord. They must be taught.
- 2) We have many things that we need to do. Life is very busy.
 - a) Man has his business -- with all of the relationships this gives him with other people.
 - b) There are needs to meet, bills that must be paid.
 - c) A mother has her relationships.
 - d) Both parents obviously need some recreation, some change from the constant routine.
 - e) BUT NO FATHER, NO MOTHER, HAS ANY MORE IMPORTANT THING TO DO THAN TO BRING THEIR CHILDREN UP IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD! This has priority over everything else!
- 3) There are many things that our children need to learn:
 - a) Good manners.
 - b) Good behavior.
 - c) Honesty.
 - d) Respect for other people.
 - e) And many, many other things.

BUT THEIR SPIRITUAL TRAINING IS BY FAR THE MOST IMPORTANT. This is what God wants us to do.
- 4) We are not:
 - a) To raise our children for ourselves.
 - b) To raise our children for their own advancement. People take a lot of pleasure in the achievements of their children, but often are unconcerned about their spiritual lives.
- 5) The job cannot be given to:
 - a) Other members of the family.
 - b) To Sunday School teachers.
 - c) To a Christian school.

The Lord wants US as parents to see that this is our job.

II. HOW DO WE DO IT?

When the truth of Eph. 6:4 gets into your heart, the first thing you will do is . . .

- A. PRAY! You will pray for yourself and all that you need to know. (Remember what we saw last Sunday in Deut. 6.) And you will start praying for your children. This is

the place to start, and praying is one thing you must never stop!

- B. Lead your children to know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

This is implied in all of these passages.

Remember:

- 1) That the reason your children have the problems that they do is because they were born with a sin nature.
- 2) That they are not saved just because you are, or because they are being raised in your home. They may know a lot of verses, and they may be able to give you the right answers, but this is not necessarily salvation.
- 3) That this calls for the greatest spiritual discernment and wisdom on your part. You are going to have to be patient, and prayerful. Do not run ahead of the Lord. This is where many Christian parents are making some mistakes that will some day break their hearts.
- 4) That it takes the same work of the Holy Spirit to bring a child to Christ that it does to bring an adult to Christ.

- C. Let your home be permeated, saturated with the Word of God.

And this means getting rid of any and everything else that would detract from that Word! One of the biggest offenders in our day is television. Another is records. Another is the literature of the day -- books and magazines.

Talk about the Word. Read the Word. Memorize the Word. Teach your children the Word. See Deut. 6:7-9. See also Deut. 11:18-21.

*Read books
hear sermons
with the Word
Christian living
Hymns.*

When it is done in the right way, your children cannot get too much of the Word. Let them hear you talking about the problems of the day, the problems that you as a family face, in the light of what God says in His Word.

- D. Concentrate on four things:

Make it your primary concern that your children:

- 1) Know the Lord in an ever-increasing way.
- 2) Love the Lord.
- 3) Obey the Lord.
- 4) Trust the Lord.

Finally (although much more could be said):

E. Make it attractive to your children.

Is our relationship to the Lord such that our children want to be like we are?

Do you know what ^{is} one of the major ways in which people are brought to Christ -- perhaps the major way? It is when people see the attractiveness of a Christian and they want to be like that Christian.

We heard a testimony like that this past weekend at our Men's Retreat.

Shouldn't we be having this kind of an effect upon our children?

Whatever criticisms you might level at Naomi in the OT Book of Ruth, she had this kind of an influence on her daughter-in-law. See Ruth 1:16. Naomi, seeking the best for her two daughters-in-law, was encouraging them to stay in Moab when she herself was preparing to go back to Israel. The husbands of all of these women had died. What did Ruth say?

"Entreat men not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God."

How is the attractiveness of your life indicated by your children? When they begin to ask questions! See Deut. 6:20.

Cf. also 1 Pet. 3:15.

Concl: The story of a Pastor in England comforting his daughter during an air raid on a Saturday night during World War II. After talking to her while he was sitting on her bed, he prayed -- and then she prayed. This is what she said, "Dear Lord, when I grow up, make me big and strong like my Daddy is."

Many wonderful things are said about David in Scripture. But there is none greater than the words of 1 Kings 3:3a, "And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David, his father . . ."

May God bless us so that our children will follow us -- as we follow the Lord!

THE CHRISTIAN AT WORK

Eph. 6:5-8

Intro: The Book of Ephesians makes it clear that the early Christians had problems in seven different areas:

- 1) Problems in connection with the Word of God. They did not know what they needed to know. Cf. 1 Cor. 8:2.
- 2) Problems in connection with their walk. They did not live the way the Lord wanted them to live; problems with them-^{self}s.
- 3) Problems in the church. This is interwoven in Ephesians with what Paul writes about their walk. It has to do with their relationship with other believers. This was caused by their problems with sin and with the world.
- 4) Marriage problems -- between husbands and wives.
- 5) Family problems -- between parents and children.
- 6) Work problems -- between masters and servants.
- 7) Problems in connection with their warfare with the Devil. This is yet to come in our study: Eph. 6:10-20.

If you think about these for a moment, you will realize that there is not a single area of our lives that Paul has not touched.

When he writes about marriage, family, and work problems, it seems like he wrote for us today.

What does this tell us?

It tells us that:

- 1) These always have been problems.
- 2) They always will be problems -- as long as time lasts and as long as men are what they are! In comparing Paul's day with ours, there is only one factor that is the same. The culture is different. The language is different. Only man is the same. This indicates that the problem is not geographical, not cultural, not economic, not social, ^{not racial.} These may be contributing factors. BUT THE MAIN PROBLEM IS HUMAN -- IS MAN!

Now -- in view of all of this,

I. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

We are thinking especially of the master-servant problem. We run immediately into a great social evil: slavery. Paul might have argued that these slaves (and this is the way he addresses them) were the victims of a corrupt society -- and they were! But that is not his approach. Therefore, let us notice for a moment . . .

A. What Paul does not do.

1. He does not encourage rebellion or revolution.

You never find this encouraged either in the OT or in the NT.

One of the greatest of insults that can be thrown upon the character of the Lord Jesus Christ is to call Him a revolutionist in the context of the day in which we live! HE WAS NOT A REVOLUTIONIST -- nor did He encourage revolution, ever. You do not find revolution encouraged in any of the writings of the Apostles. AND YET THEY LIVED IN ONE OF THE MOST CORRUPP SOCIETIES THAT HAS EVER EXISTED.

2. He does not agitate for social reform in his preaching and teaching.

And he and the other apostles have been severely circitricized for this! They have been accused of condoning slavery.

He never condoned it!

Instead, he worked on the only solution -- the changing of men through the Gospel of Christ and through the Word of God. He did not deal with just the symptoms; he went to the heart of the matter.

What has the church done today?

In many churches the preaching and teaching of the Word of God has been replaced by:

- 1) Attacks against our government.
- 2) Attacks against the Viet Nam War.
- 3) Attacks against big business, or attacks against labor unions.

What has been the result? Are we moving away from our problems?

Look at the evidence for yourself. We are more deeply involved with problems than ever before, and we are going deeper into them by the minute! Oh, one thing may be solved, but the trouble only breaks out some place else!

Perhaps it is time that we paid some attention to the Word of God.

3. He does not imply that he has a solution that will do away with the problem.

Nowhere in Paul's writings does he indicate that the world is going to be changed --until Christ comes!

If we are trying to bring about a perfect society, we are trying to do something that man will never be able to do.

What, then, is the answer?

B. What Paul does do.

1. He addresses himself to the individuals involved.

Note: "Slaves ... Masters ..." Just as we have had "Fathers ... Children ... Husbands ... Wives ..." How fair the Word of God is!

And he does not tell them what is wrong with the system, or what is wrong with others. He tells them what they need to do about themselves.

2. He addresses himself to a certain group of slaves -- not to all slaves generally.

The same applies to wives, husbands, children, and parents!

And this is where the context helps us.

The book of Ephesians was not written to all Ephesians! See Eph. 1:1 . . . "to the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus."

Take these verses into a labor meeting and they would not know what you were talking about. They might even laugh you out of the room. Vv. 5-8 do not describe how a non-Christian operates; this is only for believers!

Therefore . . .

3. He clearly implies that the first step in the solution of personal problems is a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

If you have not trusted Christ as your Savior, then you can only be dealing with symptoms as you deal with your problems. You are not dealing with the real issue.

If you do not know the Lord as your Savior, and you may not even know what this means -- let this be the first thing that you do before you do anything else!

But this is not all that he does.

4. He commands them to obey their masters -- with their eyes on the LORD!

This has been the emphasis on all four groups which we have already discussed: wives, husbands, children, and parents.

The main thing is not that I have an easy time, nor that my earthly master is changed, but that the Lord is pleased.

And you see the relationship between work out of the home, and the training that one should have in the home. If children are brought to Christ and then taught to please Him, it will be a normal thing for them to do the same thing when it comes to work!

We need to learn what David stresses in Psa. 16:8,
"I have set the LORD always before me; because
HE is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

Now we need to ask, CONCLUDED HERE ON 5/30/76 a.m.

II. HOW DO WE DO IT?

This brings us to our text.

Every man, woman, and young person should take these verses to work with him.

It comes down to three things:

- 1) What we do.
- 2) How we do it.
- 3) Why we do it.

A. What we do.

Paul plays on this one string until you would think that there is nothing else that he knows. Over and over again he says, "Obey, obey, obey!"

The servant's first responsibility is to do what he is told to do -- whether he likes it or not! There can be no substitute for obedience.

But it is not enough just to obey. Paul goes on to emphasize the importance of . . .

B. How we do it.

Paul says three things in this connection:

- 1) "With fear and trembling."

- 2) "In singleness of your heart."
- 3) "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers."

And so we must say that our obedience must be:

1. Inward as well as outward.
2. To be inward requires:
 - a. Attention to detail: "with fear and trembling."

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:3; Phil. 2:12.

A good servant wants to do everything just as close to perfect as he can. He will not be satisfied just to do a job; he wants to do it the best way it can be done.

- b. With genuine enthusiasm: "in singleness of your heart."

He concentrates on his job. He is sincere. There is no pretence, no deceit, no hypocrisy. He is genuine and faithful in his work.

And closely related to this is the third:

- c. For the master's profit: "not with eyeservice, as menpleasers."

A manpleaser has to be watched because he is seeking his own advancement -- not the good of his employer.

Paul wants those servants who know the Lord to be just as faithful when they are not being watched as when they are.

One thing remains:

C. Why we do it. There are two reasons:

1. Because as the Lord's people we are always serving HIM. See this emphasis in vv. 5, 6, 7. How this dignifies the lowliest task.
2. Because the Lord rewards faithful service -- here, and hereafter. See v. 8. The servant who lives for the Lord will be living for eternity and heaven.

Concl: Perhaps the greatest example in the Bible of a faithful servant was Joseph -- wherever he was. And no person in the Bible is more of a type of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Concerning our Lord, cf. Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of man .."

BONDSERVANTS OF CHRIST
Eph. 6:5-8

Intro: When Paul was describing to the Corinthians what it means to be a child of God, he wrote,
"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

This is certainly clear in these verses which we have recently been considering in Eph. 5 and 6.

The Lord transforms marriage,
our families,
and our work.

Everything in the life of a Christian is exalted to higher levels than ever before.

We find this over and over again with respect to servants.

Think how much of the Bible has been written either about servants or to servants. Many of our Lord's parables had to do with servants. Some of the greatest people in the Bible were servants: Joseph,
Daniel,
Nehemiah,
Onesimus -- to name just a few.

Even concerning our Lord -- He Himself said,
"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister . . ." (Mark 10:45).

A servant here is really a slave, a bondservant -- and yet Paul seems to take special delight in referring to himself as a bondservant, a slave, of Jesus Christ. Cf. Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:10; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:1.

In fact, in Eph. 6:5-9 every child of God is placed in the category of slaves by the Spirit of God -- even "masters."

And you will notice that Paul continues with the same theme here that we have had in connection with marriage,
and the raising of children:
-- OBEDIENCE. It is almost like he has nothing else to say!

But, oh, how we need this. And, if we learn obedience at home, we will not have problems with it when we go to work.

One thing is certain: The more I bring the Lord into whatever I am doing, the greater will be my blessing in this life where there will always be injustices of man kinds. This is a passage all of us need to take to work with us!

But what does Paul teach "servants" that they should do?

Let me divide this passage under 4 headings:

- 1) Be satisfied.
- 2) Be faithful.
- 3) Be loving and devoted.
- 4) Be confident.

I. BE SATISFIED.

Sin has produced an irresistible inclination in man toward change. Man basically is never satisfied. Regardless of what he is, he wants to be something else. Regardless of what he has, he wants more. Regardless of where he is, he wants to be somewhere else.

Isaiah says this in Isa. 57:20, 21,

"But the wicked are like the troubles sea . . ."

Many of the proverbs deal with this.

Paul had to deal with this in the early church. See 1 Cor. 7:17-24.

How DREADEFUL IT WOULD BE IF WE WERE ALL PREACHERS! ILLUS: SISTERS WHO MARRIED A DOCTOR. A PREACHER.

We are warned in Scripture about seeking great things for ourselves, about pride and selfish ambition. We are not to exalt ourselves, or even to seek it.

When Paul concludes what he has to say to "servants," a servant must have had the feeling that being a servant was the most wonderful position a man should have.

The Lord may advance us, but that is not to be our concern. We are to be satisfied where we are and do the best job that we can do for the glory of God.

II. BE FAITHFUL.

Notice: "Servants, OBEY"!

This is what Paul has been saying over and over.

And then he tells them how:

- 1) "With fear and trembling." Cf. 1 Cor. 2:3; Phil. 3:12.
- 2) "In singleness of your heart" -- which means to give all of your energy and all of your attention to the job that you are doing. Concentrate on that one thing as though it were the most important thing going on in the world.
- 3) "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers."

There are really two ideas here: (1) To make sure that you are working when the master is watching;

(2) To make sure that the master sees all that you are doing so that you will get the proper credit. One is as bad as the other. If you do things to be seen of man, that is the only reward you are going to get.

— But a servant could do all of this and yet have something very important missing.

In the third place a servant must . . .

III. BE LOVING AND DEVOTED.

It is Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones who sees in this passage a connection which Paul may have been drawing between God's will for "servants" and what our Lord gave as the first commandment.

In v. 5 you have the "heart." In v. 6, the soul (which is the word used in the Greek -- "doing the will of God from the soul." In v. 7, "with good will doing service," brings in the mind because it suggests the motive,
the intent,
the purpose, for which a
thing is done.

Our obedience must be inward as well as outward.

Think how this could lift your own spirit -- if you really loved doing what you are doing. This is a rare thing today. People do not take delight in their work. They work because they have to, and therefore they spent a great portion of their waking hours in misery and unhappiness.

The Lord can and will give you this attitude if you are trusting Him and seeking to please Him.

But there is one more word:

IV. BE CONFIDENT.

This takes us to v. 8.

The Lord knows what is going on. He knows your heart as well as your outward obedience. And He is going to make everything right -- if not now, certainly when we are with Him!

A slave was a slave of Christ (v. 6) and should do his service "as to the Lord, and not to men."

This where a servant is tested as to how real eternity and heaven are to him. Often the rewards come now, but in some cases a servant may have to wait until he gets to heaven.

But one thing is certain: the reward will come!

Concl: One word in conclusion -- not taken up specifically in the text, but certainly implied.

— What about winning people to Christ -- those who work with us? Why hasn't the Apostle Paul who obviously was concerned for the world as few men have been, why does he not touch on this great theme?

He does!

Everything in Eph. 5:22 through 6:9 is extremely important for the evangelization of the world BECAUSE nothing is more vital to world evangelization and to the winning of people to Christ than the godliness and faithfulness of our lives.

When we do the Lord's will in the Lord's way, then we will see the Lord's blessing!

THE MASTER OF MASTERS

Eph. 6:9

Intro: We come to the last of the special instructions given by the Apostle Paul.

It is possible that a master could also be a husband and a father, and thus come under all three headings for instruction.

His actual power would be the greatest here -- more extensive! And yet, with the exception of what Paul has to say to the children, Paul's words are fewest here.

Remember two things:

- 1) Paul is not addressing all masters. He is writing to masters who have believed in Christ, masters who are saved. But in addition,
- 2) Paul is addressing Spirit-filled masters.

Let us examine the text.

I. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE: "Masters."

It is the Greek word, κύριος, which is most frequently translated, lord. It is a part of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why Paul says in the verse, "knowing (as you do) that your Master (the Lord Jesus Christ) is in heaven."

A master is one who owns servants. They belong to him. He has the right, the authority, to decide what the servant is to do, and when he is to do it.

For the most part the master-servant system in the Roman Empire was full of injustices -- especially for the servants. Paul knew this, and the Lord Jesus Christ knew this. Therefore, this verse is quite surprising in what it says. Note:

- 1) Paul does not tell the masters to try to do away with the system.
- 2) He does not even indicate that it is a sin to be a master. He does not tell the master to stop being a master. Paul knew (and the Lord knows) that you will never do away with the injustices of society. The wrongs are not made right by laws (although we need the best laws we can get). But these are not the solution. Paul's instruction in 1 Cor. 7:20 applies just as much to masters as it does to servants: "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called."

Paul's solution is this: Not a change in the system, but a change in the masters.

This shows how absolutely essential the Gospel is, and how important the life of the Christian is after he has come to Christ for salvation.

The world will never change. It is too far gone for that. Even the Lord will only be able to change the world by making a new earth. But men can be changed -- and it is through changed lives that the light can get to darkened hearts and to systems that are full of evil.

Therefore, it is not surprising to see what follows.

II. THE LIFE OF THE MASTERS.

How should a master live -- one who knows the Lord, and who wants to please the Lord in the way he deals with his servants?

Here we are in for a surprise: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening."

What does Paul mean?

He means that the masters were to take everything in vv. 5-8 from the word "with" on, and attach it to v. 9 -- their verse!

There is not one kind of a life for a servant and another kind of a life for masters. Paul does not have separate principles for the two groups. He would not encourage us to have a MASTERS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS and a SERVANTS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS. The book of Ephesians applies equally to all believers, whatever their station in life might be!

And so the "masters" must be just like the "servants" in:

- 1) Their regard for the authority of Christ.
- 2) Their concern for the will of God.
- 3) Their need to be real -- dealing with inward feelings as well as with outward obedience.
- 4) Their outlook and hope for the future.

The one addition that Paul makes here is "forbearing threatening." This does not mean to give it up, to stop all discipline and punishment. But it does mean to let up on it, to go easy with it, not to let this be the chief means of dealing with the servants. They are to be gracious and patient and loving like the Lord has been with them.

What a delight it would be to be the servant of a master like this!

Finally, Paul ends the verse with:

III. TWO THINGS TO REMEMBER.

The word "knowing" is identically the same word which Paul used in v. 8. It means literally, seeing ye know, or knowing as you do.

- A. Their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ: "your master also is in heaven."

It is a way of saying, Your servant's Master is your Master. Therefore, you and your servant are fellow-servants!

Being a good servant of Jesus Christ makes a man the greatest possible master of men!

And, since the master's Master is "in heaven," it means:

- 1) That the heavenly Master is sovereign over all.
- 2) That the heavenly Master will be just that all through eternity, while earthly service will one day come to an end. Contrast the statement in v. 5, "your masters according to the flesh."

A master was not to forget this. Our Savior is the LORD Jesus Christ.

- B. The nature of our Lord: "Neither is there respect of persons with him."

Obviously, if a man were a master, the Lord wanted him to be the best master he could be by the grace of God. If that were not the case, you would not have v. 9 in the Bible. BUT -- the master must remember that he was not a master because he was any better, or even more deserving, than his servant.

This is illustrated in at least **four** ways in the Scriptures:

- 1) Concerning what we have in this life. See 1 Cor. 4:7; Jas. 1:17. This truth even kept John the Baptist from resentment or jealousy in connection with our Lord's ministry. See John 3:29.

Illus.: The immigration official who said, "I suppose you want a brownie button for that," when I told him I was born in the States.

We have no right to glory in such things.

Illus.: My pastor friend in Texas who had been asked, "Why were you born in Canada?" His answer: "So I could be near my mother!"

Whatever we are and wherever we are is of God!

- 2) Concerning sin. See Rom. 3:22b, 23.
A master cannot get out of this category because he is a master. A master stands side by side with his servant in facing this charge.
- 3) Concerning salvation. See Rom. 10:12, 13,
"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
It takes just as much grace to save a master as it does to save a servant, to save a Jew as to save a Gentile, to save a white as it does to save a black. To teach anything else, is to deny the grace of God. Cf. Eph. 2:8-10.
- 4) Concerning the lives we live and the service we render to God. See Rom. 2:6-11.

Concl: It is the pride of man and the sin that is in the heart of man that is at the root of all of our social problems -- and the Gospel and the spiritual life are the only solutions that can possibly meet the need.

This is why it is a tragedy when people turn away from the Gospel and from God to work on some other kind of a solution.
WHEN WE KNOW THIS AND REMEMBER THIS AND ACT ON THIS, THEN AND ONLY THEN WILL WE SEE IN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES A SMALL INDICATION OF WHAT WE WILL ONE DAY EXPERIENCE HEAVEN-WIDE!

Robert Murray M'Cheyne, who was born in Scotland on May 21, 1813, and who died in Scotland on March 25, 1843 -- two months before he was 30 years old -- penned these words with which I close this morning. They bring out what masters and servants and all other believers need to keep in mind.

"When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When I stand with Christ on high,
Looking o'er life's history,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

"When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

"When the praise of heaven I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

(Over)

"E'en on earth, as through a glass,
Darkly, let Thy glory pass;
Make forgiveness feel so sweet,
Make Thy Spirit's help so meet,
E'en on earth, Lord, make me know
Something of how much I owe.

"Chosen, not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee,
Hidden in the Saviour's side,
By the Spirit sanctified,
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe."

THE CHRISTIAN'S WARFARE

Eph. 6:10-20

Intro: This message -- an introduction to the whole passage,
a summary,
a survey.

"Finally" -- a word of conclusion. But also a word marking a transition. It is an expression which points ahead: henceforth, or, for the future.

Obviously, this is a subject of supreme importance.

Paul wants us to know (if we have not learned it before we get to the book of Ephesians) that the Christian life is not just a life of learning what to do and doing it! We do not know the Lord very long before we begin to realize that there are enemies we have to contend with.

We can see it in the Word.

We see it in the lives of other Christians.

We face it in our own experience.

If we had a utopian idea of the the Christian life when we came to the Savior, it is soon gone. It has never been easy to be a Christian, and it never will be! It is a battle from beginning to end.

It is no wonder that Isaac Watts wrote those familiar words which we sometimes sing so glibly,

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

"Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend of grace,
To help me on to God?

"Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.

William Gurnall, one of the Puritan writers, ~~wrote~~ wrote the following words in the dedication of his great work, The Christian in Complete Armour:

"The subject of the treatise is solemn, A War between the Saint and Satan, and that so bloody a one, that the cruellest

which ever was fought by men, will be found but sport and child's play to this. Alas, what is the killing of bodies to the destroying of souls? It is a mad meditation indeed, to think how many thousands have been sent to the grace in a few late years among us by the sword of man; but far more astonishing, to consider how many of those may be sent to hell by the sword of God's wrath. It is a spiritual war you shall read of, and that not a history of what was fought many ages past and is now over; but of what now is doing, the tragedy is at present acting, and that not at the furthest end of the world, but what concerns thee and every one that reads it. The stage whereon this war is fought, is every man's own soul. Here is no neuter in this war. The whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against Satan, or for Satan against God" (pp. 2, 3).

What is it that Paul is teaching us here about this unfinished war?

I. THE MAIN IDEA (Eph. 6:10).

It is that which is behind all training for war. The soldier must "be strong." Or better, be strengthened!

And this strength only comes "in the Lord" -- through our union with Him.

And this is not for just an isolated battle, but for the war itself.

This is behind Paul's prayer in chapter 3.

II. THE FIRST REQUIREMENT.

This is stated at the beginning of v. 11 and again at the beginning of v. 13.

It is an armor which God has provided and which can only be obtained from Him.

III. THE PURPOSE.

This is stated three times: vv. 11b, 13b, 14a.

IV. THE REASON FOR THE ORDERS (Eph. 6:11b, 12).

Ours is not an ordinary enemy. He is unseen. He is mightier than we are. We are in his territory. We used to belong to him (see 2:1-3). He is our accuser -- the one who specializes on slander.

V. THE ARMOUR (Eph. 6:14-17).

There are six parts, and each one reveals an area of our vulnerability and of the Devil's attacks:

Here we must distinguish between the doctrinal and the practical. We go back to Eph. 4:22 ff.

A. The truth (v. 14a).

Cf. Job's friends -- who obviously had a lot of truth, but did not know how to use it. And so their desire to help turned these "friends" against each other.

B. Righteousness (v. 14b). This speaks of what the believer is! It has to be practical righteousness -- righteousness which is acceptable to God and provided through Him.

C. Our walk (v. 15).

D. Faith (v. 16).

The Devil will do anything to destroy our faith, to undermine our confidence in God, to make us believe that God does not care, that it is foolish to trust Him, that He does not answer prayer. The battle often rages fiercely in this area.

Note this in many of the Psalms.

This is how the Devil won the battle with Eve in the Garden of Eden.

E. Salvation (v. 17).

This is behind all that Paul has written in chs. 1 and 2. A child of God who doubts his salvation is knocked off his feet and left at the mercy of the Devil.

F. The Word of God (v. 17b).

At this point we come to the mention of the Third Person of the Godhead. Thus, all are involved in this conflict. And all are needed! It is the Spirit's sword. The Word is related to the whole armour -- defensively and offensively.

VI. THE SECOND AND LAST REQUIREMENT (Eph. 6:18).

It is possible for us to be very strong on the Word, but very weak in prayer. The inevitable result is defeat. Or, the same is true if we are strong on prayer, but weak in the Word. These two, and only these two, are all that the child

needs for victory over the Devil. After all, what can be added to God, the Word, and prayer?

Do you PRAY?

Do you pray ALWAYS?

Do you pray with SUPPLICATION?

Do you pray with ALL PERS~~E~~VERANCE?

Do you pray FOR ALL SAINTS?

How much there is for us to learn! Probably no one here can answer all of these questions with a "yes."

Concl: This is the ground that we will be covering for the next several Sundays. Memorize them. Pray over them. Ask the Lord to give you understanding. And may He lead us on to victories that will bring eternal glory to His own Name.

THE LORD, OUR STRENGTH
Eph. 6:10

Intro: Are you memorizing vv. 10-20?

This is the climactic point in the Epistle. Everything has been written with these two things in mind:

- 1) That every believer is weak, and needs to be strengthened.
- 2) That there is an unending conflict facing every one of us who knows the Lord.

How important is Paul's attitude! In spite of the fact that he was a prisoner,

- 1) He is not vindictive.
- 2) He is not in a panic; there is no appeal for help for any kind -- except by prayer, and that for his ministry.
- 3) He is not defeated.
- 4) He is not discouraged.

His main concern is for the Ephesians -- how they will get along in the battle. He is concerned about getting the Lord's people ready for the battle.

It is obviously a very enlightening and encouraging passage of Scripture.

First of all, let us note:

I. THE MEANING OF THE VERSE.

"Finally" is for emphasis, to attract their attention, but also to look ahead. It suggests something very important. And it indicates that Paul is leading up to a conclusion.

There is a great combination of words here that have to do with power -- the power of the Lord.

The verb is a passive, indicating not what the Ephesians were to do for themselves, but what the Lord would do for them. It is "in the Lord" and "in the power of His might" that they would be strong -- and this is the only way!

Note also that it is a command. To be weak when we should be strong is to be disobedient to God.

II. THE MAIN PARTS OF THE VERSE.

While it is not specifically stated here, yet it is clearly implied that even believers in themselves are **WEAK!**

A. The weakness of believers.

See the evidence of this in the Epistle:

- 1) Eph. 3:13.
- 2) Eph. 4:17.
- 3) Even with regard to salvation - Eph. 2:4-10.

Remember our calling: 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

Think of some of the Scriptural warnings:

- 1) 1 Cor. 10:12, "Wherefore, let him that standeth . . ."
- 2) Gal. 6:3, "For if a man thinketh himself to be something . . ."
- 3) Gal. 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing . . ."

Read again Rom. 7.

Let your mind run over many of the stories of Scripture:

- 1) Abraham.
- 2) Moses.
- 3) The children of Israel.
- 4) Samson.
- 5) David.
- 6) Peter.

And these are only a few, but it includes the most important men of Scripture.

Sin has made us weak -- morally,
physically,
emotionally,
mentally.

If the work of God had been dependent upon us, the people of God, it would have gone out of existence long ago.

B. The power of the Lord.

Read Eph. 1:19 ff.;
3:7;
3:16.

So this is not the first time we have seen this emphasis upon the power of the Lord.

"The Lord" brings into the place of emphasis His Deity and His sovereignty.

His power can be seen in:

- 1) His earthly life -- in His victories over Satan and sin of every kind.
- 2) His work in creation. Cf. John 1:3. Can we do anything like that?
- 3) His sovereignty over His works and over the course of human history. Cf. Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:1-3.
- 4) His resurrection. See John 10:18.
- 5) The work of salvation. Cf. Eph. 2:10.

And now . . .

C. The encouragement.

It means bringing these two things together:

- 1) The believer's weakness.
- 2) The Lord's power.

Troubles can be:

- 1) Sudden.
- 2) Overwhelming.
- 3) Continuous.

We can feel:

- 1) Unprepared for them.
- 2) Outnumbered by the enemy.
- 3) WEAK!

All of this tends to the discouragement which leads to defeat.

The primary need is to be strong. The immediate object is to stand. The ultimate goal is victory.

How wonderful it is to know that there is an answer!

Why we need to do this, and how, is brought out in the following verses. For this morning, let us look at similar encouragements throughout the Word:

- 1) Moses to the people of Israel and to Joshua: Deut. 31:1-8.
- 2) The Lord to Joshua: Joshua 1:5-9.
- 3) David to Solomon: 1 Chron. 22:11-13.
- 4) Peter: Luke 22:31-34.
- 5) Paul: 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

Concl: Is Eph. 6:10 descriptive of the way you are living?

There is no other way to triumph over the enemy -- and the Lord has made the same wonderful provision for all of His people. Cf. the victory mentioned in 1 John 2:13, 14.

STRENGTHENED TO STAND

Eph. 6:10, 11

Intro: Are you memorizing Eph. 6:10-20? Continue reading the Epistle over and over. Let us be responsive to all that the Holy Spirit is doing to get the truths of this Book written upon our hearts!

(Read the whole passage.)

I want to spend the time today in verses 10 and 11 -- linking the two together.

Last Sunday we learned that v. 10 gave us the keynote of the entire passage. We as the children of God have no greater need than the need to be strong. AND -- we can see from v. 10 that the only way we can be strong is "in the Lord."

This has always been the case with the Lord's people.

And so I want you to see that v. 10 is really . . .

I. A REITERATION OF OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING.

(Use the notes on "Be strong and of a good courage" from last Sunday's message -- which were not used.)

All of us **are** weak. Our desires are far ahead of our ability. We claim to do more than we can do. Often our failures keep us from believing that we can ever be strong, but these exhortation PLUS the fact that we can see how many weak believers became strong, should help us to see that the Lord can change us, too.

As we go on to v. 11, we basically have two things -- although there are several parts to each one. And -- for this morning -- I want to take them in the reverse order:

- 1) Why we need to be strong: "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
- 2) How we can be strong: "Put on the whole armour of God."

II. WHY WE NEED TO BE STRONG.

There are really two reasons:

- 1) Because we have an enemy who is stronger and wiser than we are: "the devil."
- 2) Because we need to stand -- and we will fail if we try to stand in any other way than the way Paul is telling us "to stand."

A. Because of our enemy: the Devil.

We actually have three enemies:

- 1) The flesh within us.
- 2) The world around us.
- 3) The Devil above us.

We deal with each one in a different way. (Explain.)

As we get into v. 12 we will have more of an opportunity to talk about the Devil and demons, but let this much be said here:

- 1) I hope that you believe that the Devil is a real person. If you do not, then this is where you have to get your thinking straightened out. Read Gen. 3.
- 2) I hope you realize that 24 hours of every day he is determined to ruin you, or render you useless in the battle, if he possibly can. His name means the accuser, the slanderer -- and often falsely. He uses deception, craftiness, subtlety as the word "wiles" suggests. He was mentioned in Eph. 4:27, and also in 2:2. We cannot cope with him in our own strength. We must find strength elsewhere or we are doomed!

B. We also need to be strong Because we need to stand.

To stand in Scripture means to "continue, persist, persevere" (Thayer, p. 308). It is the opposite of quitting, or of compromising, or of fainting.

An illustration is seen in the case of the Israelites at the Red Sea. See Exodus 14:13.

Other related passages:

- 1) 1 Cor. 10:12, "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth . . ."
- 2) Col. 4:6, Epaphras, who is one of you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect . . ."
- 3) Rom. 5:2, "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

With all that is going on supposedly in the name of the Lord today, we nevertheless see comparatively very few who are really standing! The Lord's work and the lives of the Lord's people today are crippled with compromise -- which is just the opposite of standing. The need of of the hour is for believers who will STAND!

Do you feel like quitting? Are you tired of the struggle? Is your life characterized more by fear than by faith? Then listen to what Paul says about . . .

III. HOW WE CAN BE STRONG.

Here is the answer: "Put on the whole armour of God."
(Repeat.)

What a wealth of truth is here! Let us examine the words in detail.

A. A word of warning: This provision is only for believers.

If you have never received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you are left without any defense whatever against Satan.

B. It is the "armor of God" -- the armor which only He provides and which can only be obtained from Him.

There are other substitutes being suggested today, but no other armour will do:

- 1) Not your strength of character.
- 2) Not your family, nor your background.
- 3) Not your personality.
- 4) Not your education.
- 5) Not psychology.
- 6) Not counselling.
- 7) Not programs and seminars.
- 8) Not numbers -- as though we could overpower Satan by greater numbers than he has.
- 9) Not by anything that arises from man.

And what is the "armor of God"? Look down the list and you will see that it has to do with these three:

- 1) The Word of God.
- 2) Christ. Cf. Rom. 13:14.
- 3) Prayer.

Now let me ask you a question: Do you really believe that these are all that we really need for our battle against the devil in this world? Do you really believe it? Does your life show it? Or are there other things that you are adding to it?

A third thing:

C. This conflict requires "the whole armor of God."

Perhaps this came from Paul's imprisonment. He knew all that a Roman soldier should have because he saw them every day.

A soldier could be put to death by his failure to go into battle fully equipped, or even by failing to have his armor in constant readiness.

No part of our armor can possibly be left out!

But now the final and crucial point:

D. "Put on the whole armor of God."

God has provided it, but probably most of us are not using it. We have it, but we are not wearing it.

This is the personal and practical side of this whole passage.

Before we can do this:

- 1) We need to know what it is.
- 2) We need to know where we get it -- from God!
- 3) We need to understand what it means to put it on. This is where FAITH enters in. Paul wrote to the Roman church, "Thou standest by faith" (Rom. 11:20).

Concl: There is no other way for us to be victorious over the Enemy.

And remember that our battle is not just a defensive conflict, but we need to get on the offense. A football team never won a game by just trying to keep the other team from scoring. We are on the winning side. But, as for our part, there is no way to victory day by day except as the Lord has directed us here.

How we can thank God for those who have stood in the past!

One of the best illustrations is from the life of Martin Luther. Believers have had to take a stand in different ways; his was one of the most difficult -- before the German Emperor, Charles V, and the leaders of the Church of Rome. When asked if he would recant concerning the things which he had preached and written, with the possibility that he would be put to death if he did not, this was his reply:

"Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning -- unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted -- and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience."

And then his biographer says that he looked around on the assembly which held his life in its hands, and said,

"HERE I STAND, I can do no other; May God help me! Amen."

A SUPREME AND SOVEREIGN GOD
(in Ephesians)

Intro: (A review of Ephesians after 5 Sundays on vacation.)

Continue to read and to memorize esp. 6:10-20.

There are two truths which are prominent everywhere in the Word of God which have always been hard for men to accept. Sometimes these truths have been bitterly opposed -- even by those who are professing Christians. They are:

- 1) The absolute sovereignty of God.
- 2) The total depravity of man.

Both of these are in Ephesians. In fact, the truth of this wonderful Epistle actually is founded upon these two truths. If you and I can get these into our hearts, the book of Ephesians will open up as in no other way and as never before.

"In one of his letters to Erasmus, Luther said, 'Your thoughts of God are too human'" (Pink in The Attributes of God, p. 28). This is still our problem today.

Do you really accept them? (Take them up in the reverse order from the way they are mentioned above.)

When Paul came to the close of the doctrinal section of Romans, he was overcome with the greatness of God. See Rom. 11:33-36, esp. v. 36.

In this message I want to review the entire Epistle to the Ephesians focusing upon the way in which Paul presents these truths in the light of the sovereignty of God. The seven main themes which make up this Epistle are not limited to just one section, but several of them are mentioned more than once and in more than one section.

They are:

I. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN SALVATION (Eph. 1:3-14).

The emphasis even begins in Paul's introduction when he tells how he came to be an apostle -- "by the will of God."

II. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH (Eph. 1:15-23).

This is why Paul prayed.

III. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE CHURCH -- its nature, its members, its purpose, its destiny (Eph. 1:22-3:12).

IV. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN MEETING THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF ALL BELIEVERS (Eph. 3:13-21).

V. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE LIVES (THE WALK) OF BELIEVERS (Eph. 4:1-5:21).

We are to live, not as we think we should, but as God says that must. This necessitates a negative emphasis as well as a positive emphasis.

After using the work, "walk," 2x in chapter 2, Paul uses it 5x in chapters 4 and 5.

VI. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR MOST INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS -- at home and at work (Eph. 5:22-6:9).

All of us spend most of our time with these people in these two places.

VII. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE WARFARE BELIEVERS HAVE WITH THE DEVIL (Eph. 6:10-20).

We cannot escape it. We must prepare for it. God's way is the only way of victory -- through the Word and prayer!

Concl: God's sovereignty is evident even in the way Paul concludes his letter.

One of the greatest stories in the OT which illustrates the sovereignty of God is the story of Joseph. Just this last week I was reading in Psalm 105 the truth which forms the very basis of all that happened to Joseph in Egypt. It has to do with the sovereignty of God:

"He (the Lord) sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant" (v. 17).

And Joseph recognized this as he later told his brothers. See Gen. 50:20.

To hold to the sovereignty of God is not only to walk in the ways of peace, but it is the only way for us to grow and progress as the children of God.

Perhaps it took Paul's experience in a Roman prison to teach him the absolute reality of the sovereignty of God. See Phil. 2:12, 13.

THE ENEMY
Eph. 6:10-20

Intro: We will spend this and two more Sundays on Ephesians.

Next Sunday: THE ARMOUR. The following Sunday: THE BATTLE.

Everything in Ephesians prepares us for this final section. The battle is certain for all of us. We must be in a constant state of readiness. There will be the evil days when the battle is especially severe.

What about the Enemy? The only place he is really exposed is in the Word of God. Outside of Scripture he is often the subject of hilarity and fun, but never in Scripture. What does our passage here teach us about him?

I. HIS NAMES.

There are several given in Scripture, but here we only have two. We will get the others in our Systematic Theology on Wednesday nights.

A. "The devil" (v. 11) -- meaning an accuser, a slanderer.

See Eph. 4:27, and Rev. 12:7-12.

B. "The Wicked One" (v. 16).

Our Lord probably had reference to the Devil in Matt. 6:13 when He taught us to pray, "And deliver us from evil," or, from the Evil One.

This same root is used in two other verses in our text: vv. 12, 13,

- 1) "Wickedness" in v. 12.
- 2) "Evil" in v. 13.

The word is illustrated by Prov. 4:16. (Read vv. 14-17.) It indicates that:

- 1) The Devil is totally depraved.
- 2) He is never satisfied unless he is defiling and ruining everyone else he possibly can.

He is never a friend. If sin ever appears attractive or profitable, it is only a trap.

II. HIS ARMY (v. 12).

These are angelic beings who have become demons. We will be studying these also on Wednesday nights. They are hopelessly doomed to hell. In fact, hell was prepared by God "for the

devil and his angels" (Matt. 24:41).

But when the Devil revolted against God he took many other mighty angels with him. Their power and influence is pictured very vividly in the words which Paul uses here.

On these terms, cf. Eph. 1:21; 3:10 -- where they can be both good and bad. The Devil took many of the mightiest angels with him.

- A. "Principalities" -- those who were given first place in angelic realms, and who still hold those places in the demonic realms. This is true of the Devil Himself, and this is why he is called in Scripture, "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4).
- B. "Powers" -- Thayer says that they are "The leading and more powerful among created beings superior to man, spiritual potentates" (p. 225).
- C. Lit., the world-rulers of this darkness.

They are in control of a realm where they keep men in ignorance of God, in rebellion against God, in sin!

- D. "Spiritual wickedness in high (or, heavenly) places" -- spiritual beings because they cannot be seen, and in heavenly places, suggesting that they are far superior in every way to man.

And this gives us the reason for the instructions we have in this passage -- to "put on the whole armour of God." We will get to that next week, the Lord willing.

III. HIS WILES, OR METHODS.

This could take a whole series of messages, but let us concentrate on what is here.

- A. He will single us out. That is the reason for the emphasis on wrestling -- hand to hand combat.
- B. He will seek to get us occupied with ourselves, and with our sins. This is why he brings accusations against us -- many false (because he is the father of lies), but unfortunately many are true. Cf. Eph. 4:27.
- C. He will seek to build up our self confidence.
- D. He will do all that he can to keep us from the Word of God, and from prayer -- and to discourage us about both.

This the reason for "the fiery darts of the wicked."
He seeks to destroy our faith.

Note Rev. 12:11 again -- "And they overcame him by . . ."

Concl: The next two Sundays we will look more at the battle,
but let us notice this morning again the two things which
the Lord has provided for our protection against the Enemy.

They are:

- 1) The Word of God.
- 2) Prayer.

The Devil is out to shatter our confidence in both of them, or
to get us so occupied with other things that we do not have time
for the Word, or for prayer. He withdraws for a time. Things
go along quietly for a time to get us off of our guard, and then
he strikes!!!

What the early Apostles said is what the Devil hates to hear most
of all. See Acts 6:4. And may the Lord give us the wisdom and
the grace to see that there is no other stand for us to take now.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD
Eph. 6:10-20

Intro: The longest war in history is the war in which the Devil has been fighting God and His people. It started in the Garden of Eden, and it will not end until the Devil is finally cast into the lake of fire!

The war is not always fought with the same intensity, but it continues, nevertheless, AND EVERY CHILD OF GOD MUST BE IN A CONSTANT STATE OF READINESS BECAUSE THE ENEMY IS ALWAYS SEEKING WAYS TO ATTACK AND TO DEFEAT US.

Note the wording of Eph. 6:14, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth . . .," etc. The translation is excellent! We are to "stand" in readiness with our armor already on.

Illus: My concern after visiting some of our military bases.

Therefore, our greatest need is to get "the whole armor of God" on, and to keep it on!

Note:

- 1) The difference between what we have in Christ (Eph. 1:3) and what we need to "put on." It is the difference between our standing and our state.
- 2) The emphasis on "the whole armor of God." It all must be on us. We cannot get along without any part.
- 3) It is called the armor of God because:
 - a) God has provided it for us.
 - b) God is the only One we can get it from.
- 4) There are seven parts to the armor:
 - a) The girdle of truth.
 - b) The breastplate of righteousness.
 - c) The shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of peace.
 - d) The shield of faith.
 - e) The helmet of salvation.
 - f) The sword of the Spirit.
 - g) Prayer.

We will save our consideration of prayer until next Sunday, but let us seek from the Lord an understanding now of the various parts of the armour -- an armour designed for both defensive and offensive warfare.

I. THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH.

The "loins" are the lower part of the back between the rib cage and the hips -- regarded as the region of strength. The girdle was a wide band which went around the waist -- a belt. It served two purposes:

- 1) To bind the soldiers garments about him so as to leave him unrestricted in his movements.
- 2) To give added strength to his loins.

We even talk of girding up our loins when we are speaking of getting ready to do something difficult.

For the child of God it is the truth of the Word of God which serves this purpose. To gird ourselves with the truth means that we must do two things:

- A. We must know the truth of the Word of God.
- B. We must believe the truth of the Word of God.

This must come first. The devil attacked Eve concerning the Word. And he even did this with our Lord. And this is where he will direct his attacks against us. To be ignorant of the Word, or to be in doubt of the Word, is to leave ourselves defenseless against the Devil.

II. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

If you could see the Greek word for "breastplate" you would see that it is the word from which we get our English word, thorax -- the part of our body between the neck and the abdomen, the chest, where the heart is.

"The breastplate" covered the back as well as the front.

See Isa. 59:17 and 1 Thess. 5:18.

We are already clothed in righteousness before God, but we must now seek by the grace of God to make that righteousness ours in a practical way. Our lives must be brought into conformity with the Word of God. To be righteous is to be in harmony with some standard. Here the standard is the Word of God.

Does the Word of God describe what you are and the way you live?

III. THE SHOES OF THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.

The word, "preparation," speaks of readiness, sureness, a person who is ready for action.

And since the Gospel is here called, "the gospel of peace," Paul must be talking about the Christian's assurance of salvation. Doubt always leads to defeat. And the greatest disaster comes when we doubt our salvation.

Where does assurance come from?

- 1) From the Word of God.
- 2) From the Spirit of God.

See 2 Tim. 1:12 and Rom. 8:16, 17.

This is the main reason for the writing of Romans and 1 John. We can have "peace with God" without enjoying "the peace of God." Only when we are assured of our salvation do we experience "peace," and this is what gives us sureness of footing against our Enemy.

ARE YOU NOTICING HOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOR HAS TO DO WITH THE WORD OF GOD?

IV. THE SHIELD OF FAITH.

This was often 2 ft. by 4 ft.

The Evil One will do everything that he can to undermine our confidence in God and in His Word. His first words recorded in Scripture are in Gen. 3:1, "Yea, hath God said . . . ?"

Peter says that we are to "resist" the Devil "steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:9), and James promises us that if we "resist the devil" that "he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). This is a guaranteed victory.

But where do we get our faith. See Rom. 10:17 and Heb. 12:2.

There is something about even reading the Word of God that strengthens our faith. Are you seeing to it that your faith is strong through daily exposure to the Word of God?

V. THE HELMET OF SALVATION.

This went on the head -- and therefore has to do with the mind.

Paul calls it in 1 Thess. 5:8, "and, for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

Do you remember our study of the word, "hope," in Ephesians? See Eph. 1:18, 2:12; 4:4.

This points us to the future, the ultimate outcome and character of our salvation in Christ -- to our progressive conformation to the likeness of Christ.

Cf. 1 John 3:2. What a marvelous defense and offense this is! This, too, comes from the Word of God. Have you let the Holy Spirit teach you this marvelous truth?

VI. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

There is no doubt as to what this is -- which is the Word of God!"

Cf. Heb. 4:12.

We are talking about putting on "the whole armour of God," and now we come to "the Word of God." Why is "the Word" called "the sword of the Spirit" and why is it called "the Word of God"? Because:

- 1) It belongs to Him.
- 2) It is provided by Him.
- 3) It is used by Him. Cf. Isa. 55:11, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth . . ."

And this weapon is kept keen and forceful in our hands by the last part of the armor . . .

VII. PRAYER -- which we will take up next Lord's Day. But it needs to be mentioned here as a part of the armor.

Concl: All, including prayer, has to do with the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Do you wonder that everything in your own heart, everything in the world, and everything that the Devil does is designed to keep us from the Word -- to keep us from reading it so that we can learn it, to keep us from believing it, to keep us from trusting the Word and it alone for all that we need?

This is where the battle rages (which we will be talking about next Sunday). The Devil has no power against the child of God who will take his stand on the Word of God -- and stay there! May the Lord help us to see this morning that this is the most important thing in our lives. And may we give ourselves to the Word as never before, trusting the Lord to teach and to give us the strength to stand day by day against all that the Devil might seek to bring against us.

THE BATTLE
Eph. 6:10-24 -- Final Message

Intro: In this, the concluding message on the present series in Ephesians, I want us to consider THE BATTLE. Such a subject focuses attention on the phrase in v. 11, "the wiles of the devil" -- his methods, the strategy that he uses, the tactics he employs to bring about our defeat and the defeat of the work of God in the world.

Much could be said about this subject which is not recorded for us in Ephesians, but, since we are considering Ephesians in particular, I want to limit myself to this passage. We will do well to digest what we have here.

What does Paul tell us in this passage which gives us some indication of the things which the Devil will seek to do to defeat us as Christians?

Let me mention six in the order in which they appear in the passage.

I. "THE WILES OF THE DEVIL."

Let us call them temptations because that is what they are.

A. The temptation to compromise.

This is seen in Paul's repeated use of the word, stand.

Not to stand is to give ground, which is compromising. And where will the Devil try to get us to compromise? The whole passage indicates that it is with the Word of God!

One can see this battle shaping up today again on a massive scale, but this is always going on in the lives of the people of God -- pressure to get us to give in to compromise with the Word of God!

Illus.: 88 years ago, in 1888, Charles Haddon Spurgeon was engaged in a bitter controversy with the Baptist Union in England which was to result in his censure and expulsion from that organization. It all came about because of the Union's refusal to take a stand for the doctrines of Scripture. The one and only thing that they declared themselves on was the mode of baptism. One of the messages which Spurgeon preached that year which reflected what he was going through was a sermon entitled, NO COMPROMISE, preached

on October 7 of that year. Spurgeon's mother died that same year. The controversy took such a toll on Spurgeon's health that he was out of his pulpit for 4 months.

The Christian is under orders to stand. To fail to stand is treason against the God of heaven! Regardless of the cost, we must stand!

B. The temptation to doubt.

We have this in Paul's emphasis on the word, "faith."
See vv. 16 and 23.

The Devil will seek to get us to doubt the Word of God,
the love of God,
His wisdom,
His power,
everything!

Note Genesis 3:1-5.

The battle can get very, very bitter right on this point. Some of you are faced with this today.

C. The temptation to fear.

The request in vv. 19, 20 is amazing, especially coming from the Apostle Paul. (Discuss the details of the two verses.)

D. The temptation to discouragement.

See verses 21, 22. Why was Paul sending Tychicus? To tell the Ephesians about Paul's circumstances. Why not write about them? Probably because it would have been too discouraging for them -- considering Paul's needs, his health, etc.

See Eph. 3:13.

You can almost hear what the Devil was telling Paul -- and telling the Ephesians too. "If God is God, and Paul is really right, then why . . . ?"

But note that Tychicus was sent not just as a reporter, but as a comforter, an encourager. What do you suppose he told the Ephesians?

Are you under attack on this point today?

E. The temptation to be self-sufficient.

I wish all of you could read John Calvin's comments on

the last two verses of Ephesians -- as they have to do with our need for "peace . . . love with faith . . . grace . . ."

And note also the emphasis on:

- 1) The weakness of believers in v. 10.
- 2) The need to put on the whole armor of God.
- 3) The need for prayer.

WHY? If a believer is growing in the Lord, will he not get beyond such a place where he needs to be so dependent upon the Lord? Remember Paul's request in vv. 19, 20!

F. The temptation to be all-inclusive.

Many profess even today to love the Lord. Politicians have found that it is profitable to claim some faith in Jesus Christ. But Paul singles out those who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity"!

This means with a love that is going to remain -- not fade away!

Man is always concerned about bigness. A "mised multitude" came with the Israelites out of Egypt, and they were a source of constant trouble to the people of God.

And so it always is! What difference does it make how many we get involved in any work of God if there is not agreement among them about the Gospel and all of the others truths of the Word of God?

These are only some of "the wiles of the devil." But they are enough to occupy us this morning.

What can we do about them?

Paul has given us the answer, and there is no question as to what he means.

II. THE STRATEGY OF THE BELIEVER.

Remember that we are not just interested in defending ourselves, but we want to defeat the enemy! How can we do it?

There are just two things that are absolutely essential. If you have these two, you need nothing else. If you are without either one or both of them, nothing else will be able to take their place!

A. The Word.

It means that we must know the Word, and that the Word must be personally applied and appropriated by each one of us -- daily!

Are you reading it? How much are you reading it? How faithfully are you reading it? Are you taking to heart what you read?

B. Prayer.

See v. 18.

Whatever else you might see in this verse, one thing that it means for all of us is that we need to be praying more than we are!

(Explain the verse -- the first part for ourselves; the latter part "for all saints.")

Concl: How does Ephesians end -- with uncertainties and doubts and fears as to the outcome? ABSOLUTELY NOT! We have the promise of continuing victory.

The battle is fierce, and constant. But the victory is the Lord's!