

THE CHURCH AND MISSIONS  
Ephesians 6:10-24

Intro: A new and unexpected opportunity for ministry has been opened to us as a church, but also a great responsibility. In fact, we all should realize that it is a responsibility far beyond our capacities. I am not referring particularly to the book work that will be involved, but I am referring to the spiritual ministry that the Lord has laid upon us. Perhaps one reason the local church has really been on the sidelines observing the work of missions, instead of being vitally involved in it, is because churches have been content for it to be that way. People who were critical of us when Trinity began were quick to say, because of our Calvinism, that we did not believe in missions, that we did not believe in evangelism. What a foolish thing for them to even think! People who believe in the sovereignty of God in salvation and in the doctrines of grace have more reason to believe in missions than any other group of the Lord's people. We know that God has a work to do throughout the world, and we know that, when the Gospel is preached, God is going to bless the message that His purposes might be accomplished.

Perhaps the Lord is going to do something special for us as well as for Phares and Lucile and Tim in this stronger relationship that we are to have with them. We hope that it is going to result in great blessing for them in Japan, and that it will result in great blessing for us here at home, too.

I want to charge your hearts and my heart tonight with at least some of the responsibilities that will be ours in an increased way during the years to come. There are many passages of Scripture that I could have used, but somehow the Lord seemed to lead me to Ephesians 6. And I want to point out some things which I hope will serve as a guide for us in this new ministry that the Lord has given us. I am going to go to the end of this chapter with some brief remarks, remarks that will include Phares and Lucile as well.

The first thing I want to point out is that

I. OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

Everything that the Apostle said from verse 10 on in this chapter seems to have been prompted by what he said in verse 12. (Read.)

We have an unseen Enemy whose work is very visible. He may use human beings, but he and his forces are spiritual beings, but, nevertheless, very real.

This is a warfare that we are sure to lose if we do not

engage in it God's way. Therefore, though we have read this passage many times, we need to observe carefully what the Apostle Paul said here, and then follow his directions.

## II. THE REQUIREMENT: "Be strong in the Lord."

There is really only one thing that he told the Ephesian believers they had to be, and it applied to everyone in the whole church. Listen to what it was:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord,  
and in the power of his might (v. 10).

Paul never did have a mission board to look to. Mission boards were unheard of in those days. It was the local church which he enlisted to stand behind him in the work of the Gospel. And so his words are very applicable.

How can we be strong in the Lord?

There are just two things that we need to be concerned about:

### A. Putting on the whole armour of God.

How do we do this? Remember that this applies to all of us, not just a few of us.

# It has to do with the Word of God.

No Christian can be strong without the Word of God. But this involves more than just reading the Word every day. It involves more than coming to church regularly to hear the Word. IT MEANS THAT THERE MUST BE THE DAILY APPLICATION OF THE WORD OF GOD IN EACH OF OUR LIVES. The Word must be conforming us more and more each day into the likeness of Christ. Our faith needs to be strengthened. We need to know more of the Spirit's work in and through us. In short, we cannot afford to be mere hearers of the Word; the Word must be translated into obedience-- and only the Lord can accomplish this in our lives.

### B. # It has to do with prayer.

Both of these points are well-known to most of us, but how faithful are we with the Word and in prayer? It is one thing to know what we need to do; it is quite another thing to do it, and to do it faithfully!

The Holy Spirit is needed here, too.

We are to be on guard, "watching." And we are to

be specific in our praying. Notice that Paul did not ask them to pray that their needs would be met, i.e., their material needs, or even their physical needs, but it was concerning his mouth. How interesting! The Gospel needs to be preached; it needs to be proclaimed. And usually the greatest hindrance is not money, nor health, but lock-jaw. We suffer that at home, too, do we not? If we pray this way for Phares and Lucile, the Lord will not only help them to have a stronger witness, but the Lord may do the same thing for us here. If the Word is going out, a work can be done. If the Word is not going out, we might as well not even be around!

The battle for the Gospel in Japan is to be waged primarily on our knees. That will be our part. If our praying is what it ought to be, all of the other needs will surely be met.

And so it behooves each one of us to examine our own lives. Are we not only reading the Word, but are we obeying the Word? Is it our desire each day not only to please the Lord, but to be conformed more and more to be like the Lord. And are we faithful in praying--all kinds of prayer? Do we know what it is to worship as well as what it is to bring our petitions to the Lord? Are we on watch?

Our new ministry somehow caused me to look at the remainder of this chapter. In it I realized that what the Lord has done for us in opening this new door of ministry also involves a greater responsibility for Phares and Lucile--a ministry for us.

### III. THE MISSIONARY'S MINISTRY TOWARD THE HOME CHURCH (Eph. 6: 21-24).

I know that Phares and Lucile have been engaged in both of these, but I want to request that they continue to do what they have been doing.

The first is

- A. To keep us informed as to how things are going in Japan.

See vv. 21, 22. This was one phase of Paul's ministry for the Ephesians.

We want to hear from you. That will help us to pray, and it will enable us to rejoice in what the Lord is doing in Sasebo and the surrounding area.

- B. To pray for us. See vv. 23, 24. Here Paul wrote out his prayers for them. We need missionaries who will

pray for us like this because the battle rages not only in Japan, but the same warfare goes on here at home. And so we need help just as Phares and Lucile need help. And they will be helping in the work here by their prayers, and we will be helping in their work overseas by our prayers.

Concl: What a fellowship is our--partners, workers together in the great task of making the Lord Jesus known in Sasebo and in Portland. Let us be faithful to the Lord, believing that He has a work to do in both places, according to His plan, and all for His glory.