

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS A WARFARE**

Ephesians 6:10-12

**Intro:** As we come to the last part of this glorious epistle, Paul introduced what he was about to say as his final point, with the word, “Finally.” Some expositors have pointed in that in Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi, in chapter 3, verse 1, he said, “Finally,” when he was only about half way through his letter. And then when in reading Philipians we come to chapter 4, verse 8, he said “finally” again. Often we preachers are guilty of that. We say, “finally,” and then go on to speak about as long as we have already spoken.

But we really can’t accuse Paul of making a mistake like that. He was speaking under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and so his words were carefully used under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So we need to look for another explanation of Paul’s use of this word, “Finally.”

In a sense it was used by Paul to point out a point of special importance that he was making. It indicates that he had been building up to a truth, or some practical emphasis that he wanted them to pay special attention to. Here in Ephesians he was bringing his letter to a close, but he wanted those who would read this epistle to know that this is some kind of a P.S. that we add to a letter because we have forgotten to include it until we had finished the letter.

No, it is not a P.S., a postscript. It is a vital part of his letter. In fact, it is a part that he had been working toward since he started the letter. The Apostle Paul was a very logical thinker. I had a philosophy professor when I was in the University of British Columbia who used Paul’s letter to the church at Rome as the greatest example of logical thinking that he had ever read. He was a Russian teacher who had read very widely, and in our classes he went through the book of Romans from chapter 1 to chapter 16 to show us that Paul was a master logician. But he didn’t accept it as the word of God; he just looked upon it as written by a person whose logical reason was unsurpassable. I took what my professor had to say as a marvelous testimony to the Word of God. But he looked upon it as a piece of ancient literature.

God is logical. He originated the process of thinking. But the unique fact about the whole Bible is that it is the Word of God. Man in his logic can

reach some false conclusions. But the Word of God is inerrant.

So when Paul wrote this word “finally” here at the beginning of verse 10 in Ephesians 6, he was saying in so many words, “Now I have reached a point in this epistle that I had in mind from the very beginning.” As I have tried to bring out in our study of Ephesians, Paul began this epistle by laying down some foundational truths, and gradually he has built upon that foundation, point by point, and now he has come in this latter part of chapter 6, verse 10 to the point that he had in his mind at the very beginning.

Now let me point out how Paul has been “building” this letter.

He began in chapters 1 and 2 with the Gospel, which is really the foundation of all of our relationship with God. Then in chapter 3 Paul indicated that God was doing a special work with His people in this generation, and that work he called, “the church.” He actually touched upon this truth in at the end of chapter 1 where he mentioned, “the church, which is His body,” meaning, the body of Christ.

Then in chapter 4 and 5 down to verse 21 he told the Ephesians how they were to live. The word he used was “walk.” In chapter 4 verse 1, “walk worthy” of our calling. In chapter 4, verse 17 they were not to walk like other Gentiles walk, even the way they used to walk before they were saved. In chapter 5, verse 2 they were to “walk in love.” In chapter 5, verse 8, they were to “walk as children of light.” And then in the 15<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter 5 they were to “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” And these words were written just as much for Christians today as they were those Christians in the first century.

Following this Paul emphasized where we should look first to see the effect of a relationship with Christ, and that was in the home. The Gospel will make a difference in the way a wife responds to her husband, and in the way a husband loves his wife. It will show up when children are saved by their obedience to their parents, and it will show up in the concern that parents have for their children. And the Gospel made a difference also in those days when there were bondservants in the home, and where the husband was also a master.

Then we come to our word, “Finally.” Here Paul was saying something like this: “Now I want to tell you something that is very important, some-

thing which probably some of you have already discovered, and that is that you need to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” because we are all involved in a spiritual warfare with enemies we cannot see, but who are nevertheless very real enemies, who are set on our destruction. This is a truth every young Christian needs to be told at the very beginning, and this is a truth that the oldest Christian among us must never forget.

I have a book in my library, written by a British pastor who was born in the year 1616. He was one of those men known in church history as the Puritans. He wrote a book on these last few verses of Ephesians, or really two volumes, numbering approximately 1100 pages. That pastor’s name was William Gurnall, and the title of his book is, *The Christian in Complete Armour*. He wrote it for the people in his church in Lavenham, England. This is what he said in the dedication of the book:

The subject of this treatise is solemn; *A War between the Saint and Satan, and that so bloody a one, that the cruellest which was ever fought by man will be found but sport and child’s play to this* (italics mine). It is a spiritual war that you shall read of; and that not a history of what was found many ages past and is now over, but of what is now 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 (p. v).

I finished reading this book back in September of 1984. I don’t know how long it took me to read it, but it was many months. I would like to read it again, but I may not be able to. But I would encourage all of you to get it and read it. An abridgment of this has been published by Banner of Truth which may bring it more within the realm of possibility for those of you who read. In the few Sundays that we will spend on these verses, you will probably here from time to time some words from this servant of the Lord who was so greatly concerned that the people of God in future generations would fight and win against the enemy of our souls.

But for today let us look briefly at verses 10, 11, and 12 of Ephesians 6.

Bishop Moule in his valuable commentary on Ephesians remind us that it is in connection with the home that the Apostle Paul initiated his comments on our spiritual warfare and the primary target of the Devil in

his hatred of God and the people of God. Each one of us needs to apply the teaching of Ephesians (and all of the Word of God) to our lives individually. That is the emphasis of the early part of this epistle. But next to Paul's emphasis on individual holiness, he points to the home as a primary target of the Devil. If he can't get us individually, his next step is to focus on the home. And we see this today in the breakdown of our homes – the lack of any Christian teaching in most homes, the great number of divorces in our homes, the alarming rebellion of children. And along with this we have liberal judges who refuse to punish criminals, and laws that are made that limit parents and teachers in what they can do in disciplining children. When we turn away from God, as we have, chaos is the result everywhere. May the Lord give us ears to hear the message of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. It has God's answer to our needs today. If we continue in our God-less ways, we will reap a greater harvest of tragedy because we put ourselves, our families, and our nation into the hands of the Evil One who already seems to have things going his way. Our country's greatest need is to turn back to God and to His Word.

But now looking into our text, Paul made one strong point in each of these three verses.

- 1) In verse 10 we learn what our greatest need is.
- 2) In verse 11 Paul tells us how that need is met.
- 3) In verse 12 he describes why we need such an armor.

## **I. OUR GREATEST NEED FOR THIS WARFARE (Eph. 6:10).**

We are not saved very long before we learn that it is still possible for us to sin. Sometimes, with some people, this makes them think that maybe they haven't really been saved. But as we read the Bible and hear it taught, we learn that the greatest saints that are mentioned in the Bible still could, and did, sin. And the Devil knows this so he puts all kinds of temptations before us.

We read our Bibles faithfully and spend time in prayer in the hope of getting some help, but it seems that there are always interruptions that keep us from doing what we know we need to do. We have difficulty keeping up with our Bible reading, and we spend so little time in prayer that we get discouraged. Maybe our friends encroach upon our time, and we neglect what we know we should be doing.

Sooner or later we come to the realization that we need help. We can't

live for the Lord without that help. And we come to a passage like this and before we know what our need is, we read, “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

These words are addressed to every Christian who reads this epistle. Some Christians have strong personalities and are inclined to live for the Lord just with their own strength, but they will find that they are just as needy in this life, in this battle, as a weaker brother is. Paul states this as a command, addressing himself to all believers, but he is not talking about some experience that suddenly gives us the strength and power that we need, but as he has emphasized in the epistle, this power comes to us from God on a day by day basis. And you can see that this is not something that we do for ourselves, but it is what the Lord does for us. It is His strength, and it is the power of His might. But how do we get this strength and power? Courage is also included in this.

Please turn with me back to Ephesians 3 and we will find our answer there. Note how Paul prayed for the Ephesian believers. Follow in your Bibles as I read Ephesians 3:13-21. (Read and explain.) Before Paul mentioned our warfare, he had been praying that they would be given the strength inwardly by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is not some once-for-all experience, but a daily relationship. This is why Paul spent so much time talking about their walk. And we must not forget his word about the Holy Spirit in chapter 5 just before he began to speak to wives, husbands, etc. in verse 18. And again Paul is emphasizing a daily personal relationship where we are learning not to trust ourselves, but to depend upon the Holy Spirit. Although the Ephesians did not know it, but Paul, by his earlier instruction in this epistle, was preparing them for the conflict that inevitably they would be involved in as they sought to walk with the Lord. The Devil will do anything he can to cripple us in our walk.

But let us move on to verse 11, remembering what Paul wrote in verse 10. What do we have in verse 11? We are told from a practical standpoint

## **II. HOW OUR NEED IS MET (Eph. 6:11).**

We don't leave verse 10 behind when we go on to verse 11, but we take it with us.

In verse 10 we are told what the Lord will do for us. Here we are told

what we are to do for ourselves. Of course the Lord will work in us to show us that this is what we need. And the armor is provided for us by God. But we are responsible to put it on!

From verse 14 down through verse 18 we are going to find out what the armor consists of. Paul had plenty of time to study the armor of the Roman soldiers because it seems that he was chained to one twenty-four hours every day. And Paul stressed “the whole armor.” No part was to be left out. The whole body was to be protected. He was armed for individual conflict. It included a girdle, a breastplate, shoes, a shield, a helmet, and a sword. And verse 18, speaking of prayer, tells how we face the enemy, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . .”

The purpose of the armor and the weapon was to protect us from “the wiles of the Devil.” The word for “wiles” in Greek is the word from which we get our English word, *methods*. Paul had referred to this in chapter 4, verse 14, where he used this same word but it is translated “they lie in wait” with the purpose of deceiving. Our archenemy is named here. He is the Devil, the accuser, a slanderer. In Rev. 12:10 we are told of his ultimate judgment of this enemy of God and His people who “accused them before our God day and night.” He is the master Deceiver. We have that clearly indicated in his approach to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He even tried his deceptive methods on the Lord Jesus when he tempted Him according to Matthew 4:1-11.

In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul said that he was “not ignorant of his [Satan’s] devices.” Here Paul was speaking of Satan’s purposes, the way he thinks, what he is always seeking to do. In Ephesians 4:27 we read where Paul told the Ephesian believers, “Neither give place to the devil.” (Read the context of this verse beginning with verse 25 and going on down to the end of the chapter.) It is only through the Word used by the Holy Spirit in our lives that we can keep from giving the Devil the opportunity to take advantage of us by leading us into sin.

Much, much more could be said on this point, but let us move on to verse 12. Here we have Paul explaining

### **III. WHY WE NEED SUCH AN ARMOR (Eph. 6:12).**

The word “for” introduces the reason for what Paul had just written.

“We wrestle not against flesh and blood.” Obviously people are very involved and very visible in the sin that is going on in our world, and people give us a lot of trouble. But people are not the main source of our trouble. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood.” We need to know who our real enemy is.

One of our biggest problems is that we have an enemy that we cannot see. They are angelic beings. There are two kinds of angels: elect angels and fallen angels. The Devil is an angelic being. The book of Genesis tells us that sin was committed among the angels of heaven before sin was committed by Adam and Eve. Those beings who rebelled against God under Lucifer are great in number, great in power, highly organized, and far more powerful than the nations of men on the earth. If God were not a sovereign God, they would have destroyed the human race long ago. Satan is their king, and although he knows that his time is limited, yet he continues to do all of the evil that he can do before judgment is executed upon him. We need to remember that hell was prepared by the Devil and his angels, who are also called demons. See Matthew 25:41. These words in verse 12 indicate various levels of power and authority among the forces of the Devil. And yet the encouraging truth which Paul was presenting here is that God has provided for His people to live victorious-ly over the forces of evil. In spite of all that the Devil may do, and can do, and will do, his doom is sealed and the victory is with God.

This truth was a source of great comfort to the Apostle Paul as he expressed it in 2 Corinthians 2:14-17:

- 14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.
- 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:
- 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?
- 17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

**Concl:** We all can be thankful that, although we live with spiritual conflicts every day, “greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Ultimately the Lord will claim His rightful place over all the heaven and the earth. Until then we can claim victory in Christ by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us as we act in obedience to the precious Word of God.