

Title: Spiritual Warfare

Passage: Ephesians 6:10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak

Introduction:

Evil

- it is a very present reality. Not a mere idea.
 - ex: physical harm, torture, abuse
- Defined in Bible as both an attitude of the heart but also a person contrary to God.
- It is stark contrast to the holy God.

Satan

- Two errors of thinking see in present culture/thinking:
 - disregard reality of evil and Satan (material/natural world only, nothing spiritual), or
 - attribute everything bad to Satan (minimize human responsibility for one's sins and actions)

Overview:

- I. What is spiritual warfare? And who is involved in it?
- II. What enables us during spiritual warfare?
- III. What weaponry do we have available to fight?

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

- Definition: overall conflict between kingdom of God and kingdom of Satan and his legions
- Definition: the battle between good and bad, righteousness and evil, and truth and falsehood
- Definition: lifelong struggle with our lies, lusts, sins, temptors, and other evil-doers. Our sufferings provide occasions to either stumble or to stand.

Passage (Ephesians 6:10-20)

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

- this is not introducing a new topic but rather mentions as factual reality
- context of preceding chapters (how you have been rescued from darkness to light; how to live out one's faith practically)

Ephesians 6:11-12

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- fighting both flesh (inner sin) and spiritual forces (not just the latter)
- "schemes" = deception

WHO IS INVOLVED IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

God

- God always has been, is, and always will be in control.
 - Satan is not an equal partner in the fight.
- Satan is a super-natural being but the focus of the Bible is God

Job 1:12

And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

- Satan was allowed before God, and only allowed to affect Job with God's permission
- God restrained Satan from doing what he wanted to do to the full extent.
- Satan's existence is within the scope of God's sovereignty.
- It is a mystery how God's purposes are accomplished and His will is done.

Satan

- "Satan" = slanderer, accuser (name reflects his character)

History: Satan cast out of heaven after seeking to ascend to God's throne

- Isaiah 14:12-15

Isaiah 14:12-15

How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Ezekiel 28:12-19

...You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx,

and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings.

On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.

I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.

By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever.”

Old Testament

Genesis 3:1, 14-15

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”...The LORD God said to the serpent...”I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

1 Chronicles 21:1

Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

Zechariah 3:1

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

- Satan is opposed to God and humanity. He accuses God’s people before God.

New Testament

1 Thessalonians 3:5

For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

Revelation 12:10

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

John 8:44

You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

2 Corinthians 12:7

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.

- Satan is cunning and dangerous
- He is a fierceful enemy who knows all the human tendencies and weaknesses.
 - But Jesus Christ has already won the battle!

Ephesians 6:12

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Rulers

- Meaning: different areas of our world.
- Satan led a coup in heaven with a third of angels cast down with him.
- Satan, demons are limited but are rulers in certain geographic regions

Daniel 10:13 (Daniel prevented from certain areas, referred to a spiritual ruler over Persia for a period of time)

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia,

Isaiah 45:1

Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:

Authorities

- Meaning: something given a degree of value and influence
 - Ex: lust, materialism

Powers

- Meaning: one who has control over what one thinks and does
 - Ex: media/press

WHAT SHOULD WE DO AS CHRISTIANS?

Wrestle

- “For we do not wrestle against...”

- Recognize that it is Satan wrestling against us (thoughts against God)
- Being a Christian is not being in a state of absence of conflict or struggle

Luke 9:23

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Summary Points

- The Bible is a book about God, not the devil.
- The devil is never outside of God's control. Always been bound by boundaries set by God
- Satan always delights when we get messed up, puffed up, or give up.
- *Two key truths:* 1) God is good, all the time (no shadow of evil); 2) God works all things to the good for those who love Him

Psalms 107:1

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Key Verses

- There is always hope. Victory is on our side!

Romans 16:20

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

1 John 4:4

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Revelation 12:8-12

but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"