

EPHESIANS 6:10-20

Preparing for the Real Battle

Memory Verse

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

Ephesians 6:12

Real-life Problems

Even though we have been given victory over sin in Christ, we all still have a very real and present enemy who wants to kill, steal and destroy us. The evil one would love to expose our weaknesses, causing us to doubt ourselves or others. The enemy does this often getting us to believe that our problems are with other people and not him. He wants us to get angry at our friends for not including us. He wants us to blame our parents for our frustrations. He wants us to believe our teachers are just out to get us. Satan would love nothing more than for us to forget he even exists and, instead, pit us against one another and God.

The Good News

We all face a daily battle against evil in this world. Yet in Christ, we have been given everything we need to stand firm in that battle. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has already claimed our final victory in the battle and supplied us with His Spirit as the source of our strength in the battle.

I. Introduction

OPENING QUESTIONS

Idea #1: When something frightens you, what is your first response –fight, flight or freeze?

Idea #2: What is your go-to song when you are studying?

Idea #3: Would you rather live for an entire year on a boat or on a train?

PRAY

Open your time together in prayer.

REHEARSING THE GOSPEL

What does gospel mean?

Good news

What's the good news?

Jesus died for my sins

Why did He die for your sins?

So that I can have abundant life in relationship with Him now and forever

What is grace?

God's love for undeserving sinners

REVIEW

1) What were the two reasons Paul wrote this letter?

1) To remind the church of the power of the gospel 2) To encourage believers to live in light of their new identity as the church

2) Who was the original audience of this letter?

The church, or followers of Jesus Christ, in Ephesus

3) Where was Paul when he wrote this letter?

Paul was in prison for his work in spreading the gospel.

What's going on?

REMIND

The gospel changes everything about the life of the believer. No longer do we walk as unwise, but through being filled with the Spirit, we have new fellowship and transformed relationships.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) We are in a battle, but our enemy is not who we think.
- 2) The Lord has given us the armor for battle, but we must chose to use it.
- 3) We fight the battle on our knees.

Read

Read **Ephesians 6:10-20** aloud in your group.

II. Questions for Discussion

A. WHAT?

1) In verses 11 and 13, what are the reasons Paul gives for taking up and putting on the armor of God?

1) To stand against the schemes of the devil 2) To withstand the evil day 3) To stand firm

2) According to verse 12, what is our battle against? What is it not against?

Our battle is a spiritual one against the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this present darkness. Our battle is an earthly one against flesh and blood.

3) List the five pieces of armor Paul describes in verses 14-17?

1) Belt of truth 2) Breastplate of righteousness 3) Shoes from the readiness given by the gospel of peace 4) Shield of faith 5) The helmet of salvation.

4) In verse 18, who does Paul say we are to be praying for?

All the saints

5) What specific prayer request does Paul ask for himself in verse 19?

The words to be given him to boldly proclaim the mystery of the gospel

B. SO WHAT?

1) In your own words, how would you explain what Paul is saying in verse 12 ?

Answers will vary. Let multiple students answer to allow others perspectives to challenge each other.

2) How do you think Paul's charge to be strong in the Lord (v. 10) should inform how we are to fight the battle?

It is a reminder that our strength to fight does not come from us, but from the Spirit of the Lord in us. As we stand firm in God and our relationship to Him, He will give us the strength for the battle.

3) Paul uses the image of "standing" three times in this passage. What is significant about standing when it comes to warfare?

Standing was the position a warrior was in when he was ready and willing to fight. It was a sign of presence for the battle. In a sign of surrender, a warrior might sit, kneel, or lay down. To remain standing would be to remain in the battle and confident to approach the fight.

4) What is the significance of shoes in a warrior's armor? How might the gospel of peace act like shoes for us?

Shoes are often not considered a prime part of the warrior's armor. However, shoes protected the warrior's feet, meaning it allowed them to continue advancing in the battle. The gospel of peace is what allows us to continue advancing against the attacks to the enemy. We can move forward in confidence because the gospel not only provides current peace, but future hope. We know the enemy is already defeated, so we can fight knowing that his power is limited.

5) How can faith work as a shield for us and the Word of God as a sword?

A shield is what is used as a form of protection from the attacks of an enemy. It blocks their weapons. Our faith is our form of protection against the schemes and attacks of the evil one. Faith is what will block the lies the enemy throws at us. Faith will guard our hearts and minds in Christ. While the shield is used to protect against an attack, the sword is actually used to attack. It is not just protection, but a weapon used to wound one's enemy. The Word of God, or the Bible, is our weapon in battle. It is our forward attack against the evil one. He cannot stand against the truth.

6) What role does prayer serve in our ability to be strong and stand firm in the battle?

According to Paul, prayer seems to be the baseline, or strategy, for going to battle. While we are to put on the armor of God to prepare for the battle, we are to fight the battle in prayer. We are to pray for ourselves and for the others who fight with us, the saints. Praying is the basis for our perseverance in the battle.

Going to War

Watch the scene here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WpFkFyG5qQ

In this scene from the movie *War Room* we see Miss Clara enter into her closet, which she calls her war room. She calls it her war room because "In order to stand up and fight the enemy, you need to get on your knees and pray."

What is significant about this scene is that we see Miss Clara praying for not just herself but others. This is a beautiful example of how prayer is the foundation through which Christians fight the spiritual battle we are facing. We see an example of the way in which we can pray for other saints as Paul calls us to do.

You can also note that before Miss Clara enters her war room to pray, she "takes up" her sword—the Bible—to go to battle with her.

C. NOW WHAT?

1) In what areas of your life do you find yourself more tempted to rely on your own strength and not the Lord's strength?**2) A breastplate would be used to protect a person's heart and a helmet would be used to protect a person's mind. In what ways do you see your heart and mind being vulnerable to the enemy's attack? How might righteousness and salvation guard your heart and mind?**

Answers will vary. What is important is for students to see that both righteousness and salvation belong to the Lord. It is Christ's righteousness, that He has credited to us, that protects our hearts. While our flesh is weak, the breastplate of Christ's righteousness protects us and keeps us. Also, the knowledge of our salvation is what will protect our minds from the lies of the enemy. Understanding our salvation as secure because of Christ's work helps us to guard against the lies that would try to convince us otherwise.

3) What keeps you from praying for others? How does prayer help us to fight the battle we face?

Main takeaway

First, as Christians, we are in a battle, but our enemy is not who we think. We do not fight a physical battle, but a spiritual one. Second, by God's grace, He has given us all the armor we need for this battle, but we must choose to take it up and put it on. Finally, we are called to fight the battle on our knees in prayer.

III. Closing

REMEMBERING THE GOOD NEWS

We all face a daily battle against evil in this world. Yet, in Christ, we have been given everything we need to stand firm in that battle. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has already claimed our final victory in the battle and supplied us with His Spirit as the source of our strength in the battle.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God Almighty, we confess that we are quick to put on our own strength and blame to the wrong enemy. Help us to rightfully see our battle as a spiritual one, and to humbly seek first Your strength to fight. We thank You that You have graciously given us all things in your Son, and that, through Him, we have all we need for battle. Grant us the boldness to speak and the faithfulness pray as we should. Amen.

Supporting resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) In what situations do you most often find yourself relying on your own strength? What makes you doubt the Lord's power in those times?
- 2) How does it make you feel that you have been equipped in the ways mentioned in this passage? Give thanks to God for the ways He is equipping you for the battle.
- 3) Who are other Christians who you can commit to regularly pray for as they face the battle? Who can you ask to commit to pray for you?

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- 1) In what areas of your life do you find yourself more tempted to rely on your own strength and not the Lord's strength?
- 2) In what ways does the armor of God provide protection for you? What does it look like for you to choose to put on the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of salvation daily?
- 3) Who could you commit to pray for daily as they face this battle? Take time now to pray over your student toward the battle they face.