

Theme: Every Christian is called to draw upon the strength of Christ to take a stand against Satan and his kingdom, praying for the spread of the Gospel and the kingdom of God.

I. Intro - Inevitable Spiritual Warfare

- A. If we SIT with Christ and WALK with Him - Satan attacks
- B. Our WALK inevitably leads us to STAND in battle
- C. I did 7 week series in 2017 - much more there
- D. I also encourage you to read *Screwtape Letters*
- E. Today a brief look at spiritual warfare

II. Sit, Walk, Stand - The Importance of the Order

- A. The order in the letter teaches us this
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the schemes of the devil...¹³ 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. ¹⁴ **Stand** therefore... Ephesians 6:11,13–14
 1. SIT (Ephesians 1-2); WALK (Eph 4:1-6:9); STAND
 2. This is all 3 occurrences of 'stand' in Ephesians
 3. NOTE: 'withstand' is a related verb (ἀνθίστημι)
- B. Our strength to STAND comes from Christ
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Ephesians 6:10
 1. We are to make ourselves strong in the Lord Jesus
 2. Our strength comes from Him and His might, & we draw upon His strength because we SIT with Him.

- C. Our armor is the armor of God - not our own
Put on the whole **armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil... ¹³ 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. Ephesians 6:11, 13
 1. We do not STAND in our armor but God's
 2. This armor belongs to God and is provided by God
 3. This is part of our inheritance when God made us SIT with Christ
- D. We can not STAND until we WALK
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Ephesians 6:10
 1. STAND is last - we must WALK before we STAND
 2. We can not wage war against the enemy if we are walking in his ways in our daily life
 3. It is pointless to think I can STAND against the lies of Satan if I WALK in falsehood and deceit in my daily life! It is like shouting to get peace and quiet!
 4. Furthermore, I can not blame Satan for what I have brought into my own life by disobedience! I can't STAND against what I am inviting into my own life!
 5. The mandatory preparation to STAND against Satan is drawing strength from being seated with Christ and walking in obedience to His commands.

III. Stand - Our Warfare With the Enemy

- A. The enemy - Satan and his demons (not other humans)

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 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. Eph. 6:11–12

1. Paul is clear - our enemy is Satan and his demons, not other humans!
2. If they have flesh and blood they are NOT your enemy and are not the target of spiritual warfare!
3. The focus of spiritual warfare is NEVER other humans, but rather Satan and his forces and their destructive purposes.
4. The church has messed this up many times - the Crusades are one example - and we must be very careful of using 'war' language to describe our disagreements with unbelievers.
5. Our responsibility with unbelievers is not STAND but WALK - to display a godly life before them, point them to Christ, show love and grace - not to declare spiritual war on them.

B. Spiritual warfare requires active obedience from us

1. We are commanded to 'take up', 'put on'
Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...
¹³Therefore 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. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness... ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Eph. 6:11, 13–14, 17

- a. These are imperatives - commands to act
 - b. Spiritual warfare is a reality, and it requires us to actively prepare by consciously taking up and putting on the armor of God.
2. We are told we must 'wrestle' - very active idea
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. Ephesians 6:12
 - a. To STAND is not passive; it is an active resistance against the attacks of Satan
 - b. This requires to be consciously aware of the schemes and attacks of the enemy, and to actively resist them.

C. We STAND in the victory of Christ

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Stand therefore... Ephesians 6:11, 13–14

1. We are NOT commanded to attack in this case, but rather to STAND
2. This is because Christ has already won the battle! The victory is His, and He is already seated far above Satan and his demonic forces.
3. We STAND in full assurance of victory because Christ has already won and He has given us His strength and armor! The victory is ours in Christ!
4. We do not fight for victory; we fight from victory. (Nee, 55)

5. This attitude is essential as we face the attacks of the enemy; Christians should be eternal optimists for we know that Christ has already won!

D. We primarily STAND in spiritual warfare through prayer **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... Ephesians 6:18

1. Praying, prayer, supplication (2x) in one verse!
2. We take up the armor so that we may engage in the warfare of prayer
3. The battle is won in prayer, not politics, slick marketing campaigns, our ideas or efforts. If we turn to these things before prayer, or spend more energy and effort on them than prayer, it is a sign that we are fighting in our strength, rather than the strength of Christ, and that we are no longer seated with Him but are fighting on our own.
4. Paul tells us to be alert and persevere. We must be mindful of the spiritual war that is raging around us and in the lives of the ones we love, and we must not give up or attempt to fight a spiritual war with carnal weapons.
5. There are two great dangers here for Christians: that we are asleep and ignorant of the spiritual attacks of Satan, or that we trust in carnal weapons in this spiritual war.

E. We STAND in prayer for the Gospel to go forth and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ep. 6:19–20

1. Paul wants and needs them to pray for him as he carries the Gospel forth
2. This is why it is essential for us to pray for our missionaries and for our gatherings, that the Gospel may go forth in clarity and power
3. We should also be praying for those in our circle of influence, asking the Gospel to break into their lives.
4. The ultimate focus when we STAND in spiritual warfare is for the success of the Gospel and the growth of God's Kingdom in the world today and in the future.

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I understand the reality of spiritual warfare?
1. Spiritual warfare is not fictional, something that only existed in the past, or something that happens to a few super-spiritual saints - it is a daily reality for every believer and local church.
 2. There is no spiritual Switzerland, a person or church not swept up into the spiritual war that engulfs the whole world.
 3. Many problems and struggles in your marriage, family, friendships, are the symptoms of spiritual warfare going on around you.
 4. Not everything is a result of spiritual attack - many things are either a result of living in this fallen world, or are the result of my own sin. You can not wage spiritual warfare against such things.
 5. But there are many things that are the result of spiritual warfare, and these situations will never be resolved apart from warfare in prayer.

6. When confronted with these things do I seek God as to whether they are the result of spiritual warfare?

B. Am I engaging in spiritual warfare in my personal life?

1. It is not enough to know about spiritual warfare - I must actively engage in it!
2. Remember the command: take up, put on, stand!
3. Do I regularly wrestle in prayer to see God's will accomplished in my life and the life of those around me? (Start locally)
4. Is my prayer life predominately concerned with comfort and ease, or for the advance of God's Kingdom?
5. Am I specifically praying for the Gospel to advance among my family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and around the world?
6. The enemy would love for us to live as practical atheists or spiritual materialists - as if God and Satan are not actively involved in the affairs of our daily life.

C. SIT, WALK, STAND - The Christian life

1. Remember these deep truths - and live them out
2. SIT - Our position in Christ; the foundation and fuel for our walk and warfare
3. WALK - Our life in the world; the sanctification that flows from being seated with Christ
4. STAND - our warfare with the enemy; the outgrowth of sitting with Christ and walking in His ways

D. A Mighty Fortress

Stand - Our Warfare With the Enemy

Ephesians 6:10-2-0

September 22, 2019

A Mighty Fortress

St. Patrick's Breastplate

Teaching keywords: Spiritual warfare; Satan and demons; Christian life; salvation; union with Christ; prayer

May Christ be your shield today: Christ before you; Christ behind you; Christ beneath you; Christ above you; Christ on your right; Christ on your left; May Christ be with you, Christ be in you alone and in multitude, near and afar; for all you face and for all your life, that you may live in the protection and power of his blessing.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹²For 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.

¹³Therefore 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. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. Ephesians 6:10–20 (ESV)