

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE -

SPIRIT-FILLED BELIEVERS FACE WARFARE

Ephesians 6, verses 10-18

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

Perhaps someone is asking, "Why would Ephesians, the most wonderful Epistle, the most lofty treatise in the New Testament, descend to a battlefield in the end? Is it not true that CHRIST won the victory completely and entirely? Are we not in CHRIST JESUS, and therefore victorious in Him? Are we not already seated in the Heavens? Is not our citizenship in Heaven? Then why should this grand and glorious Epistle that bears us from earth's sorrow into the heavens, then descend to the battlefield in its climax?"

That question is clearly answered: There is an enemy within. There is a traitor in our house. I am speaking of the flesh, warring against the spirit. Let me remind you that regardless of how consecrated and separated you are, you live in the flesh. Never let anyone tell you that the flesh is not still alive. It is true that we have crucified the old man . . . the affections of the flesh and the lusts thereof; but Satan will continue to rear his ugly head until we get that glorified body in the first resurrection.

The first desire of the devil is to damn your soul and see you burn in hell. There is a reason for that, which I have not time and space to discuss here. The devil is jealous of JESUS, he is envious, and he wants to burn every soul in hell that he possibly can. But if that soul comes to JESUS, and by faith in His shed Blood is born again, Satan does not give up. He is continually seeking to devour his testimony and his influence as a believer: **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in**

your brethren that are in the world" (I Peter 5:8-9).

Most of us read I Peter 5:8 and then stop. We use the verse to warn sinners that the devil is just one step behind them, ready to gobble them up and damn them at any moment. But dearly beloved, we read verse 9 and learn that we are to resist the devil steadfastly in faith, knowing that the same afflictions "**are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world,**" speaking, of course, of fellow Christians, brethren in the Lord. Job was a perfect man, and Satan accused Jehovah GOD of paying Job to serve Him.

You remember what a terrible, terrible test Job went through - but he came out victorious and climaxed his testing by saying, "**Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.**"

In the New Testament, Peter loved the Lord and he was sincere when he said, "All others may forsake you - but I will go with you, to prison or to death!" Yet Peter denied his Lord, cursed and swore he never met Him . . . even though he later went out and wept bitterly. If we resist the devil he will run from us; but if we do not resist him, if we are not alert and on guard, he can certainly devour our victory and our testimony . . . and our usefulness as a believer. Believers are certainly in warfare continuously, and will be until we are safe in the arms of JESUS.

If Satan tried every trick in his ungodly book in an effort to cause JESUS to sin, you need never entertain the idea that he will not attack YOU. He did his best to get JESUS to sell out - but with JESUS there was no shortcut. He finally put the devil to flight by declaring, "**Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve!**" Then the devil left JESUS "**for a season,**" but it was not long until he returned and through the religious leaders of the day did everything in his ungodly power to stop JESUS and prevent His going to the Cross, bearing our sins in His body on the tree. But in spite of the devil, JESUS marched on to victory.

Verse 10 opens with the word "**Finally**" . . . that is, "To bring these glorious truths to a close, let me warn and advise my brethren." He continues by saying, "**My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.**" The only way we can be strong against Satan is in the Lord. All the way through the book of Ephesians we are "**in the Lord.**" The only way we can overcome the devil is "**in the power of HIS might.**" You are no match for the devil, I am no match for the devil. We have overcome the devil because "**greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world**" (I John 4:4). If it were not for the power of the Lord, you and I would succumb to the power of Satan; but thank GOD, we are "**MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US**" (Romans 8:37).

But never forget that we are more than conquerors ONLY in Him - and if it were not for the power of His might we would not be conquerors. I thank GOD that JESUS has never asked me to walk a path that He did not walk before me. He was tempted in all points as I am - yet was without sin. Therefore, "**there hath no temptation taken you (or me) but such as is common to man**"; but GOD is faithful, and He will not permit us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the very temptation itself make a way to escape, that we poor, weak, finite creatures may be able to bear it - but only in the Lord (I Corinthians 10:12-13).

In verse 11 Paul begins to instruct us how to be strong in the Lord. We are to "**put on the whole armour of God.**" You can clearly see that redemption is the beginning of our salvation. By that,

I mean that when we are born again we are a child of GOD, but we are a babe in CHRIST. We are admonished to grow, and finally, we are to be a good soldier. Babies and children do not enlist in the army. Mature men enlist in the army to fight the enemies of the homeland.

Paul takes for granted that the Ephesian believers have grown to the place where they are strong enough, developed enough, and old enough in the Lord to become a good soldier and fight the warfare against Satan. We are to put on the whole armor of GOD so that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil - and his wiles are many, you may rest assured of that.

"**The whole armour of God**" conveys to us the origin and the nature of the armor. Please mark well the fact that the armor with which we will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil is from GOD - it is not man-made, it is God-furnished. Please notice: The armor of GOD is not fancy garments of lace, linen or silk - but armor - and when we think of armor we think of steel. Certainly we need the armor of GOD that we may be able to stand against Satan's methods and escape his pitfalls. The Greek word for "**wiles**" means "*methods*."

Satan has many demon-devised methods and schemes to outwit the child of GOD - and we must have the mind of CHRIST and the power of the Spirit if we overcome Satan's many "methods."

Before leaving verse 11, let me point out one more fact: We are to put on the whole armor if we are to stand. If we leave one spot unprotected by GOD's armor, if there is one little detail that we think we can handle in the flesh, we are open to defeat. It takes ALL the armor if we are to be able to stand in the hour of battle.

Verse 12 gives us light as to whom we are fighting against: "**We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**" We are not to deceive ourselves in thinking that our enemy is weak, or that he is flesh and blood. No, we are not wrestling against human power. We are wrestling against demon-power. Carnal weapons of the flesh will not suffice. We may invent weapons galore . . . varied and sundry weapons . . . we may do our best but the weapons we invent will not bring victory.

There is gross ignorance among believers concerning Satan's kingdom. It would do most Christians a world of good to take time out to study the devil and his demon kingdom. The devil is a personality. Liberals and modernists would have us believe that Satan is an evil influence - but the Bible distinctly teaches that he is a person.

JESUS referred to him as "**the prince of this world**" (John 12:31). Paul describes the devil as "**the god of this world**" (II Corinthians 4:4). In our present Epistle Paul describes Satan as "**the prince of the power of the air**" (Ephesians 2:2). In the last precious book of the Bible, John refers to our archenemy as "**the great dragon . . . that old serpent . . . the devil . . . Satan . . . which deceiveth the whole world**" (Revelation 12:9).

The Word of GOD does not leave us in ignorance concerning the methods of Satan. He achieves his ends through keeping the souls of the unregenerated in the dark. He blinds their minds (II Corinthians 4:3-4).

He keeps them from "**the light of the world**" (John 8:12).

Paul, writing to the believers at Corinth, warns them that Satan is transformed into an angel of light. He stands behind the sacred desk in local churches on Sunday morning. He impersonates the "**ministers of righteousness.**"

- He preaches a social gospel,
- He denies the Blood.
- He magnifies works instead of grace.
- He energizes men to parade under the name of Christian ministers, when in reality they are the ministers of the devil.

Study carefully II Corinthians 11:13-15. Satan accuses the brethren (Revelation 12:10). He deceives men - even THE WHOLE WORLD (Revelation 12:9). But Satan does not fight the warfare of evil by himself. He has a well-organized, gigantic, powerful empire. In Matthew 12:26, JESUS speaks of the kingdom of Satan: "**And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?**" JESUS recognized the kingdom of Satan. Why then should we not learn all we can about this powerful kingdom of demons, where the devil is chief over all? Satan is the leader of organized "**principalities and powers**" which are made up of "**rulers of the darkness of this world.**" These powers and rulers are stationed in the heavenlies.

I am sure someone must be asking, "Did you not say earlier in these messages that we are seated with JESUS in the heavenlies?" Yes, we are seated in the heavenlies in CHRIST JESUS. I also pointed out earlier in the message that there are three heavens (II Corinthians 12:1-3). There is the atmospheric heavens, the starry heavens, and the Heaven of Heavens. The Third Heaven is "**our Father's house.**" CHRIST is seated at the right hand of GOD the Father (Acts 7:55, Hebrews 1:1-3). Therefore we are seated with JESUS - not in the atmospheric heavens, not in the starry heavens, but in the Father's house . . . Paradise.

Satan at one time was in the Heaven of Heavens with GOD the Father. He was the "**anointed cherub that covereth.**" Personally, I believe he was the chief of the archangels. I believe that in the beginning, GOD created Gabriel, Michael, and Lucifer, and I believe Lucifer was the chief. He was the "high sheriff" of the throne of GOD until iniquity was found in him. Study carefully Ezekiel 28:14-15, also Isaiah 14:13-14. In these passages you will learn where Satan originated.

Satan brainwashed some of the angels, and led them to believe that together with him they could overthrow GOD and take His throne, and Satan would exalt HIS throne above the stars of GOD. Of course, the created is always weaker than the CREATOR; therefore, since GOD created Lucifer, the Shining One, GOD was more powerful, and He cast Satan out of the Third Heaven. Now he occupies the atmospheric heavens, he is the prince of the power of the air.

Eventually he will be placed in the lake of fire (Revelation 12:7-12) and when he is finally consigned to his eternal abode, his activities will be over. He will be tormented day and night forever and ever, along with the billions he led astray and robbed of their right to the Pearly White City because they refused to "**come to Jesus, that they might have life.**" Satan and all of his demon henchmen will be cast into a bottomless pit (Revelation 19:20, Revelation 20~2-3).

Satan is a defeated foe . . . he knows it; therefore, he is walking around seeking whom he may devour. He is the archenemy of every person on this earth.

Verse 13 opens with the word "**Wherefore**." That is . . . "Because the preceding is true, the following is needful."

Notice: "Wherefore, TAKE" . . . not "make." There is a world of difference. Man may make armor that looks very strong and capable of defending against the wiles of the devil; but the armor that brings victory is not armor that man can make, but armor that we TAKE by faith, as the Lord GOD Almighty provides. We take "**the whole armor of God**," that we may be able to stand "**in the evil day, and having done all, to stand**."

In verses 14 and 15, the pieces of armor are listed.

There is the girdle of Truth. JESUS said, "**Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free . . . I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life . . . Sanctify them through Thy Word, Thy Word is Truth**." Therefore, the girdle is JESUS.

Next, we have the covering for the breast . . . the breastplate of righteousness. This portion of the armor is for the protection of the most vulnerable parts, the vital organs of heart and lungs where a wound would be fatal. For this, nothing short of righteousness will suffice. "**Christ is made unto us wisdom, RIGHTEOUSNESS, sanctification and redemption**" (I Corinthians 1:29-30). "**He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD in Him**" (II Corinthians 5:21). So... the breastplate of righteousness is JESUS.

We have then the covering for the feet . . . our Gospel shoes: "... **and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace**." JESUS said, "**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you**." "**Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on (JESUS)**." "**His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, THE PRINCE OF PEACE**." Again, we see that our shoes are JESUS.

We have a shield - and with our shield we quench (ward off) the fiery darts of Satan. Be sure you do not forget your shield, because it, "**ABOVE ALL**," is of utmost importance. "**Taking the SHIELD OF FAITH . . .**" The shield is faith . . . "**So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of GOD**." "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth**." "**Being born again - not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of GOD**." "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my Word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life**." Thus, we clearly see that the shield that guarantees the quenching of all the fiery darts of the wicked is none other than the Lord JESUS CHRIST . He is faith.

Next, we have a helmet: "**Take the helmet of salvation**." What is salvation? "**Christ in you, the hope of glory**." "**Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God**." "**Salvation is of the Lord**." "**Therefore, He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him**." "I

am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." **"There is no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."** The Scriptures clearly teach us that salvation is JESUS - in you by faith.

Last, but by no means least, we need a sword. **". . . and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD."** The sword is the Word. **"The Word was in the beginning with God, the Word was God."** JESUS was God in flesh (II Corinthians 5:19). Therefore, the sword is JESUS.

You see, beloved - when we are in CHRIST JESUS, fully surrendered, soul, spirit and body, we have on the armor that all hell cannot penetrate. But if we depend upon our strength, our ability, our implements of warfare, we are defeated before we begin. We are no match for Satan and his wicked kingdom. **"Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall"** (I Corinthians 10:12). When you get your eyes off JESUS, and think in your heart that you are able to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil, you are in for defeat and a great disappointment.

The warrior is to **"pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."** We are not only to pray, but we are to watch **"with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."** We are to pray for ourselves, and for all other saints, remembering that we are all fighting the same warfare against the same powerful **"principalities and powers, and rulers of spiritual wickedness in high places."**

When we are praying for others, we are strengthened in the inner man ourselves. Prayer is an imperative if we would be victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Today, thousands of young men attend seminaries and schools to be taught how to preach. They "study for the ministry." Not one time did JESUS ever have a class in "How to Preach." It is true the disciples walked with JESUS for three and one half years, and He was the greatest Teacher who ever lived. They were exposed to the greatest ministry ever to exist upon the face of this earth; but JESUS did not organize any seminaries or colleges to train preachers.

Do not misunderstand me. I am in favor of education.

I believe many preachers would be better preachers had they gone to school. If I had a request granted to me concerning my life before I was converted, I would wish that I had been saved as a child, and that I had gone to school and learned more about the languages used in the time of JESUS, and the language of our Bible. I realize that I am limited in learning, from the secular standpoint. But thank GOD for the few years in which I did attend school after the Lord saved me.

GOD puts no stamp of approval upon ignorance. It is not a Christian virtue to be ignorant, neither is it a Christian virtue to advertise your wisdom. I am afraid education today is doing as much, if not more, to harm preachers than to help them. But what I am trying to say, is this: JESUS did not give the disciples any lessons in preaching, but He did teach them to pray. He said, **"After this manner, pray ye,"** and He gave them the model prayer found in Matthew chapter 6. He further instructed them not to pray as the hypocrites - loud repetition - but to go into the closet and shut the door.

I am for public prayer - but I am afraid not many of our public prayers ever reach Heaven. I am

afraid we pray them to the people in the room with us instead of to the GOD who hears in secret. We need to be taught how to pray. I confess my limitation in prayer. I need to know a deeper prayer life - and I think most of us would agree that we need to enter the school of prayer to be taught of The HOLY SPIRIT, who "**maketh intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered.**" Of course, if we do not pray in the Spirit, our prayer is only the saying of words. If we pray in the Spirit, He bears the message to our Intercessor (JESUS) who intercedes in our behalf to the Heavenly Father. Prayer is the greatest weapon against the devil. On many occasions JESUS prayed all night. There is a place for all night prayer - and there is a place where a prayer should be short and to the point. pray effectively we must pray according to the blueprint for prayer.

Daniel was a praying man. He prayed to GOD three times a day.

I am sure you know the story of how the enemies of Daniel attempted to get him into real trouble because of his prayer life; but they could not change his habit of prayer. Three times daily he went into his room, faced the open window toward Jerusalem (the city of his fathers), and prayed exactly as he had prayed before his enemies had forbidden him to do so. He did not hide, he did not pray in secret. He prayed as he had always prayed.

In the tenth chapter of Daniel, we have an interesting account of how the answer to Daniel's prayer was hindered for twenty-one days by the prince of the kingdom of Persia (Daniel 10:13). The prince of the kingdom of Persia was a powerful demon belonging to the kingdom of demons of which Satan is the head. Two things are taught here: (1) the power of prayer, and (2) it is possible for the devil to hinder prayer.

For twenty-one days Daniel prayed, and Satan hindered the answer to his prayers. But Daniel remained faithful in his prayer life - and hell had to move aside and let GOD's answer through! I know we cannot fully understand the depth of this truth - but nevertheless, it is true.

I am glad that when even the weakest saint of GOD goes upon his knees, hell must move back as that child of GOD enters boldly into the holy of holies by a new and living way . . . the Lord JESUS who died. . . and through His death we have access into the very presence of Almighty GOD. But only through JESUS. He is our Mediator (I Timothy 2:5, I John 2:1-2). There is no man or woman, no church or preacher, or anyone else on this earth who can mediate to GOD on your behalf . . . only Jesus. Every believer is a king and a priest in the eyes of Almighty GOD.

Listen to these words: "**Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the Heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit**" (James 5:17-18).

Elijah was a powerful man of prayer - but he served the same GOD we serve, and if we would pray in the Spirit, led of the Spirit, we too would get an answer from GOD. One prayer promise: "**If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you**" (John 15:7). That verse needs no comment . . . it is clear and understood. An abiding believer who is filled with the Word shall ask what he will, and a GOD who cannot lie nor break His promise nor prove unfaithful, will answer. I know that we will regret when we

stand before JESUS to receive our rewards, that we did not talk less, work less, preach less, teach less . . . and pray more! If we would stay ahead of the devil, we should obey I Thessalonians 5:17: "**PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.**"

~ end of chapter 25 ~

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