

**ARM YOURSELVES!
Part 1**

KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

Ephesians 6:10-12

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Colossians 1:16

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him....”

There is an invisible war being fought all around us 24/7 and we are involved in it. You are aware, are you not, that the Christian life is a warfare, not against visible foes but against invisible? We live in a visible world. We are material creatures and our entire lives are fashioned and focused upon caring for the material well-being of ourselves and others. As Paul wrote, *“the things which are seen are temporal”* and that is the realm in which we spend our days upon the earth. We live and move and have our being in a tangible, material world.

However, when we become Christians we become aware of the truth that there is an immaterial, intangible universe, an invisible world, a realm which we cannot see with the material eye. Paul continues, *“but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* It is in this realm that the conflict of the ages is being fought and we Christians are involved in it.

THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE

The Christian life is a war zone! We are being attacked, bombed, ambushed, sniped at and threatened every day by the Evil One and his guerrilla demons. Yet many Christians go about cavalierly and nonchalantly, living as though they did not have an enemy in the world.

However, there is a warfare presently being fought in the universe between the “seen” and the “unseen,” between the visible and the invisible. This conflict has been raging since the beginning whether we are aware of it or not. These two realms are two very different spheres, two disparate kingdoms – kingdoms in constant conflict.

Paul wrote about these conflicting kingdoms in Ephesians 6 saying, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (Eph. 6:12)

What is it about the words: "*Put on the whole armor of God*"; and, "*The devil as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour,*" that is not comprehended by many who classify themselves as Christians? Is it that they are ignorant? Is it that they have been led to believe that warfare is for pastors, Christian leaders and missionaries only? Perhaps they have they never considered the question posed in the old hymn:

*"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fight to gain the prize
And sail o'er bloody seas?"*

The apostle Paul says to such, "*It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*" (Romans 13:11-12) Evil forces are at work; Satan desires to destroy the citadel of your soul and overthrow the Church of Jesus Christ!

There is an unseen sphere all around us in which battles rage every moment. It is in the realm of the spirit world. In 2 Kings 6 we have a glimpse of that world. Elisha prayed that his servant might see into the world of spirits that surrounded them. He prayed, "*LORD, I pray open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.*" (II Kings 6:17)

If our eyes were opened as were the eyes of the servant of Elisha, we too would see our streets, hills, homes, cities and churches surrounded by demonic foes as well as God's angelic army. We are in the middle of that warfare!

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIORS

Before we surrendered to Jesus, we were at war *against* God, if not consciously and actively fighting against Him, we were nevertheless, on the side of His enemies. Paul wrote to the Romans, "*When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*" (Rom. 5:10) and to the Colossians he wrote, "*You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled....*" (Col. 1:21)

When God delivered us from the Kingdom of Darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of Light, our allegiance was changed and we are now engaged in warfare *for* God. Christians are the human soldiers in God's army. The enemy, the devil, wants to negate our effectiveness in this warfare.

Illust. There's a story about a king of Sparta in ancient Greece who boasted to a visiting monarch about the mighty walls of Sparta. But the guest looked around and didn't see any walls, and finally he said to his host, "I'd like to see those walls. Show them to me!" The Spartan ruler pointed with great satisfaction to some disciplined and well-trained troops, part of Sparta's mighty army, and exclaimed, "There they are! Those are the walls of Sparta!"

Christians make up part of the wall that is standing in resistance to evil and the Evil One and his army. Therefore, Paul writing to Timothy, said:

- *“Fight the good fight of faith”* (1 Tim. 6.12) and
- *“war a good warfare”* (1 Tim.1:18).
- Paul’s end-of-life testimony was: *“I have fought a good fight.”* (2 Tim. 4:7)
- Jude writes, *“Earnestly contend for the faith.”* (Jude v.3)

Therefore, while the Christian life is most wonderful, it is a warfare. This world is a battleground and we are the warriors in the battle against Satan, the enemy of our souls and his demonic spirits.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthian Christians he writes concerning Satan, *“we are not ignorant of his devices.”* (2 Cor. 2:11) If Paul were to write a letter to the average church today, I do not believe that he could say what he said to the Christians in Corinth. My observations, after over 50 years in the Gospel ministry, are that there is great ignorance, yes, shocking ignorance among God’s people, about Satan's devices and the spiritual warfare that he is orchestrating against the Church of Jesus Christ.

Consequently, some believers go about their daily lives oblivious of the spiritual conflagration being waged in the atmosphere all around them. Paul alerted the Christians in Ephesus about this conflict saying, *“put on the whole armor of God...”* That is, arm yourselves!

THE CHRISTIAN’S WARDROBE

The armor that God has provided for Christian soldiers is listed in Ephesians chapter 6. In versus 11 through 17 Paul takes us into God's armory and two times He says that we are to put on the complete armor, not just a piece or two. In truth, the armor is indivisible. Paul’s instructions are: *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”* (v.11) And, *“Take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.”* (v.13)

Suiting Up For War

In verses 14-17 are listed six parts of the Christian’s armor: *“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

This armor, to which we are introduced, is Jesus Christ Himself! Paul makes that clear in Romans 13:14 where he says, *“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”*

Jesus Christ is our defense. Therefore, we need to understand this armor in order to learn how to utilize, in our Christian warfare, all that Jesus Christ is to us in a practical way. We

probably have heard some Christians say "Christ is the answer!" Well yes, Christ is the answer, but how is He the answer? That is what we need to know and that is what this section of Scripture shows us.

Arm Yourselves!

The United States military has the most sophisticated weapons of war in existence. What would you think if our military had all of these weapons, but did not know how to use them? They would be useless and we would be defenseless. God gives us His weapons so that we can successfully resist the enemy. Therefore, we need to know what weapons we have available to us and how to use them.

What do the various pieces of the armor mean to us? In Ephesians 6, Paul provides us with a description of each piece of the Armor of God. Here is the Christian warrior's armament – are you ready for this? It may be a surprise to some – here is Paul's armament list:

Truth
Righteousness
Salvation
Faith
The Gospel of Peace
The Word of God

Confused? Disappointed? Thankful? Did you expect some cloud to drop out of the sky and protect you from satanic schemes or hope that God would give some magical incantation to be spoken against spiritual enemies? That isn't going to happen! *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds...."* (2 Cor.10:3, 4)

Only as we consciously utilize the protection of truth, righteousness, salvation, faith, the Gospel of Peace and the Word of God are we armed for the conflict. This armor covers the Christian's loins, breast, feet, head and is a complete shield to his whole being against any temptation or trial he may encounter.

The battle gear is for every Christian, not just a few stalwart saints. Every Christian is a soldier in God's army. The Christian was intended to be involved in this war. His head is provided with a helmet, for he is to be thoughtful; His heart is covered with a breastplate; His whole nature is protected by a shield; a sword is provided for his hand to use and shoes with which his feet are shod.

Armor we have; we are not only to be armed but we are to be advancing the cause of Christ. We are to do our duty and God will do His part. We are not to lie on the couch and watch the battle; we are to take an active role in the fight! The song, "Stand Up For Jesus" encourages us to:

"Put on the Gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer:
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there."

Conclusion

There is spiritual warfare being conducted all around us; kingdoms are in conflict – the Kingdom of Light battles the Kingdom of Darkness. Christians are citizens of the Kingdom of Light. Paul issues a call to arms in Romans 13:12 saying, *“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.”*

In the next message we will continue to walk through God’s Armory and examine the Call to Arms in more detail. In the meantime know this that:

“The fight is on, O Christian soldier,
And face to face in stern array,
With armor gleaming, and colors streaming,
The right and wrong engage today!

The fight is on, the trumpet sound is ringing out,
The cry “To arms!” is heard afar and near;
The Lord of hosts is marching on to victory,
The triumph of the Christ will soon appear.”

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