

# Ephesians: Good News for the Church

## Ephesians 6:10-24

"Stand Firm Against the Devil"— January 8, 2023



### **Introduction**

Last week, we started a new year. It is a good time to slow down, step back and see how the pieces of life fit together. As you reflect on the last year with all of its joys and sorrows, ups and downs, you may be left scratching your head, wondering what God is doing. What is God's plan? While we can't predict what 2023 holds, we can know what God's plan is and where history is headed.

In [Ephesians 1 verse 10](#), Paul tells us God's plan - when Jesus returns He will unite all things in Him - things in Heaven and on earth. At the center of God's plan for His glory is the church. As we learned in chapter 2, not only are we reconciled vertically with God, but we can be reconciled horizontally with one another. In Christ, the church is where God begins to unite all things under the Lordship of Jesus. Though imperfect now, the church is a preview of where history is headed.

When we look at what it could be and what it is supposed to be, we think that it is glorious. But then we wonder why are things done God's way so hard some times? It's the devil. Satan hates you. He hates God, His plan and His church. Satan doesn't want people to become Christians, and when they do, he is doing everything that he can to mess up God's plan.

We are not on a cruise ship. We are on a battle ship. We are at war. Life and death, heaven and hell and eternity are hanging in the balance, and the devil is not to be trifled with. What hope do we have if the devil has the church in his crosshairs? How can we fight in such a way so that we can know and experience victory? Here in chapter 6, Paul shows us how.

### **Sermon Outline**

1. Be strong in the Lord. Vs. 10-12
2. Stand firm in God's armor. Vs. 13-24

### **Read & Discuss**

**1. Read vs. 10-12:** We are up against the Devil, and if you don't take that seriously, it makes it easier for him to destroy your life. We know that there is evil and that dark forces are at play. We can suppress that truth and pretend it doesn't exist, but deep down, we know what is evil.

Identifying the enemy may be hard. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. This fight is NOT against people. They may do awful things and make your life miserable, but they are a spiritual prisoner of war. They are used by the devil. We must remember that once we were all POW's. ([Ephesians 2:2](#)). God rescued us and made us His own. Rather than hating the person who makes your life difficult, pray for them, share the Gospel with them, love them and rescue them from the clutches of the devil.

Satan is real. The forces of darkness are real, personal, and intent on destroying you. ([1 Peter 5:8](#)) The fight is real. We are called to fight in a battle that has infinite significance. What are you living your life for? What gets you out of bed in the morning? What are your priorities? What are your ambitions? What are the plans you are making for the future? This battle is not optional for Christians. Are you prepared for to fight? ([2 Timothy 2:4](#)) Are you settling for the civilian pursuits of this world? Do you know and have you accepted that God has something far more significant for you to live for?

God calls us to wrestle, but the strength for this fight is not found in ourselves. We must be strong "in the Lord and in the power of His might." It's the same might that is mentioned in [Ephesians 1:19](#) - the might that raised Christ from the dead. God and the devil do not have equal powers. Satan is real, but he is a created being. He is fallen. God is in control, so Satan only does what he does with permission. There is no question of who wins in the end. We fight, but we fight in God's power. It's similar to what Paul says in [Philippians 2:12-13](#). We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because God is at work IN you. God puts weak Christians in a battle that we cannot win on our own, so that we can learn to trust and rely on Him whose strength will triumph over any enemy. Are you trusting in God's strength as you face battles each day? What does that look like? How do we do that?

**2. Read vs. 13-24:** In vs. 11-14, Paul issues the command to "stand" 4 times. Why not invade or advance on the enemy? Christ has already won the victory. Jesus went to the cross won the final victory for us. ([Hebrews 2:14](#), [Colossians 2:15](#)) We fight a defeated foe. When Satan sees the church, he sees that his days are numbered.

Satan wants the opposite of everything God wants for us. He wants us to fall. To that, God calls us to stand. Keep standing. Stand firm. Withstand the schemes of the devil. But how do we stand firm? Put on the armor of God.

**The Belt of Truth:** Satan is a liar. God's armor starts with THE belt of truth. In Ephesians 1-3, Paul gives us the truth about our new identity in Christ. This should radically change how we live. Satan is doing everything he can to distract you from those blessings and deceive you about who you are in Christ. This is why we need a daily intake of God's word. Do you have a plan to read, study, and memorize God's word regularly?

**The Breastplate of Righteousness:** This is the righteousness of Christ. In [Revelation 12:10](#), Satan is called the accuser. First he tempts you to sin, then when you cave to that temptation and sin, he turns around, points his finger at you and accuses you. In one sense, he is right, but what he doesn't want us to see or to remember or to know is the antidote for sin - the breastplate of righteousness. ([1 John 2:2](#)) We have an advocate! Jesus reminds the devil (and us) that He has paid the price in full - there is no condemnation. If you are not a Christian, you may be asking, if trusting Christ puts me in the devil's cross hairs, why should I trust Christ? There is no neutrality. Either Jesus is your Master or the devil is. Jesus is a much better master who gives life. ([John 10:10](#))

**Shoes for your feet – The Gospel of Peace:** We are to share the Good News. The Devil will do everything that he can to keep us from sharing the Gospel. He'll make us too busy, afraid, or discouraged. As those who have found peace with God and with one another through Jesus, we have good news, which we must be ready to share. ([Isaiah 52:7](#)) With whom is God calling you to share the Gospel with this week?

**The Shield of Faith:** God is our shield. ([Ps. 3:3](#)) By trusting God, we take refuge in God as our shield. ([Proverbs 30:5](#)) The faith that Paul has in mind is more than believing that God exists, it is believing that God is sovereign, powerful and in control of everything - big and small, good and bad, and that God is good. Our faith must not be based on feelings. Our faith is based on the word of God which extinguishes the fiery darts of doubt. With what circumstance in your life do you need to trust God?

**The Helmet of Salvation:** Jesus brought salvation by His strong and mighty arm. ([Isaiah 59:17](#)) Jesus did everything that was necessary for salvation. His last words were "it is finished!" The helmet of salvation is a reminder that God has done everything and will hold you fast. He will get you across the finish line.

**The Sword of the Spirit:** All the other pieces of armor are used for protection or defense. The sword is used for attacking. When Jesus was tempted, He modeled the use of this sword for us. ([Matthew 4](#)) Our typical response to a temptation is to use human reasons and not God's word. What has been your response to temptation at times? [James 4:7](#) has a wonderful promise. What does it look like to resist? We must answer temptation with the sword of God's word.

Fighting in the battle can leave us exhausted. We must rely on God in prayer if we are to stand firm. Prayer undergirds and fuels everything in the battle. Why don't we pray as we should? Prayerlessness exposes how proud and self-reliant we are. Prayer is the language of humility. When are we to pray? At all times! How should we pray? In the Spirit, guided by God's word. What kinds of prayers should we pray? All kinds. Who should we pray for? All the saints - yourself, your family, your church family, saints around the world.

If we are to stand firm, we must rely on God in prayer, but we must also rely and lean on our brothers and sisters in the church. Paul sent Tychicus to the Ephesians that he might encourage their hearts. The battle can be discouraging at times. Have you ever felt that way? Who is the "Tychicus" in your life? How can you encourage others in the fight?

The church is the preview of the victory that God has promised us. Let us not grow weary in doing good. In due season, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ([Galatians 6:9](#)). Stand firm.

### **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand*, *believe*, *desire*, or *do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <a href="#">Genesis 18:1-15</a> "Is Anything Too Hard for God?"
--