SESSION 13
WALKING TO BATTLE

EPHESIANS 6:10-20

10 Finally, **be strengthened** by the Lord and by his vast strength. 11 Put on the **full armor of God** so that you can stand against the **schemes of the devil**. 12 For our struggle is not against **flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having **prepared** everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with **truth like a belt** around your waist, **righteousness like armor** on your chest, and your **feet sandaled with readiness** for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the **shield of faith** with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**—which is the word of God. 18 **Pray at all times** in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. 20 For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

EXPLORING KEY WORDS

A Indicates action on our part and the reality that power comes from God (1 Cor. 16:13)
B Likened to the armor a Roman soldier wore into battle, God gives us this spiritual armor to withstand attacks from Satan.
C The devil tempts us (2 Cor. 11:3), seeking to destroy (1 Pet. 5:8) and deceive us (Rev. 12:9-10).
D "Human beings" (GNT) aren’t our enemies but we should seek to reconcile them to God (2 Cor. 5).
E "Having done everything, to stand firm" (NASB)
F Truth—“personal integrity, moral courage”—(AMP) helps hold everything in our lives together. Ephesians 4:21 says, “the truth is in Jesus.”
G Living with “an upright heart” (AMP) helps keep us protected from the great damage of sin.
H Like all-terrain sandals that enable us to cover long, hard distances, Christians should be ready to go anywhere, anytime to spread the gospel.
I Like a shield useful for hand-to-hand combat and aerial attacks, God is our “protective” (AMP) shield.
J Our salvation serves as a helmet that keeps us spiritually alive (Isa. 59:17). God secures salvation when a person puts faith in Christ (John 10:28-29).
K The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). The Word is “living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12).
L Christians are to have a posture of prayer “on all occasions” (NIV), both for themselves and others (Matt. 6:5-15; 1 Thess. 5:17).
1. AWARE (Eph. 6:10-13)

- Paul summoned his readers to prepare to take a stand against the devil, realizing that the true battle on this earth is with him and his evil forces.
- Paul explained that God provides spiritual armor for the believer to wear when taking this stand.
- Emphasize the reality of the devil and of his working in this world. Remind readers that Jesus already defeated Satan on the cross.

2. PREPARED (Eph. 6:14-17)

- Paul identified the armor God provided for His followers, including His Word and the truth of the gospel.
- Emphasize that soldiers must wear armor for it to be valuable.

3. FIELD SUPPORT (Eph. 6:18-20)

- Paul emphasized the importance of prayer for the person going into spiritual battle and for those already in the battle.
- Prayer is the means by which the armor is put on and victory is won.
- Remind the readers of the importance of prayer in battling against the devil and temptation.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS

God provides believers with all the resources needed to live Christlike lives.

- God equips believers for spiritual battles by providing all the needed resources.
- Believers must prepare themselves for spiritual battle.
- Believers must depend upon God through prayer for victory.
FOCUS ATTENTION
How do soldiers prepare for battle?
• Soldiers equip themselves with the proper uniform, strategic weapons, and a focused mind and heart.
• God is working His purpose to “bring everything together in Christ” (Eph. 1:10). Satan is fighting furiously to try to keep that from happening. Believers live in the midst of that war zone.
• Paul ended his Letter to the Ephesians by telling believers how to walk confidently into battle.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE
EPHESIANS 6:10-13
Why is it important for believers to identify the enemy accurately?
• People aren’t the real enemy. When we regard people as the problem, Satan wins.
• A myriad of evil spiritual forces rage against believers. They’re powerful, cunning, and fight dirty in their attempts to knock believers from their stand in Christ.
• Satan’s tactics are usually subtle. He lies, distracts, intimidates, and insinuates to try to get us to doubt God and rely on ourselves.

What do believers need to be aware of about ourselves?
• We can’t victoriously battle Satan with our own strength, goodness, or knowledge. We must rely on God’s might, which is far greater than Satan’s.
• Our best weapons against evil aren’t our right to vote, ability to debate, or admirable self-discipline. We win only when we put on the full armor of God.
• Our task isn’t to attack or defeat Satan—Jesus already did that—but to stand firm against his attacks.

EPHESIANS 6:14-17
Describe the resources God has provided to prepare believers for battle.
• We must not get so caught up in the physical illustrations that we neglect the spiritual realities that empower us to stand firm.
• Like a soldier’s belt, God’s truth holds everything together.
• The breastplate protected vital organs. A right standing with God protects against eternal death.
• Hobnailed sandals enabled a soldier to walk with sure footing. The gospel is our firm foundation, whether we’re staying or going to advance His kingdom.
• Water-soaked shields covered, deflected, and absorbed flaming arrows. Faith deflects Satan’s attempts to make us panic and run.
• Our certain hope of salvation is like a helmet that protects our minds from despairing thoughts and keeps us focused on eternity.
• “The word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword …” (Heb. 4:12).

What does it look like practically to prepare ourselves for battle with these resources?
• Choose each day to live the truth of the gospel with integrity.
• Reflect our right standing with God by righteous character and deeds, and by repentance when we fall short.
• Live in constant readiness to promote the gospel.
• Counter Satan’s attacks by trusting in God’s character and promises.
• Read, study, memorize, and obey the Bible so we can speak specific Scriptures into specific situations. Satan cannot stand against the truth of God’s Word.

EPHESIANS 6:18-20
What’s the relationship between prayer and victory?
• Prayer isn’t the seventh piece of armor. It undergirds the whole process of spiritual warfare.
• Prayer keeps us connected with our commander. God alone has the strength, armor, and knowledge to lead us to victory.

Describe the kind of prayer that leads to victorious Christian living.
• The Holy Spirit must energize, empower, and direct our prayers.
• Prayer must be consistent and comprehensive. When we pray about everything, we humbly acknowledge we need God’s strength for everything.
• Be intentional, alert, and persevering in prayer.
• Victorious prayer is gospel-focused. Paul didn’t ask for prayers that life would get easier but for courage to share the gospel even when life was hard.

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE
How can believers walk bravely into battle?
• Be aware our enemy is strong, but our God is stronger.
• We cannot win by being passive. We must activate God’s available power and armor through intentional spiritual preparation and obedience.
• God doesn’t intend believers to battle alone but to stand together. Pray for spiritual victory for ourselves and others.
• Personal Challenge: What steps will you take to be better prepared to stand firm in the gospel in the middle of this war zone?
OBJECT LESSON

A BOTTLE OF SUNSCREEN
Display a bottle of sunscreen. Ask: Do you think most people wear sunscreen the way dermatologists say we should? Why? Dermatologists urge everyone to wear sunscreen every time they’re going to be outside and to reapply often when they’re out for extended periods of time because ultraviolet rays that cause skin damage and cancer are always present. Many people disregard this advice because they’re not convinced the sun can do that much damage, they don’t want to bother putting on sunscreen, or they want a tan, which our culture has deemed attractive.

In Ephesians 6:10-20, Paul warned of the invisible enemy who can do great damage, and Paul urged us to cover ourselves with protection. Like the sun’s UV rays, Satan and his minions are invisible. They look for ways to sneak in on us and do us harm.

Ask: How much good can this bottle of sunscreen do if you don’t put it on? God has provided us full-coverage protection against Satan’s tactics, but we must put it on every day. Often when we think of putting on the armor of God we envision putting it on one piece at a time. But we can also think of it as covering ourselves all over with Jesus. Ask: How do each of these pieces of armor point to Jesus? How can we cover ourselves with Jesus?

Ask: How do you get sunscreen on your back? When it comes to spiritual warfare, how can believers help cover one another? We need to pray for one another that we will stand firm against Satan and lead bold, gospel-centered lives.

AN AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS
In Ephesians 6:20, Paul informed us that he was “an ambassador in chains.” The use of this term was important in the Scripture and gives us great insight into how Paul viewed his ministry and calling from God. What does this term mean, how was it used in Scripture, and what implications did it have for Paul’s ministry?

To be an ambassador is to be a “representative of one royal court to another.” It’s a position that serves an important role in a nation or global affairs. The Bible speaks to the benefit of having good ambassadors, in that “faithful ambassadors bring health to a nation” (see Prov. 13:17).

In the Old Testament we see several examples of ambassadors being used. “The king of Babylon sent official ambassadors to learn of Hezekiah’s power (2 Chron. 32:31). Pharaoh Neco sent ambassadors to prevent King Josiah of Judah (640–609 BC) from joining in the battle at Megiddo, but Josiah persisted and died (2 Chron. 35:21-24). … Isaiah condemned Israel for sending ambassadors to Egypt seeking military aid rather than seeking God’s aid” (Isa. 30).

In the time of the New Testament, many cities and regions sent ambassadors to Rome. During Paul’s time, “various cities and provinces usually sent their ambassadors to Rome to plead their cases before the emperor or to offer tribute to gain some imperial favor. Philo describes participating in such a delegation to the emperor Gaius (Caligula) to make an appeal on behalf of Alexandrian Jews who were suffering brutal persecution at the hands of their fellow citizens.”

Paul’s identifying himself as “an ambassador” (Eph. 6:20) meant he was a representative, not of himself, but of the kingdom of God. He was acting under the authority of King Jesus, who sent him. We see from Garland, “in ancient times ambassadors were considered to be inviolate and were never to be imprisoned.” Yet Paul was “in chains” (v. 20). He had been imprisoned for fulfilling his ambassador responsibilities. At the same time, just because Paul was in chains, he didn’t refuse to stop acting on behalf of Christ, still proclaiming the truth of the gospel to Rome. His mission was critical for their good; they needed to believe in the true King and worship Him if they were to have His grace and mercy when they met King Jesus face-to-face.