

Pastor Hilary Harris Ephesians Part 11 4.11.2021

Spiritual Battles -

New to church- educate you through the Word about the battle we are in and how we can be successful in fighting it.

If you have been around a while, you know we are in a fight..Grace to keep going..

- End of the message , we're going to worship, help lift up your arms, so you can keep going...

Ephesians 6: 10-13

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

It is the end of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. He's been sitting in a prison cell , contemplating how to best build the church, and the last thing he leaves us with is "Finally, Be strong in the Lord..."

Goes on to use the word "against" 6 times. As pastor Dave mentioned several weeks ago, this is the most concentrated use of the word in your Bible.

*He is making a point: **You are in a battle.***

Whether you know it or not, the moment you say yes to Jesus and accept Him as Lord of your life. You've engaged in warfare.

You are that important!

- Your future , marriage, kids, peace..

And the enemy knows how this all ends. He does not win.

- Ephesians 2:5-6 Risen & United with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places.
- He is returning for His bride, He will raise up the believers in victory, for eternity!

But for now... If he knows he cannot win then : make them think they're not in a battle.

Sleeeeeeeeeeep ... Take a load off. Show up to church if you feel like it...

**Directive throughout scripture: “Lift up your eyes...Lift up your heads:. Look out”
There is a battle going on for your mind, your purity, the unity of the church.**

You have an enemy and it's not flesh and blood! It's not your neighbor or your ex wife...

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

And He is not God, but he is not stupid. Vs. 11 says “Put on the armor of God so you can stand against the “Schemes” of the devil”.

Schemes (3180) - methodos: following or pursuing of orderly and technical procedure in the handling of a subject. Verb: *methodeuo*, to go systematically to work, to do or pursue something methodcally and according to the rules.

Consider that the enemy is tactical enough that he will use the chaos around you to distract you from the battle that is actually happening in the spirit.

- And the enemy sits back in bliss as we tear down each other, as we tear down ourselves and as we do the damage for him!

Paul of all people could have said, the government is the enemy! The government is out to kill him. Or “the religious leaders are the enemy!” or “the crazy church people are so annoying!” He had a lot of people against him and against the church and yet he says , “our struggle is not against flesh and blood.”

1 Peter 5:8

NASB - Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Be alert: “to watch”

/.give strict attention to, be cautious, active to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake you

How do we stay alert?

- Deal with the small things.
- He is not showing up in a red track suit with devil horns.
- He's in the subtle comments, the thoughts that take seed.
- Deal with offense & bitterness. Watch over your eyes and what you take into your soul. Stay connected to the body of Christ. Submit to trusted leaders for character building and course correction.
- In Leadership College (shameless plug), zero tolerance gossip policy.
- Eph 4:27 says we don't want to give the devil even a foothold.

2. Equip yourself

Ephesians 6:13-17 Paul lists the armor we are provided. But we have one offensive weapon. ***The sword of the Spirit: The Word of God.***

Swords in those days were smaller, almost dagger, used for hand to hand combat. A personal battle. Remember : when the battle gets personal, use your sword.

When he comes after your peace, your kids, your marriage, use your sword.

Word of God "rhema"- ***a living voice, a word spoken.***

- ***So we get close so we can hear.***
- ***I like to be in my room. I read a little of the "Logos", the spoken word, and I wait for the "rhema" the living word to come alive.***
- ***I begin to hear what he's saying and I start declaring.***

Revelation 19:15 - out of his mouth comes a sharp sword to judge the nations.

Hebrews 4:12, ESV: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword,

- Isaiah 26: You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on you.
- Psalm 66, we went through fire and water, but you brought us out into a place of abundance.
- Matthew 9: And Jesus went through ALL the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, healing EVERY disease and sickness among the people.

You begin to PIERCE your enemy with the word.

Last thing Paul says to do....

3. Stand.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

After you've done everything, stand...

One of the enemy's biggest weapons is time.

I can believe for a month. But can you keep believing when you've been standing for 12 months.

5 years .

I can run to the house of God when I heard God's promise yesterday, but do I still run to God's house when I heard God's promise 7 years ago?

How long can you stand?

The answer is: Not very long on your own. But the good news is, because of Jesus' blood and His death on the cross. He already claimed the victory for me. ***And now I can stand in the grace.***

FOR MONDAY—

1. Pray and ask God to reveal the small things that you need to take care of before they become bigger things. Ask God what chaos is the enemy using to distract you from the actual battle.

TALK IT THROUGH

1. Why are some battles that were historically significant? What are some victories that you personally celebrate?
2. When have you experienced weariness? When have you get spiritually depleted or exhausted? What brought you out of it?
3. What are reasons that we often underestimate the battles around us? What distractions try to diminish your personal importance?
4. How does each component of the armor of God protect us from the schemes of the devil? [Ephesians 6.10-13]
5. Why does "being alert" involve intentionally dealing with any sin and offense right away? What happens when we let these linger?