

Warriors, Not Victims: Standing in the Whole Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-20

Key Thoughts

1. **The strength is His, not yours.** "Be strong in the Lord" comes right after wives, husbands, children, and bondservants were each told to do something they could not pull off on their own. Dynamis is God's inherent ability, His pool of power. Kratos is His power to overcome any obstacle. He gives us everything we need to do everything He has called us to do.
2. **The job is to stand.** Not advance. Hold the line. Ancient infantry lost the moment the line broke, because the casualties happened in the rout, not in the formation. That is why hiding and retreating is not an option for a believer.
3. **The enemy is subtle, not obvious.** The wiles of the devil do not look like a towering figure ready to strike. They look like "follow your heart," a man who claims to speak for God and cannot be checked, anger you never dealt with, and the barb that comes out of nowhere. Far less overt, and far more dangerous.
4. **We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.** Paul wrote this in chains, and neither the guard nor Caesar was the real enemy. The real opposition is principalities and powers, more than any of us can handle alone. That is why Paul says the whole armor. Not part of it. All of it.
5. **Every piece answers a real attack.** Truth guards your worth. Righteousness closes off the enemy's vector of attack. The gospel of peace keeps your footing when the accuser asks if you are really saved. The shield goes over everything and quenches the darts. The helmet covers what gets past. And the sword both deflects the lie and strikes back with the truth, the way Jesus did in Matthew 4.

Discussion Questions

1. Ephesians 6:10 starts with "Finally." Think about what it follows: wives, husbands, children, bondservants, each told to do something hard, and from the heart. Where in your life right now are you trying to do what God asked in your own strength instead of in the power of His might?
2. Read Ephesians 6:11-13. Paul says the goal is to stand, not advance, and ancient armies lost when the line broke and men ran. Where are you most tempted to hide or retreat instead of holding your ground? What would standing look like there?
3. Paul does not describe the devil as a towering figure. He describes wiles. Which of these has gotten past you: "follow your heart," "God just wants you to be happy," anger you never dealt with, or a barb that came out of nowhere? Why did it not look like an attack at the time?
4. Read Ephesians 6:12. Paul wrote this in chains, and he says the guard and Caesar were not the real enemy. Who or what in your life feels like the enemy right now? What changes when you see the real source of the opposition?
5. Paul says whole armor, not part. Go through the six pieces: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word. Which one are you most likely to leave off, and what attack does that leave open?
6. Personal: Read Ephesians 6:18-20. Paul asks the church to pray that he would speak boldly, even from prison. Who will you pray for this week by name, and what will you ask God for on their behalf?

Applications

1. **Find the lie and answer it with the Word.** Jesus did not argue with the tempter in Matthew 4. He said "It is written." Name the one lie the enemy keeps feeding you, about your worth, your salvation, or your anger, and find the verse that answers it. Write it down and use it.
2. **Get blameless.** If your heart condemns you in some situation, that is an open vector for the enemy. Settle it this week, with God and with whoever else is involved, so the enemy has nothing to aim at.
3. **Ask.** Supplication means asking, so ask. Pray for the people in this group by name and for what they actually need. Then pray for your elders to speak boldly, as they ought to speak.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that the strength for this fight is Yours and not ours. You have every ounce of power we will ever need, and You have made it available to Your children. Forgive us for living as victims when You have called us to be warriors, and for trying to stand in part of the armor when You told us to put on all of it. Open our eyes to the wiles of the enemy, the lies that sound reasonable and the anger we have let sit. Remind us that the people in front of us are not the enemy. Gird us with Your truth, keep us blameless before You, plant our feet in the peace of the gospel, and teach us to answer every accusation with what You have written. Make us a praying people who ask, who keep watch, and who pray for one another by name. And give our elders boldness to speak as they ought to speak. In Jesus' name, amen.