

“The Full Armor of God” Part 1 (Ephesians 6:10-18)(7.9.23)

Ephesians 6:10-18 Amplified Bible

¹⁰ In conclusion, be strong in the Lord [draw your strength from Him and be empowered through your union with Him] and in the power of His [boundless] might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God [for His precepts are like the splendid armor of a heavily-armed soldier], so that you may be able to [successfully] stand up against all the schemes *and* the strategies *and* the deceits of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [contending only with physical opponents], but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this [present] darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) *places*. ¹³ Therefore, put on the complete armor of God, so that you will be able to [successfully] resist *and* stand your ground in the evil day [of danger], and having done everything [that the crisis demands], to stand firm [in your place, fully prepared, immovable, victorious]. ¹⁴ So stand firm *and* hold your ground, having [a]tightened the wide band of truth (personal integrity, moral courage) around your waist and having put on the breastplate of righteousness (an upright heart), ¹⁵ and having [b]strapped on your feet the gospel of peace

in preparation [to face the enemy with firm-footed stability and the readiness produced by the good news]. ¹⁶ Above all, lift up the [protective] [c]shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil *one*. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray [with specific requests] at all times [on every occasion and in every season] in the Spirit, and with this in view, stay alert with all perseverance and petition [interceding in prayer] for all [d]God's people.

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"The Full Armor of God"**

INTRODUCTION:

On the third day of our vacation last month, I received this text as we were preparing to eat our lunch at a small town family restaurant. The text was from a former member of Emmaus Church, currently living in another state, who still feels a strong connection to this congregation. Here is the text:

"Please pray for me, my best friend killed himself today. Please pray for his family too. I just don't

understand why a man of GOD would do that. He posted [on social media] Ephesians 6:12-13, less than 16 hours ago. I'm a mess right now."

I responded to the text like this: "Very sad. We know that spiritual warfare is a very real thing. I hear [your pain and confusion]; surely this is a struggle and a testing for you. I apologize for being short and to the point now, but I am about to get back into the car on a roadtrip to Wyoming. Protect yourself and think about your family. We cannot really know the deep inner struggles that some people go through.

Go to the Emmaus website for the Believers Warfare Prayer and read it out loud regularly. You have used this before. This is critical for your sanity and spiritual well-being! I will pray over you. Blessings, with three prayer emojis."

I warned this person because it is widely known that there is a such thing as suicide contagion. I will use a definition from CNN: "Suicide contagion is a process in which the suicide of one person or multiple people can contribute to a rise in suicidal behaviors among others, especially those who already have suicidal thoughts or a known risk factor for suicide." I have also know families that have a seemingly inexplicable high rate of suicide.

So, that is the genesis for this sermon series on spiritual warfare.

BODY:

On several occasions, I have recommended the Believer's Warfare Prayer to you. Pastor Dr. Hal Seed shared this testimony about it on his website PastorMentor.com: "In the early days of New Song [his church], I felt spiritual pressure constantly and some sort of threat to the church's existence daily.

Someone handed a printed prayer to me by seminary professor Victor Matthews called, "The Believer's Warfare Prayer." I haven't met Dr. Matthews, but his prayer has contributed significantly to my ministry.

I prayed his prayer out loud, verbatim that first day and the spiritual pressure I was feeling abated. The pressure returned the next day, so I prayed it out loud again. I found that every time I prayed the prayer, I felt relief. It was like the Lord and I were pushing back Satan, claiming territory and victory.

I began to pray the prayer daily. This went on for years.

As New Song grew and our members matured, more and more people were lifting me up in

prayer, so that I began to experience their “prayer shield.” I prayed my Warfare Prayer less often. I didn’t seem to need it as much.

Then, a few years ago, New Song appeared on the **Outreach 100 Fastest Growing Churches** list. That seemed to paint a target on my back. The church and I have experienced spiritual attack over the last two decades, but never like this.

Proverbs 15:22 tells me that plans fail for lack of counsel, so one day I went to see a counselor. You know what she told me?

“You should remember that these attacks you’re experiencing have a spiritual basis to them.”

Good call! I dug out my Believer’s Warfare Prayer and began praying it again. It’s helping. A lot.

Every Christian leader I know feels attacked, discouraged, disparaged or hopeless from time to time. Leaders are pro-active, so we start by addressing the symptom of our problem, but it makes sense to go deeper and attack the root.

The Believer’s Warfare prayer is a sound spiritual exercise. God can hear our inner-most thoughts, but Satan can’t. I find that praying it out loud has

a two-fold benefit: God hears and responds, and demons hear, and flee.

My encouragement to every believer who feels attacked is to pray this daily until they find themselves back in a smooth place, and then to pray it weekly or monthly thereafter. The prayer takes six to eight minutes to pray out loud, and it's well worth it.

I pray the prayer exactly as written. When I stumble over a sentence, I reread it accurately. Words matter, and Victor Matthews is a genius. His prayer is an excellently-crafted, well-rounded, Biblically-based prayer that contains crisp theology."

A.W. Tozer's children compiled a book of his work titled "The Warfare of the Spirit;" and, the first chapter bears that same name. That chapter has six paragraphs:

"There is a kind of dualism in our fallen world which has accounted for most of the persecutions endured by believers since the days of Cain and Abel.

There are two spirits in the earth, the Spirit of God and the spirit of Satan, and these are at eternal enmity. The ostensible cause of religious hatred may be almost anything; the true cause is nearly

always the same: the ancient animosity which Satan, since the time of his inglorious fall, has ever felt toward God and His kingdom. Satan is aflame with desire for unlimited dominion over the human family; and whenever that evil ambition is challenged by the Spirit of God, he invariably retaliates with savage fury.

The world hated Jesus without a cause. In spite of their fantastic charges against Him, Christ's contemporaries found nothing in either His doctrines or His deeds to rouse in them such unreasonable anger as they constantly displayed toward Him. They hated Him, not for anything He said or did, but for what He was.

It is possible within the provisions of redemptive grace to enter into a state of union with Christ so perfect that the world will instinctively react toward us exactly as it did toward Him in the days of His flesh.

It is a great reproach to us as Christians that we excite in the hearts of the unbelieving masses little more than plain boredom. They meet us with smiling toleration or ignore us altogether, and their silence is a portent and a sign. Well might it cause us nights of tears and hours of prayerful self-examination.

It is the Spirit of Christ in us that will draw Satan's fire. The people of the world will not much care what we believe and they will stare vacantly at our religious forms, but there is one thing they will never forgive us—the presence of God's Spirit in our hearts. They may not know the cause of that strange feeling of antagonism which rises within them, but it will be nonetheless real and dangerous. Satan will never cease to make war on the Man-child, and the soul in which dwells the Spirit of Christ will continue to be the target for his attacks."

The recently deceased and beloved Charles Stanley wrote, "*You are in a spiritual battle.* It doesn't matter whether you want to be in a spiritual battle—you are in one. The battle is between good and evil, and you are the prize. God desires to have a relationship with you, bless you, and live with you forever. Satan desires to keep you from all that God wants for you. He is the enemy of all people—followers of Jesus or not. He is your enemy!"

Now, when we are confronted by big issues of life or death, like suicide, it is not hard to see the reality of the cosmic conflict of good and evil. But, you have heard that the "devil is in the details." It is much harder to discern the workings of our

Enemy in the smaller conflicts and challenges of life.

BELIEVER'S WARFARE PRAYER (To be read aloud)

Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to You. I take a stand against all the workings of Satan that would hinder me in my prayer life. I address myself only to the True and Living God and refuse any involvement of Satan in my prayer.

(I command Satan, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to leave my presence with all of his demons. I bring the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ between Satan and myself.)

Heavenly Father, I worship You and give You praise. I recognize that You are worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise. I renew my allegiance to You and pray that the Blessed Holy Spirit would enable me in this time of prayer. I am thankful, Heavenly Father, that You have loved me from past eternity and that You sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to die as my substitute. I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ came as

my representative and that through Him You have completely forgiven me.

You have adopted me into Your family; You have assumed all responsibility for me; You have given me eternal life; You have given me the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ so I am now justified. I am thankful that in Him You have made me complete, and that You have offered Yourself to me to be my daily help and strength.

Heavenly Father, open my eyes that I might see how great You are and how complete Your provision is for this day. I am thankful that the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won for me on the Cross and in His Resurrection has been given to me and that I am seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies. I take my place with Him in the heavenlies and recognize by faith that all wicked spirits and Satan himself are under my feet. I declare, therefore, that Satan and his wicked spirits are subject to me in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for the Armor You have provided. I put on the Girdle of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Sandals of Peace, and the Helmet of Salvation. I lift up the Shield of Faith against all the fiery darts of the enemy; and take in my hand the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of

God. I choose to use Your Word against all the forces of evil in my life. I put on this Armor and live and pray in complete dependence upon You, Blessed Holy Spirit.

I am grateful, Heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly and triumphed over them in Himself. I claim all that victory for my life today. I reject all the insinuations, and accusations, and the temptations of Satan. I affirm that the Word of God is true and I choose to live today in the light of God's Word. I choose, Heavenly Father, to live in obedience to You and in fellowship with Yourself.

Open my eyes and show me the areas of my life that do not please You. Work in me to cleanse me from all ground that would give Satan a foothold against me. I do in every way stand into all that it means to be Your adopted child and I welcome all the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

By faith and in dependence upon You I put off the old man and stand into all the victory of the Crucifixion where the Lord Jesus Christ provided cleansing from the old nature. I put on the new man and stand into all the victory of the Resurrection and the provision He has made for me to live above sin.

Therefore, today I put off the old nature with its selfishness and I put on the new nature with its love. I put off the old nature with its fear and I put on the new nature with its courage. I put off the old nature with its weakness and I put on the new nature with its strength. I put off the old nature with all its deceitful lusts and I put on the new nature with its righteousness, purity, and honesty.

In every way I stand into the victory of the ascension and glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby all the principalities and powers were made subject to Him. I claim my place in Christ as victorious with Him over all the enemies of my soul. Blessed Holy Spirit, I pray that You would fill me. Come into my life, break down every idol and cast out every foe.

I am thankful, Heavenly Father, for the expression of Your will for my daily life as You have shown me in Your Word. I therefore, claim all the will of God for today. I am thankful that You have blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am thankful that You have begotten me unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I am thankful that You have made a provision so that today I can live filled with the Spirit of God with love and joy and peace, with longsuffering, gentleness and goodness, with meekness, faithfulness, and self-control in my life.

I recognize that this is Your will for me and I therefore reject and resist all the endeavors of Satan and his wicked spirits to rob me of the will of God. I refuse in this day to believe my feelings and I hold up the shield of faith against all the accusations and distortion and insinuations that Satan would put into my mind. I claim the fullness of the will of God for my life today.

In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ I completely surrender myself to You, Heavenly Father, as a living sacrifice. I choose not to be conformed to this world. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, and I pray that You would show me Your will and enable me to walk in all the fullness of Your will today.

I am thankful, Heavenly Father, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in my own life today I tear down the strongholds of Satan and smash the plans of Satan that have been formed against me. I tear down the strongholds of Satan against my mind, and I surrender my mind to You, Blessed Holy Spirit. I

affirm, Heavenly Father, that You have not given me the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

I break and smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my emotions today and I give my emotions to You. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my will today, I give my will to You, and choose to make the right decisions of faith. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my body today, I give my body to You recognizing that I am Your temple. I rejoice in Your mercy and goodness.

Heavenly Father, I pray that now and through this day You would strengthen and enlighten me, show me the way Satan is hindering and tempting and lying and distorting the truth in my life. Enable me to be the kind of person that would please You. Enable me to be aggressive in prayer and faith. Enable me to be aggressive mentally, to think about and practice Your Word, and to give You Your rightful place in my life.

Again, I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that You, Blessed Holy Spirit, would bring all the work of the Crucifixion, all the work of the Resurrection, all the work of the Glorification, and all the work of Pentecost into my life today. I surrender myself to You. I refuse to be

discouraged. You are the God of all hope. You have proven Your power by resurrecting Jesus Christ from the dead, and I claim in every way this victory over all Satanic forces in my life. I pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ with thanksgiving. Amen.

CONCLUSION:

When I look back over my tenure here at Emmaus Church, it seems evident that there has been a force opposing us. The Lord Jesus said, **"I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."** Brothers and sisters, let us equip ourselves with the full armor of God. Pray. Stand firm. We will continue our examination of Spiritual Warfare next week.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.