

## Ephesians 6:10-18 p.979

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

## Spiritual Warfare: Biblical attack and defence

Ephesians 6 - we're in a battle – it's an assumed reality in the Bible.

World events often suggest a force for evil at work:

- Genocide – religious nutters persecuting Muslims, Yazidis, Christians...
- Human trafficking
- Also our own daily battles and temptations

...Hence “Deliver us from evil” in the Lord’s Prayer

...Hence in the baptism service “Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?” and “Fight valiantly against the world the flesh and the devil”

– **Just in the West it's doubted - everywhere else people know** life is a battle

[Guys coming into Betel know there's a devil before they realise there's a good God]

“Jesus has got to set us free” - part of discipleship evangelism.

– **Get the balance right** - not ignoring, not too much

CS Lewis quote

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”

God much much bigger than Satan; satan is a fallen angel originally created by God.

**Smith Wigglesworth** saw Satan manifesting “it's only you” turned over and went to sleep.

**Martin Luther** “I resist the devil and often it's with a fart”.

Rejecting – but not overly respectful.

## Daily Prayer – How to Fight in Daily Life

I now step into your protection and I put on your armour: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the readiness of the Gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation. I take up the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, and I wield these weapons against the evil one in the power of God. I choose to pray at all times in the Spirit, to be strong in you, Lord, and in your might. *Eph 6:10–18.*

Ephesians 6:12 *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,*

Not just about physical armies – there’s more going on

*but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

We may or may not experience physical warfare in our lives, terrorism, crime or domestic violence – but whether we like it or not, we are in a battle – a spiritual one. And we need to “put on the full armour of God”.

Two types of armour – defensive and offensive – to defend and to attack

### Defensive:

*Belt of truth* – who God is, who I am in him. Creator, Redeemer Sustainer, Father, Son Spirit – the dance of the Trinity. We are his much loved sons and daughters, adopted into his family, safe and secure in Him.

*Breastplate of righteousness* – I get my righteousness, my good standing before God from Jesus who died for me. I get my healing and renewal in Him – I’m washed clean from all my sin and shame. When God looks at us, he sees us as pure and good as he sees Jesus himself.

*Helmet of salvation* – knowledge of my salvation protects my *mind*, my *thinking*.

*Shield of faith* – fiery darts can be ‘batted away’ – thoughts, accusations lies, about myself or others, from satan or my unhealed old self.

### Offensive:

*Shoes of the readiness*: spreading the good news about Jesus, living in and for his kingdom and glory. I have a glorious purpose, no matter what my positions, roles and status in life.

*Sword of the Spirit – the word of God* – Jesus tempted in the desert countered the enemy with the words “It is written...” I can fight back; I can fight to freedom in Jesus. Not “please make it go away” but “I stand in the power of Jesus and in his authority, I *tell it to go away*”.

We’re on the winning side - we can defend, we can attack, we can overcome.

### Barth:

[In Christ] “we are set at God’s side and lifted up to Him and therefore to the place where decisions are made in the affairs of His government. And this is what takes place in ... Christian prayer ... We then find ourselves at the very seat of government, at the very heart of the mystery and purpose of all occurrence.’

Our Victory in Spiritual warfare depends on what Jesus has achieved. That’s why the creed we listened to is more than just a set of historical facts

“It is finished” – Jesus’ life, death, resurrection and ascension mean Satan is comprehensively defeated. **We’re not fighting for victory but from victory** – the name of Jesus is our pledge and guarantee.

Pete Greig: We pray from *victory and joy* not despair and despondency.

Julian of Norwich c.14th – lots of visions and “And all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.”

Why then pain and suffering? Especially as we remember the pain and horror of warfare. There are no easy answers, but we are between the time of Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, and Jesus’ return; the war is over, but there are still battles to fight.

For example (1): D-day meant the end of the war, but there were some battles to fight before VE and VJ Day

For example (2): **33 Chilean miners** – presumed lost. Then drill bit through, and the victory was coming, and did come. Still there were more than 50 days of darkness to endure. This stands as a metaphor for that deep longing for the new heaven and new earth.

This is important at any time – but it's very important for us now. We're a fledgling church plant – working together to bring life and hope back not just to a church, but to a community.

The enemy doesn't want this to happen – he'll **turn up the volume** on accusations and lies. He just wants to destroy God's good things – churches, lives, marriages, families, friendships. We're on the front line.

Have you had extra trouble? Marriage and family issues? They can and do happen all the time, but church plant folk often say the battle gets harder

What do we do? Remember there's **Power in the Name of Jesus – we pray in that.**

PG says three things:

**1. Pray it.** How? Jesus used scripture in the wilderness - if he needed it, so do we: **claim the promises.** E.g. Daniel reading Jeremiah; prayer and fasting 21 days, crying out. Then angel appeared; we heard you on day one, but [stuff] - ie reality of spiritual battle.  
*Plant seeds rather than pulling up weeds*, most of the time. Focus on positive; invite God in.

**2. Practice it.** Live the victory. McClung: church between Satanist and porn bookstore, choosing live differently: life of integrity; praise and worship. Satanist burnt down porn shop closed down.

Live differently to existing strongholds, virtues in the face of vice. Fight for your friendships, marriages, families, sexual ethics – that's where the enemy is doing a lot of damage nowadays

**3. Preach it** – tell people about **Jesus**. The ultimate spiritual breakthrough is when someone in darkness surrenders to the light and becomes Christian. Thereafter it's taking hold again and again and again of what we have and who we are in Jesus Christ.

### **Psalm 91 p.497**

1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

3 For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

5 You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

8 You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—the Most High, who is my refuge —

10 no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

12 On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

14 "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name.

15 When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honour him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation

### **Matthew 4:1-11 p.809**

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. "

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,' and

"On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. "

7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. '" 8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. "

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him