

THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND

Text: Ephesians 6:10-14

INTRO: You probably remember what you were doing on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, when you heard the news that the U.S. was under attack by Muslim extremists. The World Trade Center was destroyed. The Pentagon was damaged. Over 5,000 American men, women, & children were murdered, all in a matter of a couple of hours. How were the terrorists able to carry out their schemes so successfully? Primarily because we had underestimated their cunning, their zeal, and their determination. We had underestimated their resolve to attack & destroy our way of life. And now our country is at war. A war we did not want, but a war we must win if our values and our freedom are to survive.

But as Christians, we are engaged in another, even more important warfare, a struggle that involves our eternal destiny. Let us resolve to rise to the challenge; to know our enemy; to utilize every legitimate resource at our disposal. We must win at all costs.

I. WE ARE SOLDIERS.

A. Jesus is referred to in Heb. 2:10 as the Captain of our salvation.

B. We are the soldiers in His army.

Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need. (Phil. 2:25).

You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. (2 Tim 2:3-4).

II. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE ENEMY & THE NATURE OF OUR STRUGGLE.

A. Not against people, *per se*, vs. 12a.

But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the

weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments & every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor 10:2-5).

B. The enemy is Satan & his forces, vs. 12.

1. Satan & His angels: principalities, powers
2. World rulers who abuse their authority: rulers of the darkness of this age.
3. False teachers in the church: spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. (1 Pet. 5:8-9).

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God & He will draw near to you... (James 4:7-8).

III. OUR GOD HAS ADEQUATELY EQUIPPED US FOR THE STRUGGLE, vs. 13-14a.

A. Our protective equipment.

1. Gird you waist with truth.
Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning (Luke 12:35).

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, & rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:13).

2. Breast-plate of righteousness. Right behavior is our bullet-proof vest. As long as we do what is right, Satan & all his forces cannot defeat us

3. Shoes -- preparation of the gospel of peace.

And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15).

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7).

NOTE: Never underestimate the cunning of Satan. He would have your feet shod with the preparation of gossip, fault-finding, tale-bearing, 1 Tim. 5:13.

4. Shield of faith. The soldier's shield was about 4 ft long & 2 & 1/2 ft. wide. It helped him ward off spears, swords, & arrows-- all the weapons of the day. The warrior's ultimate protection. There is no substitute for faith, Heb. 11:6.

5. Helmet of salvation.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. (1 Thess 5:8).

That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil. (Heb. 6:18-19).

B. Our offensive equipment. To wage war successfully, it is necessary, not only to maintain a proper defense -- but is also necessary to seek to advance the cause.

1. Sword of the Spirit -- the word of God.
2. Prayer, vs. 18-20. Prayer is a formidable weapon in our efforts to free others from the clutches of Satan, and to keep ourselves free from the ruin that will otherwise come.

CONCLUSION: As the apostle Paul penned the words of our text, he was a “prisoner of war.” Men had chained him with chains, but God had set his spirit free. During a later imprisonment, with death looming before him, he wrote: I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

READ AGAIN EPHESIANS 6:10-14a

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 28, 2001
Bethlehem, PA, November 18, 2001