

# Spiritual Warfare

Putting on the Armor of God

# Introduction

- “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:12)
- What does it mean that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood”?
- Don’t we actually wrestle with human adversaries?
- Christians often make one of two mistakes when it comes to spiritual warfare—they either don’t believe in demonic forces or they put too much emphasis on them

# What are we fighting?—the Devil's Schemes

- “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s **schemes**” or strategies (Eph 6:11)
- The devil is a liar and a slanderer
- He cannot make a Christian, whom God has declared as a righteous person, BAD or lose his salvation
- But he can make a flawed Christian worse by aggravating whatever is in you through lies
- “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph 4:26-27)

# What are we fighting?

- There is a spiritual battle going on...
- “Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by **flesh and blood**, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt 16:16-18)

# What are we fighting?

- Paul did fight against human adversaries:
- “For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve” (2 Cor 11:13-15)

# What are we fighting?

- Christians fight against human adversaries, too:
- “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the **cunning and craftiness** of people in their deceitful **scheming**” (Eph 4:13-14)
- There is probably no human sinning that is not influenced by Satan
- Human evil and demonic evil are intertwined

# What are we fighting?

- “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts” (Eph 2:1-3)
- Paul describes non-believers in three ways:
  - Lock step with the spirit of the world
  - Follow the ruler of the dark kingdom
  - Carry out the desires of the body and the mind

# How does Satan tempt us?

- Go after short-term pleasures over long-term consequences
- Rationalizes sins as virtues
- Justify sin by pointing out the sins of Christian leaders
- Oversell the mercy of God—God will forgive me
- I've suffered enough—I deserve this....
- Compare yourself with non-Christians who live great lives
- Hold on to resentment and refuse to forgive (Eph 4:26-27):
- “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, <sup>27</sup> and do not give the devil a foothold”



# Satanic Accusations

- By making us look more at our sins/mistakes than our Savior
- To be obsessed with past sins that cannot be undone
- By seeing troubles and struggles as punishments from God
- By making us think that inner struggles and doubts are unchristian

# Conclusion

- “Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, <sup>11</sup> in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his **schemes**” (2 Cor 2:10)
- What schemes are we not to be unaware of? The devil wants to destroy a community of faith when we fail to forgive one another
- “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood” means Christian do not wrestle against *mere* flesh and blood (i.e., human)
- We wrestle against human sins *and* satanic schemes

# Put on the Armor of God

- <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness** in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the **gospel of peace**. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.
- <sup>18</sup> And **pray** in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people (Eph 6:13-18)

# Put on the Armor of God

- Know what particular ways in which Satan tempts and accuses you
- The Gospel is the armor of God:
  - belt of truth,
  - breastplate of righteousness,
  - gospel of peace,
  - shield of faith,
  - helmet of salvation,
  - sword of the Spirit,
  - prayer

# Put on the Armor of God

- The gospel—Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection—is the good news that Jesus paid the penalty for our sin which is death
- By trusting in Jesus, he took our place on the cross, died our death, and declared us righteous
- That does not mean we are actually perfect or no longer sin
- It means that Jesus took care of our sin problem, and we are now completely accepted and loved by God
- God sees us through the person and work of Jesus
- When we are being accused, we need to be reminded that we are forgiven and accepted by God
- The gospel destroys the schemes of Satan

# Further Readings

