Standing Firm
Ephesians 6:10-18

Objective: Teach Christians how to be able to stand firm against the devil’s wiles.

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18.

Memory: Ephesians 6:11.

Introduction:
1. I used to be intrigued with mythology; concept of people doing battle with a Phoenix or a Medusa, or other superhuman creature was fascinating to me. Truth is that the concept is not all that far-fetched.
2. We are, in fact doing battle with superhuman forces. On a daily basis. Against, “…against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”
3. And the stakes are high. Your very life and soul. This is not fun and games, …

We need to be able to stand firm in the Lord.

The church in Ephesus is much like any other congregation I have ever seen. There are struggles that constantly arise. (Satan IS always active, trying to stir things up; we are at war, spiritually.) In Ephesus, there are cliques” groups that look down on others, sort of despise them; division between those of Jewish heritage and those of non-Jewish heritage. Our modern day struggles usually have a different basis, but the same source (Satan). In this passage, the divinely inspired Apostle tells Christians under fire, how to stand firm in spiritual warfare.

The important concept that underlies everything else is to…

I. Be Strong In The Lord.

A. One cannot afford to be complacent.
   1. We are in a battle with Satan and His spiritual forces. Cannot predict what approach the enemy will take; or what wily ambush. If you think you have read enough books on Spiritual Warfare so that you can out-think the Deceiver, you are wrong. No matter how wise and learned you are, you cannot count on anticipating Satan’s devises. You need to be alert and you need to rely on the Lord.
   2. Your ability to stand comes from the Lord. It’s by His power and resources that you stand.
   3. If you drift – grow apathetic, you fall. To fall means to be lost.
   4. Whatever else goes on, no matter who else is at fault, or how, you stay “In The Lord.”

B. Your spiritual safety comes from being “in the Lord”.
   1. In Him is life! He is the life and the resurrection. He is your power to prevail.
   2. If you leave Him, you fall. Period. If you leave Him, you are dead.
   3. So don’t do anything that will put you spatially outside the Lord.
   4. “In the Lord” means that you live in the same attitude, same character, same inner volition, same goal in life as Jesus did. Same desire to serve God.
   5. He “… did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Is this the heart, attitude you have? Or are you in danger of being NOT “in the Lord”? 
   6. He didn’t get personally offended. He didn’t demand his personal liberties, but yielded them on behalf of others.
   7. He was not gruff and harsh. A bruised reed he would not break, and a smoldering wick he would not snuff out.
   8. Yet He courageously and firmly spoke the truth and revealed people’s own hearts.
   9. Are you living by His Spirit? Are you strong in the Lord regardless of other people and their actions or attitudes? Is it your heart conviction to be faithful and true and obedient to God even if you are the only one who is?

Part of being strong in the Lord, means to use what He gives you to fight with and to defend yourself with.

II. Put On The Full Armor Of God.

A. “The belt of truth buckled around your waist.”
   1. Truthfulness enables you to stand. This entails knowing truth from Scripture and acknowledging
truth, but it also entails being completely truthful yourself.

2. Be absolutely honest. Even when it hurts! Stop making half-truths. Stop lying to get out of trouble—confess your sins and shortcomings. Get rid of all falsehood and deceptions.
3. The Deceiver’s power comes from ignorance and darkness. We need to come into the light and stay in the light. With all our thoughts and deeds.
4. No pretending. No “rationalizing your way around things. Face things squarely with the Truth. Even if it means confession of your faults and failures! (If I spoke out of turn I should confess.)

B. “The breastplate of righteousness in place.”
1. Simply means that if you always do right, no one will have legitimate accusations.
2. Jesus said of Nathan, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” (John 1:47)
3. Moral Integrity enables you to stand firm in the Lord. If you get wishy-washy about morality, you will fall. No fudging in regard to righteousness. Go the extra mile here.
4. If you never do anything wrong, the Accuser won’t be able to declare you guilty.

C. “With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”
1. Always being ready to respond to whatever the Gospel indicates, and living by the peace that the Gospel teaches results in unity and strength.
2. Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” Are you always ready to carry the Gospel to others, to live by it to establish and re-establish peace between yourself and another?
3. This means having a knowledge of the Gospel and living by that knowledge. 2 Peter 1:3-4, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”
   a. How will you escape corruption? By living according to the knowledge of Christ!
   c. How do you obtain the great and precious promises? Participate in the divine nature?
4. So, how important is it to spend time learning the Gospel?

D. “Take up the shield of faith.”
1. “…with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one”
2. May not anticipate all Satan’s devises, but if you are shielded by faith, they will “fizzle”.
3. Faith enables you to stand when you can’t see. When you can’t understand. When you don’t know which way to turn. Faith is the shield that protects you.
4. It enables you to resist the temptation to turn aside and do things your own way.
5. Faith is trusting God and doing what He says at all times. That will protect you!

E. “Take the helmet of salvation.”
1. In other words; protect your thinking. What do you do when doubts arise?
2. What do you do when people try to get you to rationalize and do something wrong.
3. What protects you against corrupt philosophies? Colossians 2:8, “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” Same kind of spiritual warfare we are discussing.
4. When folks are discouraging you; offering you “good” reasons why you ought not hold to the Lord in everything (because so many Christians are hypocrites, because so many have done wrong somehow; because nobody is doing what they ought to be doing, the list goes on…) Now is the time to make sure you focus your thoughts on; “…whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8)

F. “(Take) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
1. Jesus defended Himself with the Word of God – in Matthew 4 in the Wilderness.
2. Here is the part of the armor that enables you to fight back as well.
a. It is the word of God that will bring others to faith.
b. It is the Word of God and the Spirit conveyed therein that will convict them of their error.

3. Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

To fight the fight, to stand firm in our salvation, we need to put on the full panoply that God has provided for us. And then, with all of God’s armor, we need to …

III. Pray In The Spirit.

A. “On all occasions.”
   1. How often should you ask God for help? For instructions? For protection? For His companionship? At all times. On what occasions? All occasions. If you find yourself in a place, occasion where you are not comfortable talking to god, you shouldn’t be there).
   2. In other words, be constantly involved in prayer;
      a. Seeking God’s help, seeking God’s wisdom, seeking God’s strength and participation in the battles.
      b. Constantly, courageously searching your own heart to make sure you are “in the Lord”.
      c. Psalm 139:23; “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”
   3. There is no room for complacency or spiritual slumber; like Apostles on last night.

B. Pray to obtain strength for yourself and for others.
   1. Paul is not bashful about asking for their prayers for himself in verses 19-20.
   2. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”
   3. We need to fight spiritual battles with spiritual weapons. Prayer is a vital part of that.

So What?

Opposition to you and your cause as a Christian is severe and strong. Expect it to be so. We are involved in spiritual warfare on a constant, daily basis, battling not only for your soul, but for the souls of others as well. People are falling prey to Satan all the time, but you don’t have to. You can stand! We can all stand and be victorious. It takes an alertness to what is actually going on. Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, and pray in the spirit at all times.

Closing Prayer:
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   Matthew 5:9  2 Peter 1:3-4

D. “Take up the shield of faith.”

E. “Take the helmet of salvation.”
   Colossians 2:8  Philippians 4:8

F. “(Take) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
   Hebrews 4:12

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