

# Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 27

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Call to Arms”

*Ephesians 6:10-12 ~ October 2, 2011*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help believers understand the battle they are in, and to fight for Christ.

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## Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Fall Festival Sign-ups begin today!
- Pizza & Comedy Night – Sign-ups for Oct. 14
- Youth PM service next Sunday
- Prayer Gathering tonight – 6 p.m. room #1
- Men’s Breakfast this Saturday – 7 a.m.

## Opening prayer

The Christian faith is not a passive faith.

But so many people...especially men, seem to believe that going to Church and living the Christian life is boring, or it lacks excitement and adventure.

This is not what we see in Scripture – and it’s not the experience of saints throughout history, and it’s not my experience either.

The Christian faith is a battle...it’s a call to arms...it’s a life that calls you to a higher level of awareness, knowledge, and action. It is true that Jesus told us to “*turn the other cheek*”, but He also crushed Satan’s head, and he boldly confronted the religious leaders of His day and turned over the market tables in the temple. In Scripture Jesus is pictured as both a lamb *and* a lion. Jesus said He came not to bring peace, but to bring a sword (*Matt. 10:34*). The book of Revelation reveals Christ as a conquering military figure, who will devastate His enemies as He judges them for their sinful rebellion. So where do we get this picture of Jesus – and Christianity being a passive, boring faith?

Well, I believe there are many places this message has been forwarded. Sometimes from Christians themselves, but ultimately they are all from one source, Satan...the Devil.

Now I'm aware that when I speak of Satan, there are many in today's culture who don't believe there is such a creature...that "Satan" or the "Devil" is superstitious talk, holdover beliefs that educated, modern people have outgrown. But, the Bible tells a much different story. The Bible doesn't speak of Satan/Devil as a mystical force, but uses personal pronouns, Proper names and titles when referring to Satan. The Bible's clear teaching is that Satan is a real, spiritual being, who is actively opposing the work and plan of God.

Paul has just given us wise and helpful instruction regarding marriage, family, and relationships at work. He now helps us realize that all of these things are part of a larger battle that is going on...a battle that is often hidden from our eyes...a battle that is fought in the spiritual realm. Since we live in a materialistic society, we tend to put our faith in what we can see, in what we can touch and perceive with our senses. So we often dismiss the reality of the spiritual realm, and minimize its impact because it's normally unnoticed by us. But don't be deceived into thinking the unseen spiritual world doesn't exist. In fact, it's more real than the world we do see!

Turn to Ephesians 6:10-12 (**Read passage**)

**Know your weakness and power.** vs. 10

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”

There are two commands in our passage today – and this is the first one – “be strong”. This is an interesting command, because it’s in the passive voice, which simply means we are the object of the action. It is the Greek term *endunamóō*. The prefix ‘en’ means *in*, and *dunamóō* is power (*dynamo*). If it was in the active voice, it would be a command to make yourself strong. But, it’s in the passive voice, which means you are being acted upon by something else...you must be made strong by something outside of yourself. Of course, the something outside of ourselves is “the Lord”. It’s in His mighty power that we must become strong. Even though it’s the Lord’s strength and power, we are commanded to appropriate it to our life – to make His strength our strength.

We see this in other passages:

Phil. 4:13 “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

Ephesians 1:19 “and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,<sup>20</sup> which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms...”

2 Cor. 12:7-10 “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. **8** Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. **9** But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. **10** That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in

hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Know your weakness and power.

1. We are too weak to live the Christian life.
2. The power of Christ enables us to live the Christian life.

How do we access the power of Christ?

By dressing ourselves for the spiritual battle!

**Dress yourself for spiritual battle.** vs. 11a

“Put on the full armor of God...”

This is the second command in our passage.

“Put on” is a Greek word that means *get dressed*. The root word is *enduō*, and *once* again, the prefix *en* means = *in*, and *duō* means to “sink into”. So, the idea is to get in the clothes...to sink into the full armor of God.

The command is for the “full armor of God” – not part of it...all of it! No picking and choosing...it’s a complete set!

The word for “full armor” is literally, “*every weapon*” – so the picture is for us to get into – to put on every weapon – both offensive and defensive weapons – that we need so that we can fight effectively.

Does this sound like the Christian faith the world thinks of?

Does this sound like a passive faith...one that is boring and dull?

Is this how you picture your Christian life?

Allow me to clarify something at this point. The Christian faith is not a militant faith (i.e. Islam Jihadist). We do not force

belief, or punish unbelief. This is a spiritual warfare, not a physical warfare. However, don't think that spiritual warfare is merely theoretical! It is every day practical!

**Brace yourself for spiritual battle.** vs. 11b

“...so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”

Here is the purpose statement...the reason we need to apply God's power to us, and we need to dress for battle. Because we are going to be shot at...attacked!

The attacker is the devil, and he will attack us with his “schemes”.

“schemes” is *methodiah* – where we get our English word *method*. Notice the word is plural...Satan employs many different attacks against you. If you repel his attack in one area, he may try again in that same area, or he may attack you from another front altogether! (i.e. the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4)

“stand” is from the Greek word *histémi* (hist-ay-mee) – where our English word ‘*histamine*’ is derived from. The form of the Greek word means more than just to stand, but the prefix adds the idea of being against something - to stand against. Just like your medicine...your antihistamine helps you stand against your allergies, we need to stand against the devil's attacks.

One of the keys to military victory is knowing your enemy...knowing who you are fighting, which is what Paul tells us in vs. 12.

**Understand the nature of your enemy.** vs. 12

**12** 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.

Even though other people may oppose your faith – mock you in your faith, the real enemy force is not other people; it’s not even in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm.

Notice the detail here...that Satan is highly organized and has a structure he utilizes in the battle.

There are various opinions on what each term is describing. Some believe Paul is defining the ranks within Satan’s army, others believe its describing locations of his activity. “Rulers” and “authorities” would refer to governments and human leaders who are under Satan’s control and influence, “powers” would refer to the media and culture that is actively working against the truth of Christ, and “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” refers to the supernatural world that is actively supporting their human allies, and at the same time trying to suppress God’s work in the world (Daniel 10:13; Jude 9).

## **Application**

Be confident, Christ has won the war.

1 Cor. 15:55-56 “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our lord Jesus Christ.”

We are not to live in fear of Satan, but we should respect his power. Don’t be prideful in your holiness and your

ability to resist temptation, but know that you are on the winning side, and Satan is a defeated enemy.

Be confident in God's power, not your own power.

Even though Satan is defeated, he is still a powerful enemy, fighting to take us down with him!

**Illus.** *Our wedding reception, when I was going to be thrown into the pool, the outcome was certain, but I was taking someone with me!*

Engage in the battle.

Whether you know it or not, you are in the battle...every Christian is in the battle. There are three kinds of believers in this context.

**First**, are you a believer who is slowing down other believers who are fighting Satan?

**Second**, are you a believer who is living a life that agrees and sides with the enemy?

**Third**, are you actively fighting against Satan?

Which one are you?

Engage in the battle for the cause of Christ!

A mighty fortress is our God,  
a bulwark never failing;  
our helper he amid the flood  
of mortal ills prevailing.  
For still our ancient foe  
doth seek to work us woe;  
his craft and power are great,  
and armed with cruel hate,  
on earth is not his equal.

2. Did we in our own strength confide,  
our striving would be losing,  
were not the right man on our side,  
the man of God's own choosing.  
Dost ask who that may be?  
Christ Jesus, it is he;  
Lord Sabaoth, his name,  
from age to age the same,  
and he must win the battle.