

Spiritual Warfare

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[0 : 00] Father, we know that demons exist and that they are real. And we know that they attack people. And we know that they especially love to attack Christians.

And they love to attack churches. So, Father, we gather here, having sung your praises and having prayed to you and having heard your word read.

And we gather now at this time to read your word and to think about your word. So, Father, I know I have no power in and of myself as a frail human being.

But I thank you that in Jesus, by putting my faith and trust in him, you have adopted me as your child. And you are my father in heaven.

And so, Father, in the name of Jesus, may every demon that is present or affecting or tormenting or influencing in any way, any person in this room or this church, in the name of Jesus, may those demons be bound.

[1 : 03] In the name of Jesus, may those demons be cast far from here, never to return. And, Father, we do not want to be left empty. We ask that the Holy Spirit would fall with might and power and deep conviction upon us at this time.

We ask that we would be here, that you would help our hearts to be here in the name and presence of Jesus. That he would walk among us and be present amongst us.

That he would touch each one here personally to some needing healing to bring healing, to some needing correction, correction.

Father, he knows what we need. And we ask that he would be present and that he would truly be the one who ministers. That I, Father, would merely be your herald, proclaiming your news to your people in your city, to your glory.

And this I ask in the name of Jesus. Amen. Please be seated. So, we're going to talk about demons.

[2 : 09] So, I'm a Christian. And as a Christian, what it means to be a Christian, it means that I have trusted Jesus as my Savior and Lord. It means that I believe that he is the one who is God, the Son of God, who came and took on flesh and lived amongst us to redeem ordinary human beings like you and me.

And I believe that not just because of the narratives and the arguments for God, but preeminently I believe that because he prophesied and predicted that he would die.

In fact, he said he came to earth to die. And he did die on a cross. And on the third day, he rose from the dead. And that's a reasonable thing to believe because they've never found the body.

And the body was gone. He was resurrected. And, you know, I think that if somebody is able to rise from the dead, they're pretty trustworthy. If they're able to prophesy that that's going to happen, predict that that's going to happen, they actually do it, that means they're pretty trustworthy.

And so, we call the Christian faith the Christian faith. And that's a very, very good way to understand it. Because all knowledge and all systems of belief on one level, at the very root, there's a faith which is there at work.

[3 : 21] But sometimes people in the world mistake hearing the Christian faith as if all it is is we kiss our brains goodbye. You know, at work, some of you have PhDs in engineering. And some of you are engineers.

And some of you are lawyers. And some of you don't have all those degrees. But you're just as smart as those people. But you just happen to have gone a different route. And you know how to fix cars. And you know how to make meals.

And you know how to run families. And you do all of that type of stuff. And there's one half of our brain which is sort of all about reason and ration. And then we sort of shut that with a big, big wall.

And there's this faith part.

And that's what many people in the world think. And that's, in fact, how many people think. It's one of the reasons why people can believe very, very, very silly things in the world. And just by extrapolation, Christians also believe such silly things in the world.

But the fact of the matter is, I've just put to you, if there really was a man who said that he came from God, that he was God himself, that he came to make human beings right with God, and if he said, the way that I'm going to vindicate my claim is by predicting that I will die a death that I can't actually organize myself, and I will die in this particular manner, and after three days the grave will be empty, and I will rise from the dead, and I will appear to you to prove that to you.

[4 : 38] And if a man is able to do such a thing, he is a trustworthy man, a man worthy of being listened to. And Jesus teaches not just that God exists, but Jesus teaches that angels exist, and that demons exist.

And I believe those things. And the Christian faith, on one level, of course, is a faith. It's another topic of conversation, that all knowledge has faith at its very basic root.

Those of you who are educated in a particular way, the dream of empiricists and rationalists is a false dream. You have to begin with some things that you believe in faith, but it's not just a faith. The Christian faith, Jesus is calling us to enter into the real world. Into the real world. And today, as I proclaim to you, that not only is there a God that does exist, the God that exists is the God who's described by Jesus, because he's trustworthy.

But the God who exists, not only is he exists, but there's angels that exist in the real world. There are demons that exist in the real world. And so, in a sense, by listening to the Bible, you enter into the real world far more.

[5 : 53] You know more about the real world than the CBC does. You know more about the real world than the Supreme Court of Canada does. You know more about the real world than the University of Ottawa does.

Because the Bible wants us, Jesus wants us to know what the real world is really like. In the real world, there are spiritual beings that really exist, that have sometimes an impact on human beings. And there's angels, and there's demons, and we're going to look at that. So, if you turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6, Ephesians chapter 6, and you turn to verse 10, and text along. If you don't have Bibles of your own, you can look up on the screen. But it's always very helpful to bring your own Bible, by the way. Not just for people like me who have a love of paper, but it's really helpful just to be able to mark it or make little notes in your own Bible, and it can be very helpful for you later on.

But let's listen to this. The reason I'm talking about this today is because we're preaching through the book of Ephesians. We're finishing Ephesians today. Next week, I'm going to begin four-sermon series on different prophecies from Isaiah about the birth of the Messiah.

[7 : 13] And then after a Sunday where Matt's going to preach, I'm going to begin a series of sermons on the book of Judges. And that's what's going to be coming up. But we're looking here. We're finishing the book of Ephesians. And this is how Paul finishes his letter.

And we'll begin reading in verse 10. Finally, or another way to translate that is, henceforth, or now we hear it, let's go, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Verse 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.

And we're just going to pause there. We're going to pause and camp there for a moment and just try to understand a little bit about what he's saying. Obviously, within this text, we can see there that the devil is mentioned.

But it also has these other very interesting images. The first image, my version uses wrestle. I think the version that Anne read said struggle. Wrestle is a very literal type of word.

[8 : 29] It's an image of, it's not like being in a bunker in Nevada controlling a drone over Pakistan that you press a button and the bomb goes and you kill somebody.

This is a face-to-face, hand-to-hand type of struggle. To make it very graphic, you can smell their breath. You can smell their body odor. It's a direct, in-your-face type of struggle.

And then the Bible talks about something which is a little bit, one of the things here, it says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. But then it says these other things. And you need to be very clear that what the Bible here is describing is different types of spiritual beings.

The Bible doesn't just describe angels. The Bible has other types of ranks of angelic beings. Some of you who are old and Anglican remember the hymn Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones.

If you don't remember it, you can look it up on the internet. Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones. And in, I think it's the first verse of that hymn, it gives the ancient Christian classification of nine ranks of angels, angelic beings.

[9 : 38] The old Christians read the Bible very carefully. We have a great prejudice against old Christians and it's just blatant prejudice. The fact of the matter, if we think about it, we're constantly distracted.

We're distracted by Instagram, by Facebook, by YouTube, by Netflix, by all these other types of things going on. We have by radio. You know, for many of these people, the only thing they had was a bit of the Bible.

So they read it over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over again. So they got really smart at it. And they noticed things. And so what we see here is because a demon is an angel that has rebelled against God and has become bent in evil.

And so what we see here is different types of angelic, I mean, of demonic beings. There are demonic beings that can be called rulers. Demonic beings that can be called authorities.

A demonic being that can be called a cosmic power or a cosmic force over this present darkness. A demonic power that can be described as a, very literally, it would be a spirit force of evil.

[10 : 49] The heavenly places is just describing, here it doesn't mean heaven, it just means, in a sense, the environment and the world that angels and demons live in. That's what heavenly places means there.

It just means they're, in a sense, they're natural habitat, so to speak. And the word there, just for those of you who want a little bit of a thing, what it says they're cosmic powers or cosmic forces over this present darkness, the Greek word which is used there, it's the only place in the New Testament that it's found.

I've not talked about this in other weeks, but Ephesus was famous throughout the entire ancient world at that time as being the center of the occult. A center of magic, of witchcraft, of calling down on spiritual forces.

And this word, cosmic powers, is a word which would have been if you had gone back in time and you went and got the manuals about how to try to reach out to evil spirits, it was constantly calling them that Greek word.

So Paul is doing something very specific to the people who are right there in Ephesus, some of whom would have come out of or if they themselves had not practiced or tried to practice what we call the occult, they would know people who have and that would have been one of the things in the manuals.

[12 : 00] If you go back in the book of Acts, you'll see that after the gospel comes to Ephesus, there's one time where people come under conviction that they have to get rid of these books and they burn books that are worth tens of thousands of dollars as they come under conviction that they should not have any type of dabbling in such things.

And it's very, very interesting. You see, one of the things about the biblical description of demonic beings, of evil beings, is that they, well, it's almost like a military metaphor.

You know, the private, in the sense, a demon is like a private, private first class, I guess. I don't want to go too far because I don't know much about the military, but a captain has a wider range of power and authority and a major more than that and a general more than that and in a sense, there's some type of a similar type of demonic presences or beings that have, in a sense, a bigger, wider, we might even say an institutional and cultural forming role.

See, it's very interesting and I don't want to go very far on this, but I find it very suggestive this week as I've been meditating upon this text that he goes right from talking about the institution of slavery to demons and not only that he goes from the institution of slavery to demons, but not just individual demons, but rulers and dominions and authorities because I challenge the skeptics who are here about such things.

Isn't on one level the institution of slavery something that seems to be more like hell than heaven? Can't you see that there are things that go on in nations and cultures that seem to have something

more than just one particular demon at work?

[13 : 54] Haven't we seen even in our own culture, haven't we all been in some type of an organization or a department where there's a sense of darkness and oppression in it? Isn't it reasonable to assume that beneath Nazism and other types of evil that have been in the past and are growing in the present, a love of the culture of death, that there might be something of the evil one influencing human affairs?

Is that a completely and utterly irrational thing to believe? That's not an irrational thing. Don't we all on one level sense? Don't we say, how could they do that? Like, when I was in Israel just a couple of, like, a month and a half ago, one of the things I did, and if you ever go to Jerusalem, you have to go to, I can't pronounce it in Hebrew very well, you have to go to the Holocaust Museum. You have to do that. And you need to take, I'm going to give you one little piece of advice, make sure you allow an hour or more, maybe two or three, and don't plan that much afterwards, because it will knock you.

You will receive a blow. And one of the things which is so shocking about that, there's so, I can just go on and on about everything that's shocking, but there's a section where it talks about those who are specifically involved in seeking out Jews to exterminate them.

And the vast majority of them had master's degrees and doctorates in literature, in philosophy, in what we call the humane letters in psychiatry.

[15 : 38] Isn't there something, isn't there the smell of sulfur? about such things in our culture? Isn't there?

So here's the thing, because we're camping here a little bit, and we're going to move on, but we need to camp here a little bit. You know, if you ever read J.C. Ryle's book on holiness, it's a great, great, great, great, great book.

And one of the things he does, which is very, very unlike most other books on the subject, is he spends, I think, the first 40% of the book talking about sin. And he says, if you want to go really high, you've got to dig deep.

And he said, so many books on things about how to live a Christian life, they just brush over a certain type of thing, and they immediately try to build high. And he said, you just think about building anything. The taller the building, the deeper you've got to go.

So if you want to talk about reaching the heights of heaven, you've got to really go deep. We're going to spend a little bit longer on this, not because I have a fixation about it, but because there's so little that's wise, that's talked about in our culture about these things.

[16 : 47] But here's the first things. Demonic influence is a human problem. It isn't if all of a sudden Christians are the only ones that are affected by demons. No, it's a human problem.

It can be a problem for cultures, for nations, for movements. Why is it that all of a sudden there's so many people in a culture who seem to go in a way which is just so wrong?

Like, why is that? Is that completely unreasonable to think that there might be something of hell, a power beyond that which is physical, which is at work in such a transformation, such a movement so quickly?

And the second thing, if you could put up the next point, if you've gathered my view, these are real, there are real spiritual beings that are evil. they are hostile to all that God has made, especially human beings.

They are doomed, but can still affect the world and human beings. They delight in the rape of the environment.

[17 : 55] They delight in cruelty to animals. they are hostile to the good creation that God has made.

But they also seek to influence human beings. They especially hate human beings, partially, because what is a human being, according to the Bible? Made in the image of God.

Every human being you see is made in the image of God. They hate marriage. Why? Because in marriage you see a good marriage, an image of the relationship of Christ to his church.

And because no demon can ever create anything, it can only corrupt. And God has granted to some human beings the power of procreation that no demon can do.

That no demon can do. it's really important for us to remember and to understand that the devil is not God's equal.

[19 : 11] God has no equal. All demons are created beings. demons. And Jesus didn't have to die on the cross to defeat demons.

Because God can do it and they're gone. The reason Jesus died on the cross is for us. Although his death on the cross is also a profound defeat of demons.

demons. One of the ways, we're going to see in a moment, one of the different ways that demons affect us when we look at the armor of God, and if you think in many cases of the opposite of it. But at a very, very simple level, if you just think of the different ways in the Bible that the devil or the demons are described, they are described as being liars.

one of the names for the devil is the accuser. And so one of the ways that we human beings are affected by demons is precisely along that line of deep seasons of accusation, unredemptive accusation in your life.

[20 : 34] To believe lies about your partner or your children or your boss, to be gripped by lies about them, to be captivated by internal conversations where we say something and this other person, our boss, or a co-worker, or an underling, or a neighbor, or a husband, or a daughter, says something that goes back and forward, and it's not the way they actually would talk.

But we get caught up in this story, in this narrative of how a person is going to act, and how they're going to behave, and what they're thinking, and we get caught up in it, and we get so caught up in it, it's as if it's real.

We have almost literally, as the pictures make to mock of it, it's almost as if for some of us, and for many of us, but for all of us at some time or another, almost as if there is a little person right beside us, speaking into our ear, over and over and over and over again, the same types of lies and accusations.

Those of us who have struggled with addictions, whether we're conscious of it or not, there's several core lies that people who struggle with addictions say to themselves over and over and over and over again, and those of us who have struggled with addictions are familiar with what some of those are.

We might not have ever named them, but when I say them to you, you will recognize them. the closer someone gets to know me, the less they'll like me.

[22 : 11] The closer someone gets to know me, they will find me repugnant. No one will love me as I really am.

No one will love me as I really am. You might not say that very many. I can guarantee there are people in this room who have that not every day all the time, but for long seasons that said into their ear over and over and over and over again.

There is something unclean about me, something broken about me, something shameful about me, something wrong about me, something doomed about me.

No one will meet my needs. I need to meet them myself. If I don't get this, I am nothing.

how can I actually ever possibly survive a day or a week or a month without that drink, without that pornography, without that rush of the drug?

[23 : 44] At the same time that we have a belief, quickly dashed, I'll just do it this one time, and tomorrow I'll stop.

And if you think about how powerful these types of processes of accusation and lies are, in many people's lives, you realize how some of it is so close to the Christian truth, but deeply perverted. you are fallen. You're far more fallen than you possibly can imagine, but I can tell you this, there has never been a time in your life that you have been unloved by God, and he loved you so much, that knowing everything there is about you at the very deepest levels of who you are, and everything about you at the deepest levels of who you will be tomorrow, next week, next month, six months from now, ten years from now, if you're still alive and Jesus hasn't come back, and Jesus knew every single one of those things with a clarity that you cannot possibly have for your own self, and still he loved you so much to die for you.

And to take on to himself every wrong you've ever done, every wrong you ever will to, and take upon himself that, and the shame that goes with it, and the punishment it deserves.

And Jesus did it knowing you perfectly. And for those of us who are Christians, who still struggle, and maybe will struggle for a long time with those types of lies and accusations, see, here's the gospel.

[25 : 52] The gospel is the doom you deserved was taken on by Jesus, and the destiny he deserved was offered to you by grace alone, received by faith alone, and Jesus alone.

The doom you deserved was taken on by Jesus, and the destiny he deserved was offered to you by grace alone, received by faith alone, and Jesus alone. And I stand before you as a fallen man who has done many wrong things and still will do wrong things.

But I put my faith and trust in Jesus, and if a guy like I can do it, so can you. And if he loved me enough to die for me, he loved you enough to die for you.

And when you put your hands in the hands of Jesus, and you receive him as your Savior and your Lord, every doomed bit of you fell on him. And I stand before you, the collar is irrelevant, clothed in Christ's perfect standing before God.

And so the lies of accusation and doom and foulness are lies. lies. The lies that there are no hope or no one will love you as you really are, are lies.

[27 : 14] They are lies. Do a whole course on how demons influence you, but that's how every human being is influenced by demons. God's things.

If you go to the next text, because we need to spend a little bit about this, and you'll see how it is. It's very interesting. Look at verse 13. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Just pause there for a second. The Bible says, it says therefore, but it's really, in a sense, trying to capture the whole book of you can do this. Those of you who know the whole story of what Paul's going to do now is he's going to describe six pieces of armor, and he's going to describe them using the words of the Roman soldiers.

All of them, if you go back and get a good academic commentary, every one of the pieces of armor is connected to something in the book of Isaiah. Every one of them is connected, because in Isaiah, God is described as a mighty warrior.

[28 : 22] And so Paul, on one level, is speaking to pagans and to the Jewish hearers. They go, ah, that's in Isaiah, ah, that's in Isaiah, ah, that's in Isaiah. There's these connections. Go to a commentary.

I'm not going to go through it. I only have ten more minutes left, so we don't have time to go through it. But one of the things which is very interesting, it's a complete reversal of this very powerful Old Testament story that many Jewish people and many of you would know.

Maybe not all of you, but there's a famous story of David going to fight Goliath. And Goliath is this huge giant, and David says, I'll go fight the giant. And so Saul says, you need armor, here's your armor. And the armor's way too big and way too heavy, so David doesn't use it.

And so here's this delightful mystery, this delightful paradox. The armor that God gives an ordinary Christian like you and me is the armor he wears.

But in the mystery of grace, when you put it on, it fits you perfectly. Fits you if you're as big as Daniel, or as small as whoever the smallest one of us is here.

[29 : 27] It's this profound mystery of God's armor is big enough for him, but when you put his armor on you, it fits you perfectly. Fits you perfectly. And so look at verse 13 again, therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm.

Verse 14, stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness and as shoes for your feet having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Just pause there. That goes up. I don't know if you've been able to. Oh, they have been perfect.

Perfect. So here's this wonderful thing. We'll talk about some of these things in a moment. But, you know, I was thinking about this this week.

You have this image that God invites you and I've been actually in my prayers many times this week actually trying to imagine putting these six things on. And it struck me that we all put things on.

[30 : 33] Don't we? Like how many of us sort of wake up happy but then what do we do? We put on resentment. We put on anger. We put on bitterness. We put on our game face.

We look at the mirror and say, you're a winner. You can do this. You can accomplish. You know, we put on our best clothes. You know, for some of you who are women, you put on, you know, your

best makeup and you put on your gait.

You know, you put all the we put things on. You know, we put on resentment. We put on anger. We put on hate. We put on optimism. We put on arrogance. We put these things on.

And the Bible is saying, don't put that stuff on. Put this stuff on. And what's the first thing that he wants you to put on? Is a belt made out of truth. Why is this so important? Why is this?

Because who's the the Bible wants us? What happens in salvation? In salvation, you put your trust in Jesus. The Holy Spirit enables you to put your hand and trust in Jesus.

[31 : 32] And Jesus takes you by the hand and he takes you out of the people of the lie. And he makes you a citizen of the people of the truth.

The devil is the father of lies. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. And it's not just the truth of God's word.

It's just truth. It's just truth. It's if you're in a business and your boss is blowing steam about the financial projections, you are to be a person of the truth that says, actually, these figures are bad news.

If you're in a government department and he's trying to make it look as if everything is going up and to the right, but you look at all of the metrics and it's going down, you're to be the gal or the guy who says, excuse me, it's going down.

let's know the truth so we can deal with it. And then you look at the next thing. So the first thing is a belt that's made out of truth.

[32 : 44] And the second thing is this breastplate, this thing that will protect you from blows on your chest. And it's the breastplate, it's not the breastplate of all your good works, it's the breastplate of righteousness.

Remember how I was sharing the gospel, how what makes me right before God is not my own righteousness, but what makes me right before God is in a sense I am clothed with Christ.

That this is to grip me as I go throughout the day, that God will not love me more tonight because I preached a good sermon. My worth is not measured on how I do for 35 or 40 minutes on a Sunday morning.

So where was I? Let's go on to the next one. I can't remember exactly where I was, but that's fine. A God thing. So, oh yeah, so you know what, I'm, you know, it's the breastplate of righteousness.

I stand before God protected by what Jesus has done to make me right with him. Just look at the next one, the helmet of, no, there's the, verse 15, shoes for your feet, which is, in other words, how do you put, how do you, what do you want to have on your feet, you know, and what you do is you want the gospel, in a sense.

[33 : 59] What the gospel gives you is the power to stand. What the gospel gives you is a love for people. What the gospel gives you is a concern for the city.

What the gospel gives you is that you walk towards problems and problem people rather than away from them. It gives you this type of readiness, and that's what you put on your feet. verse 16.

No, I missed the helmet, didn't I? No, I haven't, I haven't, okay. The shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of evil, and this is actually a really important bit.

I have to watch my time, and it's because the Bible here combines two images at the same time. On one hand, our struggle with those things that are demonic is an in-your-face-direct type of thing, but it's not an individualistic thing, because what made the Roman legionnaires great was their ability to fight as a unit, and so these are four foot by two foot square shields, and if you've seen some old movies that capture this, what do they do in a battle?

The shields lock up. Guys from behind put their shields up above like that, and you have this impenetrable line that protects you from the missiles and the arrows and the attack of the other person, and so there's this, in a sense, this is a message not just to George, but also to Messiah.

[35 : 23] It's an individual image and a congregational image of us doing this together, and the faith is just, you know, it's faith and a trust in Jesus and what he's revealed and the gospel and what the Bible teaches, that that's, in a sense, what is to protect us, and then in verse 17, the helmet of salvation, what is to protect our heads, so to speak, from those types of blows?

Salvation is a little bit different than righteousness. It's the same, but different. It's this biblical idea that I'm made right with God by faith. I am being made more like Jesus by faith.

I will be completely like Jesus by faith. It's justification, sanctification, and glorification. It's that I have been made right with God. I am being made more like Jesus.

I will be glorified. That's what this is to remember on our head. That's the helmet of salvation, the three tenses of salvation, and then the sword of the Spirit, which is the Bible, which is the thing by which we are to understand what the real world is and how we share the faith and how we understand.

It's the Bible. How do you put it all on? I'm running out of time. If you could put up the next point, please, I've missed these things.

[36 : 49] The Lord has provided you his armor and empowered you and called you to stand in spiritual battle. That's what this is saying. The Lord has provided you his armor and empowered you and called you to stand in spiritual battle.

And how do you stand? How do you put on the armor? How do you move forward? Could you put up the next point? You and I, we both stand and we advance on our knees in prayer in the Holy Spirit.

We stand and we advance on our knees in prayer in the Holy Spirit. Look at what the Bible says. If you could just go to verses, oh, to verse 18.

I guess I've mixed up my order a little bit. Verse 18. Praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication to that end, keep alert and with all perseverance making supplication for all the saints and also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains that I may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.

Put it on with prayer. I mean, maybe one of the things that we can do this week is you take this little text of scripture and maybe write it down and have it in your pocket and just imagine you're going into a meeting, you're going into a situation, you're being attacked by those accusing types of thoughts and say, Lord, I really need to put your armor on.

[38 : 18] some of you are visual people. Lord, may truth be what goes around my waist.

Lord, may that which covers me be the righteousness that comes from you. Lord, on my feet, make me be gripped with the gospel so that the gospel shapes and forms how I look at problems and how I see people and where I get my confidence from.

Lord, remind me and help me to remember that I have been saved, that you are saving me, and that I will be glorified. And that out of that I can look at my weaknesses, I can confess my faults, I can acknowledge that I'm not all powerful and not always right because of the security of the helmet that you have provided me.

And Father, help me to pick up the shield and put it on my, I'm right-handed, my left arm. And Father, just grip me with the faith, with what the Bible teaches is true and what the Bible teaches is false.

And what it means to put my faith and trust in you, Jesus, and know that given that you did rise from the dead, that you conquered sin and you conquered death and all spiritual powers of evil are as nothing beside you, that that is my, that is what will protect me from the blows.

[40 : 04] And help me to take up your word, to read it today and to seek to understand it and to remember it. And help me to look at the world and understand that people are not my enemies.

They might think I'm their enemy and that's a thing I need to pray into, but they're not my enemy. That what I really need to deal with are the demonic forces that are around me and people that I know, ordinary people that I know who are under demonic influence, and attack and I am needed to bring the love of the gospel, the truth of the word and the power of prayer to pray for them and view them not as my enemies, not as my enemies, not as my enemies.

I mean, there is a possibility of peace with God that comes through Christ that is available to all. I invite you to stand. Just bow our heads in prayer.

Father, I've mentioned in particular those of us who struggle with different addictions or alcoholism. Father, I lift those of us who in particular struggle with that. I lift us before you in particular today and ask that you help us to so trust in you and so walk with you that we might have a mind which is quietened by the gospel, that we might believe the truth that comes from you, that you might give us ongoing victory against that addiction, that alcoholism.

Father, I lift those of us who struggle with that. I lift them, we lift them before you and ask for your healing power and authority to come to bear, that they might know that you walk with them, that your armor is available to them.

[42 : 06] And Father, for all of us in different ways and different times, Father, under the influence of demons, we ask that you would help us to be gripped by the gospel, that you would help us to

pick up the armor that is your armor, that is perfectly fit for each one of us and perfectly fit for us as a congregation and for other congregations together to stand, that you might help us to put it on, that you might deliver us from seeing people as our enemies and instead see them as people made in your image, that you would call us to love and seek their good and show us and help us to pray for them, especially in light of the demonic things that they themselves might not recognize that they deal with and struggle with, that you might make us individuals and small groups and men's and women's ministries and church other ministries and the congregation as whole, that you would make us a people of prayer, gripped by the gospel, a people of prayer, advancing on our knees for the good of the city, the good of the world, for the salvation of souls and the glory of your name.

And all God's people said, Amen.