

Ephesians 6 // Stand

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[0:00] But with Ephesians 6, I wanted to talk today about the armor of God, but not the armor of God, if that makes sense.

! And primarily what I really feel called to do is to talk about how we have to stand. Because we can talk about the armor of God all we want, but ultimately we have to ask ourselves, why are we wearing it?

What is it that the Lord has for us that we're supposed to be wearing in this time and in this place? So I'm going to go through that. Let me just start by reading verses 10 to 15. Finally, 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. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

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, stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

[1:22] I'm going to stop there. This is what the armor of God is for. It's to stand. To withstand.

To stand in the days that are evil. To stand. Now, I'm sure you've been taught in Sunday school. You may have even heard, you know, and you may even have pictures of soldiers with all of the armor on.

You have to ask yourself, why? Why would someone wear armor? Why would they guard themselves like this? It's because there is a very real and present darkness. There is an enemy. I'm going to read this again, and just think of that for a moment. Our need to stand. Finally, 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.

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.

[2:27] 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. Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as the shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

The church is meant to stand. We, as people who are a part of this church, are meant to stand together.

The enemy doesn't have to do much work if we're fractured and divided. I mean, really, think about it. He doesn't have to put much effort into it all if our shields are not linked together, if we're standing against this present darkness together.

One of the things that I've always appreciated about our Lord is that he didn't go around looking for evil. He didn't go around looking for demons or chasing them.

And there are some places where they focus so heavily on that, that it almost leads to some kind of weird form of worship, like an obsession. I actually knew of a place that tried to cast a demon out of a photocopier.

[3:44] Now, I've had my issues with photocopiers. I get it, but let's be realistic, right? There can be a place where we just look where it isn't there.

One of the things I notice about our Lord Jesus is that he just simply went about his job, his calling, his mission. And suddenly, evil happened everywhere.

He was confronting it, not because he was looking for it, but because when you put the Spirit of God in a place, the spirits react. When you have a situation where the Holy Spirit is making advances, things are going well, the enemy reacts.

So don't focus on him. Focus on your mission. Focus on unity. Keep your shields together. And let's guard one another with the Holy Spirit. There's a story about the Gitterini's demoniac.

And you're going to find this in a few different passages. Luke 8, I think, is where it is from where I'm talking about right now. And I stood there. Okay? There's the caves that are right over to your right, not far away from the road.

[4:55] And this guy was causing trouble, everybody that was coming down the road, to the point where it was, like, pretty scary. He'd come out, and he'd throw rocks. He would cut his own flesh. He would do all that. He was possessed.

And Jesus comes up, and you know what? The demoniac comes up to him, and he starts kind of threatening him, trying to intimidate Jesus. He said, we are a legion, which means thousands.

Do you think Jesus was threatened by this? No. No. Not for a second. In fact, in Matthew, I think the only word the Lord uses is go.

Get out. So focus on Jesus. Focus on him, because he was not affected at all. He was not intimidated by the darkness. He just simply kept on his mission.

So should we. And Jesus did exactly what Paul is encouraging us to do here in Ephesians, and that's stand. Stand against it.

[5:57] Verses 11 to 13. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

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. Now, we talked a little bit about this in the discipleship class earlier, and there are plenty of examples in history, in human history, of people who stood against unbelievable odds.

We can look at the Spartans, okay? This was 480 BC. 300 Spartans stood against the armies of Persia. Now, spoiler alert, they didn't win, but that's not the point.

They stood their ground long enough so that the Greeks could mount a defense, and the Greeks did win. So sometimes it's about standing for what is right, for what is good, even if it costs you your life.

Stand. The one thing I hate to burst anybody's bubble today, you're not getting out of this life alive, okay? I'm sorry if that's news, but you're not getting out of this life alive.

[7:20] We have to choose for what we stand for right now, because the days are evil. If you have Instagram, you know, you're probably just being waterboarded by updates on evil.

Any social media, and it's true. We don't have to look too far to find it. Another story, 720 AD. This is one of my favorites, okay?

Gangnam Charles Martel. His nickname was the Hammer. I mean, could you imagine that? Charles the Hammer Martel. He led an army, a very small outnumbered army, of the Frankish clans against the oncoming tide of Islam that made their way all the way through Europe, up through Spain, into France, and Charles Martel stood there and said, no, this is far enough.

They beat them. Charles Martel, the Hammer, beat the oncoming enemy. Europe would look very different right now had he not stood his ground.

Roman centurions, they were men chosen for their ability to stand in the face of fear and the face of battle and the horrors that come with it and not shrink back or run away.

[8:38] Their sandals were often studded so that they could actually have grip when they needed to stand their ground. They couldn't be pushed back or pushed around. I'm going to attempt to make a football reference here.

I actually did a little bit of studying, so I hope you'll just kind of bear with me here. You will never win a football game. I have to read my notes because I know what I'm talking about. You can never win a football game if your quarterback is constantly tackled.

Is that right? That's right, right? Yeah, I played rugby, okay? Rugby is not football. Anyway. Oftentimes, the entire weight of the game will rest on the shoulders of those a part of the offensive line.

That's accurate, right? Hernandez, come on. Right? Help me out here. I'm desperately trying to connect this to football somehow because I'm trying to learn this game.

Okay. I will move on. But when you think about it, the responsibility we have to stand in the critical hour that rests upon our shoulders.

[9:44] We don't always know when that critical hour will come upon us. This word stand means something. Something important. I think it means a few things and I want to go through some ideas.

One, you are going to get attacked. You will. You are going to be hit by things out of the blue. You have no idea where they're coming from.

It may be a spiritual thing. It may be something physical that is just weird, unexplained. You're going to get attacked. So stand. But don't stand alone.

Stand united with your brothers and sisters in Christ. I always have this moment of grief when I can see somebody going through something or I know they're going through something and I say, how can I help?

How can I pray? Oh, I'm fine. I got it. And then immediately I'm thinking like, well, that's not going to last. No, you don't got it. Anyway, sorry. That's a rabbit trail.

[10:47] The second thing is you must not be afraid in the middle of the attack. If you have a group of soldiers that are interlocked, their shields are interlocked and they're able to press on one step at a time, you're side by side with brothers and sisters and you're not necessarily taking ground, but the enemy is not moving through you.

And that's half the battle right there. Sometimes you feel like you can't catch a breath from all the darkness. You hear, you see, you read videos that may come across, seeing things that we as regular people were never meant to see in this life.

The darkness can feel pretty dark. Don't be afraid. Do not be afraid. That is one of the most reused phrases in the entire Bible.

There are hundreds and hundreds of iterations of some form of do not be afraid in the Bible. God is helping you.

He's going to help you to stand. Lean on Him to do so. The next thing, when you stand, don't have a thought of retreat.

[12:01] Dig in. Get into it. It's easy to run. Now, I will share a little bit of, I don't talk about this often, but a little bit of military background is that they teach you how to manage fear.

Okay? And you count through it. You let it in. You count to five. One one thousand, two one thousand, three one thousand, four one thousand, five one thousand, and then you get back to work.

People are depending upon you. Okay? But to ignore fear, to pretend it doesn't exist, that's just magical thinking. It's denial. Of course it exists. So you let it in, you give it its time, and then you get back to work.

Because that's where courage takes place. It's not in the absence of fear, it's in the face of it. And sometimes you need a brother or sister to remind you, stand firm.

We got this. Not just you. We got this together. God has given us a call and a mission, and Satan is going to do everything he possibly can to stop it.

[13:12] So stay united together, because a shield wall is useless without the unity. I kind of played a little bit of a word picture, and I wasn't going to do this, but I think I will anyways.

You know, imagine you got a shield wall in church, right? And you have these shields, they're all linked together, onward Christian soldiers, right? Remember the old song? And all of a sudden, somebody's like, who voted on the color of this shield?

Where is she? She never shows up to shield practice. Well, I don't know that he said this, and all of a sudden, and that shield wall is separated. That's not unity. That's opportunity for the enemy.

Stay on task. Link together. Be united for one another. Have one another's backs. The enemy is working hard, hard against us, especially in this day and age as we see it.

God gives us his spirit, strengthening and empowering us for the battle ahead. And he's not calling you to climb a mountain. He's not calling you to, you know, take 20 soldiers on your own.

[14:15] He's not calling you to be anybody but exactly who you are right now. What he's calling you to do is stand. That is what you're called to do. Stand. That's what the armor of God is for, is to stand.

And even when you've done all you can do, keep standing. Stand in the evil days. God gives us his spirit.

And you have a standing in Christ. You have a victory on the cross. Don't let the enemy scare you away. Don't let him do that. Romans chapter 5 verse 2 says, Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.

And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. You have a standing in grace. Not in works. Not in law. You have standing in grace.

That means you are enough. I don't think we get told that often enough in our lives. You are enough. Exactly as you sit here right now.

[15:23] So stand. God has given you a standing of grace and the devil wants to shake that from you. Well, no, we gotta be religious.

We gotta be super religious. We have to be the religious religious. No. I think that could be the enemy stealing from you. Because your standing is in grace.

Not by what we do. But what God has done for us. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 1. Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand.

We stand in the gospel. It's an announcement of what Jesus has done for us, for this world.

Salvation for all who will believe in him. He died.

He was buried. And he rose again on the third day. We stand in that reality, in that truth, and in that salvation. And when we understand the simplicity of the gospel, we can start understanding what it is that God has done for us.

[16:26] He's built a bridge that we cannot build on our own. Religion, good works, good will, whatever you want to think, it's not going to cut it. It is by what he has done on the cross that has allowed us to go home.

That's what Jesus has done for us. And we stand in that grace. Satan wants to move you from that standing. The pressure, the idea, well, let's just get more religious and get closer to God.

You don't need to get any closer to God than reading this thing here and praying through it. And don't make it a religious thing. Do it out of an, just an attitude of gratitude.

Sorry for that cheesy saying, but it's true. We were talking earlier as well about prayer. ACTS, Acts, right?

Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. It is essentially the breakdown of the Lord's prayer. The last nine, ten months or so have been a little stressful.

[17:28] Okay? And for those of you who don't know, there was just simply that, you know, I was brought into this church and there was a long process with immigration to make sure that it was all right and legal and everything was done properly.

I was never here illegally, not even for an hour. But the stress of it was unbelievable. And I found myself often saying, Lord, I believe that you called us down here.

I believe this, but help my unbelief because this is really stressful and I don't know what to do and I'm feeling freaked out right now. And fear started to settle in at some points.

And it was that last two weeks, you know, I remember Dell and Jamie was like that last two weeks where I was just like, here we go. And then I got this email that says approved. I'm like, I teared up because it wasn't that I didn't believe, it's that I needed to see it with my eyes and that was showing my lack of faith.

God didn't change, his plan didn't change, my grip on his plan changed because I was scared. And fear is a part of it. But like I said, do not fear.

[18:42] I do believe we should serve and honor the Lord in all areas of our life, but we also have to understand that our relationship with God is not about what we do for him, it's about what he has done for us.

You will never earn your way to heaven, you will never earn your way to good standing, you will never earn your way just by attending church, being a good Christian all your life, you earn it through grace because it's given to you.

You can stand in that freedom because you have a place to stand in the gospel. 2 Corinthians 1 verse 24, not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

You are a blood-bought believer. We celebrated that with communion just a moment ago. You stand in faith. How many times has the enemy tried to shake your belief?

I just shared one. And you know what? I think we need to start getting a little bit more sus and questioning about disbelief. People, you know, question faith all the time.

[19:50] They question belief all the time. When was the last time you questioned your unbelief? Take a good, long, hard look at it. Prove it. I'm feeling unbelief.

Prove it. Has God lost his faithfulness in delivering and promises in the last several thousand years? Has Jesus stopped caring for us? No.

Unbelief, start proving it. If we start looking at things like that, those moments and those seasons of unbelief might be a lot shorter and shorter as we go along. because a hopelessness can cross our heart when we start to think of those in our lives, loved ones, that don't believe.

Give them into Jesus' hands. Continue praying for them. I like to think that I am a believer because people were praying pretty hard.

Some people I didn't even know that well. And the Lord just brought circumstances together through youth outreach where I was confronted with the reality of Jesus. I had to say yes or no.

[20:56] And my yes was yes because of the love of others. It was the kindness of the Holy Spirit. You wouldn't be here this morning if you didn't believe on some level or at least you were a little curious.

But here's the problem. Sometimes we are in that place of Lord I believe, help my unbelief. Stand in faith. Like I said, call unbelief out on its stuff.

Okay? Call unbelief out. Prove it. Prove that God is unworthy. Prove that he's a liar. Prove that Jesus doesn't care for me.

Prove it, unbelief. And you start saying that and you start speaking that and you realize how silly it sounds because he's always faithful. He's always been there. His yes is amen. It's, wow, God is God.

unbelief, start doing your worst. Prove it. So stand in faith and by faith we stand together. Galatians 5 verse 1, for freedom Christ has set us free.

[22:07] Stand firm therefore and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery. Stand in freedom. There's a lot of things in this world which will promise freedom and really all it does is bring bondage.

I did a lot of work in a place called the downtown east side of Vancouver. It's the poorest postal code in Canada. It's where it's like meth central.

If you were to say meth! Meth has a city it is right down in the downtown east side. And the thing is, is you talk to a lot of people who are just starting their journey into substance abuse, let me put it that way.

It promises them heaven. It really does. Numb the pain. Check out for a while. Right? Tune out. All of that stuff.

You're promised this sense of relief. And some of the pain that people go through, that's a welcome relief. But here's the thing. If you actually spend time in those places, it looks a lot like what I imagine hell to be.

[23:11] It's not heaven. I had to stop a woman once who was scraping at the pavement so bad because she thought she could find some flakes that she could cook, that her fingers are bleeding.

That's not freedom. That's bondage. That's slavery. And we're called to stand in freedom. People will say, oh, you're a Christian.

Well, you got to obey all those rules. You got to do all this kind of stuff. You got to show up on Sundays and all that kind of thing. You know what? In Jesus, there is freedom. I don't come to church feeling in bondage.

I come to church thinking like, whew, Jesus is great and I'm going to get to hear all these other stories about how he's been great to other people. I can't get enough of that. There's freedom in Christ, but there's bondage in those other places that promise heaven.

So stand in our freedom. Philippians 1 verse 27, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or I'm absent, I may hear of you that you're standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

[24:22] Stand in unity. Stand together. God has given you a position of unity in the body of Christ. And the thing about unity is that it's not about fighting your own little kingdom or protecting your own little sense of privilege.

It's laying down your life for others. And if that's not the gospel, I'm not exactly sure where to go from here. because when we get closer to Jesus, we have unity.

Disunity happens when it's like, nope, it's my way or the highway. No, I'm going to complain about the color of the shield. I'm not going to hold it against the shield wall. Right?

No, stand in unity. Stand together. We're not told to achieve unity. It's not something we work towards or even strive towards. We're told to receive it.

it's a gift of the Holy Spirit. Dare I say it's a command of the Lord. Don't be disobedient and fight against it. It's a thousand little deaths sometimes we have to go through.

[25:26] I talked about that last week regarding marriage. From a man to love his wife like Christ loved the church, sometimes it's a thousand little deaths. And it's funny talking about shields because that aver, that word that describes helpmate, which God calls himself, the command that the woman is, is to be the help mate for Adam, is to be a shield for her husband, to protect him, to protect him in rooms where he is not sitting, which means no gossip, no tearing down.

So yes, men, you have to love your wives like Christ loved the church and die a thousand little deaths, put her needs and wants above yours. But women, if you're not protecting your man, if you're tearing him down with other people, right, you're not doing your job.

Submission isn't about inequality. We both have missions to do and ultimately is to protect one another. If you took that and put it in the face of the church, we all have different missions in order to protect and guard unity.

When you have people that don't do that, the enemy is just going, this is easy. unity. Boys, you can sit this one out, I got this one. Unity is important.

We have to protect it because we have to receive it. Philippians 4.1, Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

[26:57] Stand in the Lord. Keep a God focused life. Some of us don't do that. Some of us can have a non-God focused life. We come to church, but we have a social focus.

We have a kingdom mindset focus. We have something else, you know, and it comes down to have a focus of Jesus in your life. Just keep pressing on towards him. Father, what do you want to do today? Lord, how can I love these people?

Lord, what can I do so that people see more of you and less of me? This is having a God focused life. Stand fast in the Lord. Love one another in him.

Colossians 4 verse 12. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus greets you always struggling on your behalf in his prayers that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

Stand in his will. The will of God in your life, your gifts, your destiny, all the ways the Holy Spirit has worked in and around you fulfill who you are.

[28:02] That's what God wants to live and walk in. all that he's given you, all that he's put in your hands, walk with it. Take some risks and walk with it. I've said before a million times and I'll say it again, the

failure is not a person, it's an event, that's it.

It's something that happens. It's not who you are, it's not who I am, it's just an event which means you can move on and do something else. When I'm disciplining someone or I'm raising someone up and ministering my first thing I usually say to them is like, try, risk and if you blow it, try something different.

Don't give up. Do not fear, just keep moving forward. Stand in the will of God. I'd be grateful right now if this message was making some of you angry.

Not at me, let me just put that out there, but angry at the devil. That maybe he's stolen some things from you because you've been so focused on all of these other directions.

I want you to get righteously angry at him. Enough is enough, we say to him. Enough. I'm going to stand.

[29:18] Even if I don't know how, even if I don't know what to do, even if I don't know what to say, even if I think I'm too young or too old, none of that matters. We stand together as a shield wall and we protect and we guard.

one another and all those around. But our attitude should be a lot like Jesus because he could stand strong.

John 14, 30, I will no longer talk much with you for the ruler of this world is coming and he has no claim on me. Powerful words of Jesus.

He has no claim on me. A nice way of saying who cares? who cares? Who cares if evil is showing itself in this world like we've never seen before in ways we just shrink back from?

Who cares if it all seems to be too much? When you're with Jesus, he wasn't worried, therefore we shouldn't be worried either. Look at it straight in the eye and just say you have no hold on me.

[30:25] But here's the catch. if there's something in our life that is giving hold or a beachhead or in some way gives the devil access, cut it off.

Get rid of it. You know? Mari and I talked a bit about this lately just about friends. We were talking about friends the other day. You know, and just how there are some friends that are positive, they're nutritious, you know, in that sense that we build each other and it doesn't matter how long since we've talked, it doesn't matter how much geography in between, there's just a building up that can come from a good, good, solid friendship.

We can make them in here, we can make them in church to become good friends. And you know what? You probably know exactly what I mean when there's some people when it's just they're not good friends.

If you stop texting them, they won't text back. If you stop calling, they won't call back. Maybe they talk about you're behind your back a thousand ways to Sunday and it's like, well, that's a safety issue.

So just consider that. If there are things where the enemy has a foothold in your life, cut them loose. Because Jesus' attitude is, so what?

[31:44] He has no hold on me, so don't let the devil have a hold on you. I have to analyze this in my life all the time. because it doesn't have to be something huge.

It could be a small little attitude that's just sideways. You know? Just this little thought, little thing that just whittles it way in there. It doesn't have to be anything huge.

It can be something actually kind of small, but it grows. And finally, before I close, stand, but don't stand alone. I said this before. there may be rare occasions where you have to stand against something that nobody else knows about.

It's a battle for you, your heart, your spirit, something that you have to go through. I respect that. And that happens. But that's not all the time.

Don't be that person that says, I'm good. I got this. As I said before, you don't. I've had people so confidently say, I'll be fine.

[32:47] It's like, no, you won't. You know, life has a way of kicking you in the teeth sometimes, and you need each other. We need one another. Truly need one another.

So stand firm, but don't stand alone. Ancient warfare, they had this way of locking together, like we talked about, making a wall, the shields coming together.

And it was something powerful, it was something strong, but it had to work together, otherwise it didn't work. Stand with one another. You need other people's help, and they need yours.

You may come to church sometimes and think, well, you know, I don't feel bad, I feel pretty joyful, everything's good. Great! I'm not saying things have to be bad, but you know what?

When you're feeling that way, look around and start praying for people and think, who can I pray for? Right? If you're feeling on top of the world, you're blessed you, this is awesome, right? I love those moments.

[33:48] So use that and impart joy and hope, maybe even faith to someone else. Look around and see who else maybe needs that help out of the valley a bit, because it might be your turn someday and you'll need them.

That's what being together is about. Stand in grace, in the gospel, in courage, in faith, in freedom, in unity and in the Lord and stand in his will, because we cannot do this alone.

Let's pray. Thank you.