

Spiritual Warfare - Wrecked People

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[0 : 0 0] you're listening to the sermon podcast of grace reforms church in spring hill tennessee to learn more about us visit our website at grace.reformed.org and now today's sermon you see that we have quite a few visitors today i just want to welcome you again and thank you if you're with us turn with us to ephesians chapter six we are finishing a series today on spiritual warfare and the armor of god taught to us through ephesians chapter six and then in two weeks we'll begin first peter which i'm extremely excited about we're going to work verse through verse and learn from what peter has to teach the church to be encouraged strengthened and instructed today is going to be a little bit different it's going to be more of an overview of the entire section kind of a recap of what we've learned so far and with some exhortation to our church so before we do that i want to go ahead and just begin by reading from paul so we have all that he has said in our mind and then we'll spend some time thinking through the application that paul has for us today for our hearts and our faith in our homes this is ephesians 6 verse 10 it says finally be strong in the lord and in the strength of his might and put on the whole armor of god that you might be able to stand against the schemes of the devil for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers and against the authorities and against the cosmic powers over this present darkness and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places therefore take up the whole armor of god that you might be able to stand to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm 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 and the sword of the spirit which is the word of god praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplication to that end keep alert 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 might declare it boldly as i ought to speak this is the word of the lord last week i had someone reach out to me through social media asking for some clarification about our church and our ministries in one of the statements they said that as they were looking into our ministry that they had received a warning about our church and about our ministries and the warning was that those who come to our church or our church in other words attracts people who i quote whose lives are a train wreck that was the warning of why they should not visit or participate and to some that might somewhat sound like a negative reputation and i can see why definitely can see why you know if there was a notorious restaurant in spring hill that was famous for drug dealers and traffickers and criminals it was notorious that they ate there i'm not sure that i would take my family there today for lunch probably would avoid there for the sake of our safety but by nature a church is supposed to be a rescue mission that's who we're supposed to be it's what

we're supposed to be we truly believe we are the disciples of christ of of our lord and savior the messiah and so we use the word savior because that's what he's done he saved us he's not our good moral teacher he's our savior and i love what the song says saved a wretch like me wretch is a shortened version of train wreck turn with me to matthew chapter 9 real quick i want to read you some of these words from jesus he's talking to his disciples which is you're seeing as our master as he's walking amongst the world their righteous and holy king didn't walk on another road separate from who they were the way in which he even entered into this world which we're going to celebrate here soon jesus entered in a very lowly state to be among us but listen to this in matthew chapter 9 in verse 11 and when the pharisees saw this they said to his disciples why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners but when he had heard it he said those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick go and learn what this means i desire mercy and not sacrifices for i came not to call the righteous but sinners two other times luke will make this reference that jesus was the friend of tax collectors and sinners twice in luke matthew 11 19 it says this the son of man came eating and drinking and they say look at him a glutton and a drunkard a friend of tax collectors and sinners yet wisdom is justified by her deeds after receiving this accusation in matthew 11 jump down to verse 28 i want you to hear how jesus responds he says this come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and i will give you rest so this is just after the accusation of who it is that's drawing to jesus take my yoke upon you and learn from me for i am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light so those who are under the self-righteous yoke of the pharisees could never find real rest from their labor because the requirements kept moving every time that they thought they were about to hear the title of righteous a new requirement would be put on them and that's the burden that jesus is talking about and so those who had wrecked their lives who knew they were never going to stand up to the righteousness of the pharisees jesus calls himself calls them to himself and what does he say to them does he yell repent no he says i'm meek and lowly if you come to me i'm going to give you rest to come to jesus you have to repent but it's not the repentance that brings the mercy it's his mercy that draws your repentance these people know what it means to be stuck as a slave to be trapped and they know that there's really only one way out and that's jesus and that's what intrigued them jesus doesn't draw them near with fear of the rapture or the end of days what is interesting is he draws them near with his demeanor approachable full of love and mercy mind you he is the judge and he does bring wrath but who does that wrath often get aimed at

it's not the sinners it's the self-righteous he says i am a gentle and loving savior to those who are wicked why because the wicked know they have nothing to offer the king of glory he often talks like to the woman at the well or to the prostitute caught he talks to these people he says you have tried to find rest through money in sexuality and stealing and other gods but all you have done is enslave yourself into further pain and they're nodding their head yes yes that's right it resonated with them and then he says i can give you the water the living water john right what did you say the water that will never cause you to thirst again what does the woman at the well say give me that water i want that and i will wipe your conscience clean so you're you're going to receive satisfaction from me your conscience which barks at you of your past will be cleansed and covered your life will have a new purpose and a new meaning your future will be with me in my home with your brothers and sisters you could see why sinners would want to sit down and eat and drink with jesus please tell me more please tell me please tell me more you will be perfect as i am perfect you will be set free from fear and pain there is no death there is no evil do you believe this is yours if you believe and pray tell me why wouldn't a wrecked sinner want that message at no point does jesus affirm their sin ever never does he tell them that it's okay he promises to deliver them from the sin sometimes when people hear me speak this way they get nervous john that grace is a little too radical well we're talking about jesus here not me these are red letters but they're also doesn't matter if it's in the word of god it's it's all true what is wonderful about what christ does in his meek and gentle and patient spirit with sinners he points to the cross and says because of what i do on the cross you can have rest you can be set free what is interesting about wrecked people is the way that they now see life have you ever talked to somebody who's destroyed their life or understands their life to be of a wreck they're very humble and quiet they don't often want to talk about themselves but they're very quick to tell you about jesus more than happy they don't really want to talk about their past really it's not something they boast of they just want to help you see jesus more they have no righteousness and might i say we all have no righteousness but they definitely have no righteousness of their own to claim but they will love to tell you the joy of the righteousness they do have it's called being clothed in righteousness and they know by experience that every person they meet is one decision away from wrecking their life one the works of satan are far more powerful and they can tell you of its power because the flesh cannot discipline itself enough to outpace the temptation of satan so the enemy we face has thousands of years often we don't think about this but see he started tempting eve in the garden has been practicing ever since

oftentimes we don't realize why god kept the mystery of the gospel hidden in in parts because humans weren't the only ones paying attention to the victory lap that's about to come and so as it's been fully revealed then we have the hope of this i know that sometimes people get very uncomfortable when i talk about sinners considering themselves to be a wretch but this is what you are i just just consider for a moment the most impactful powerful people that we love to sing and quote and and read the enemy destroyed their life and jesus picked them back up and they became the most prominent teachers david solomon peter we live amongst people who understand their lives to be of no value in and of themselves this is why paul writes to timothy write this down first timothy chapter 1 verse 15 he says this saying is trustworthy which means it's going to sound off but you need to trust me on this you need to trust me this is a trustworthy saying and deserving of full acceptance not partially except everything that i'm about to tell you that christ jesus came into the world to suffer to save sinners of whom pay attention to the tense i am present tense the foremost he is saving me who i am the greatest sinner that i know this is the position that god has placed us in we are wretches that are now called sons of god and it's all because of his grace not because of our righteousness so yes i loved wrecked people because jesus came to save them of who i am i have a connection to you when people show up and they're like john my life is a mess and they're about to shock me with whatever's about to come out of their mouth thinking like oh i can't believe that happened it doesn't shock me and then when they ask why aren't you shocked i said well because i've read the bible and there's nothing that you can do that god cannot save and there is no slavery that you are in that god cannot rescue you from and so let's get to work so every day the way i view my life is i stand condemned by the law of how i have not loved and served my god as i should it's shameful at times i don't even need to leave my bed before i get out and my feet hit the floor that i'm already a wreck inside my heart and my mind my mind betrays me my heart betrays me and if you're all willing to be vulnerable you know this is true of you how will we ever find the joy and the confidence to stand up against the evil that enslaves our world if we are partakers of it i find comfort in knowing that those who wrote the new testament as i already had mentioned are men who speak from this perspective sometimes we forget about timelines but peter had only just denied jesus a few days before he stood up on the day of pentecost and proclaimed to 3 000 people that were saved can you imagine most likely there could have been people who saw him deny the faith and now was proclaiming the gospel you think peter got up there with pride we have been following jesus faithfully for three years you say yeah no i'm like you and if it wasn't for his mercy

who would i be this is why he tells people who are wrecked people who understand their frailty and their weakness he says ephesians 6 10 stand where find your strength where he does not point to your performance he does not point to your abilities he says finally be strong in the lord and the strength of his might we learn to look to christ which is so hard to do but he is to be our armor of our protection all of who his life is this is why every part of the armor our salvation our righteousness truth faith all of it is our protection because there is a legitimate war just write this verse down i think this is helpful just contemplating this this week and really meditating on this verse thinking through how it applies to all of scripture this is 1st john 3 8 1st john 3 8 it says this whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil for the devil has been sinning from the beginning the reason the son of god appeared was to destroy the works of the devil who destroys the works of the devil jesus he does this is good news y'all which means whatever we're enslaved in he is destroying this is really good news to sinners it's not great news to the righteous but to us who see ourselves in desperate need of him this is wonderful news and how is it that jesus actually did he actually accomplish what john says he came here to do this is hebrews chapter 2 look at verses 14 and 15 hebrews 2 or write it down in your notes it says this since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he received 14 he himself likewise partook of the same thing that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil just let that ruminate for a moment yeah he can kill people and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to long lifelong slavery he when he rose from the grave he delivered us from this this is wonderful news wonderful news but the question then is why do we still struggle if he's delivered us from this well what's happening this is the war that paul is speaking of you see christ won the war but there's a battle that still remains and that battle is the advancement of what christ has done to a world that is still enslaved to another god so paul is writing to the churches and speaking of the victory of what christ has done but as you advance this message it will be opposed because you're advancing it to a people who are enslaved they're not neutral they're not somewhat good somewhat bad the way in which it's being described is that you are advancing a message to deliver people from slavery and the owner of the slaves does not want to let them go if you were paying attention to even to the mighty fortress the song that we were singing he was talking about this advancement he might even kill your body but he cannot touch your hope this is in 2nd corinthians chapter 10 if you want to write it down 2nd corinthians chapter 10 in verse 4 he says for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but of divine power to destroy strongholds

[20 : 15] we destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of god and take every thought captive to obey christ and so this does become a word war we're fighting for the truth this is why we will suffer and most likely grow in our suffering in the coming years in the united states because the moment that you project the truth and understand its nature you're going to be attacked almost every new testament epistle warns you about the suffering for the sake of the gospel so it's hard for us because i think we're so involved in the world it's hard for us to see that the world is under a massive plague their minds i mean i think covid was a great example of how you can easily be manipulated and yet and yet we have been manipulated on levels that we are unwilling to see because we as christians we tend to suppress the truth it floors me how often we as american christians are surprised at the debauchery of americans i cannot believe i'm like well i can because the bible says that if you're not a christian this is how you act i mean right this if you're hearing second corinthians chapter 10 just go to chapter 4 start starting to read your bible in all areas and not just in the areas well this will help me become a better whatever understand the circumstances that you live in second corinthians chapter 4 verse 4 in their case the god little g-o-d of this world referencing satan has blinded the minds of the unbeliever to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of christ who is the image of god so if he's blinding them you have to understand what the gospel is the gospel is good news to people who are bad and if you're blind to your circumstance it's an offense for someone to say wait a minute you think i need that you're assuming there's something wrong with me and you're assuming that that person has the right to judge me this is why paul says you're gonna have to end up suffering for this message but the only way that their eyes go from blind he's blinded their eyes is if we use the arguments of the glory of christ to destroy the stronghold that holds them down teaching people morality cannot open their eyes but teaching people they're a sinner in need of the gospel is divine power so we don't need more of a moral country we need christians who are willing to do what they've been called to do and that is live for christ and not this world and that is live for christ when i think about going back to this statement of our church attracts people who have wrecked lives and thinking about how it is that jesus had compassion on those people i think in today's world i have experienced just through our own church and through preaching and teaching for many years now there are two types of people who deal with wrecked lives this is how they approach them this is how they perceive them first one is there's the self-righteous person and the second one is what i call those who seek worldly acceptance the self-righteous when they're thinking about their relationship to god and those of erect life their own

good little deeds blind themselves and refuse to examine the truly the true nature of our heart within every heart there is a room that resides evil that would terrify everyone in this room we know this many of you have been in this building singing songs to your god and have contemplated evil that we could not record with a video camera for it would not be inappropriate and if you're appalled by what i'm saying that's your righteousness blocking you from seeing yourself our hearts are a factory that just produces sin on levels that there is no way i would ever want to describe i think the apostles doing a sufficient job this is why paul cries out with frustration in romans chapter seven oh wretched man who i am not was who i am who will save me from this body of death he doesn't point to discipline or faithfulness he says praise me to jesus who will free me from this body of death the self-righteous don't want to hear of god's grace and mercy because they are blinded to their sin they think well because i have performed or have not done these things therefore i'm an acceptable person and it's an offense to me when you approach me and tell me that i am not a good person i mean you probably should pay attention to jesus words when he says there is none good no not one it's a good word to remember you see the sinner those who are wrecked can only survive if the volume of the gospel is at a ten covering the noise of the wickedness of their heart how will i ever lift my eyes to the father and ask for mercy and grace and ask for wisdom and strength how am i to do this and the volume of the gospel comes in and says because you're my chosen child and i have covered you with my grace that's how you sinner can come to be in my presence with boldness see the self righteous end up playing on the wrong team unfortunately because what they end up doing is they start shooting their brothers and sisters pointing to how well i have performed and look how well you have failed and you rely too much on god's grace i don't it's not possible to rely too much on do you know what paul says in colossians chapter two verse one how you have begun this relationship with jesus is how you continue so did you begin it in some kind of transaction he did his part you did your part you were dead in your trespasses and sins he made you alive now you walk by faith trusting in that goodness the self righteous says he brought me to life and look how well i have done along the way now pastor please give me something to stroke my ego pastor give me some discipline that i might use to prove to those around me and to prove to myself that i am worthy of the name by which i have received i can't do it because there's no power there and you know what's crazy and it's offensive but paul describes the self-righteous person as the weaker brother that's crazy number two there's a second group of people who seek worldly acceptance it's on the other side of this this is happening more and more in broader christianity in america what jesus died for on

the cross is now being celebrated as if it's accepted by god what i mean by that is clear commands in scripture about who we are and how we are to be married and how we are to see ourselves as the image bearers of god is now saying no those are not correct those words are confusing that which jesus died for and shed his blood for we're going to go ahead and accept them and love them and affirm them what happens in these particular circumstances that we are more concerned about the spiritual blind enslaved sinners opinion and how they will be accepted in our church than we are liberating them with the pure beautiful beautiful and joyous gospel i think it was hard for me i our culture through the enslavement of satan has convinced many christians that slavery to satan is actually a beautiful and loving act i'll never call slavery beautiful and loving it's not love god describes for us the picture of love and love is to lay your life down and to die for the benefit of the other and jesus cries out in pain receiving the wrath of the father for the sin that we are now celebrating calling it love it's a mockery to god and so i think there's a problem on either side there's the self-righteous who look at the wrecked and they scold them and then there's these over here who want the acceptance of the world and they look at those who have wrecked their life and they celebrate them why would you celebrate someone who's enslaved and leave them there could you imagine during the civil war we won and instead of actually freeing them we just applaud them we're so thankful that you are a slave let's celebrate it no one would do that but we do for people who have been enslaved into their bodies why our church has changed the gospel and now promoting sin is sacred because our adversary is that good that's why he has turned the message of god's divine power into a yoke of slavery and if we are not being washed in the word renewing our minds and growing in the knowledge of christ we too will fall on either the righteous or the acceptance and we will stop being a wretch who's in need of god's grace delivering other wretches so go back with me if you would to chapter six of ephesians as we have some final concluding thoughts here on this section so then what is the point of this passage and therefore what is the point of our lives in reference to this passage look at verse 18 ephesians 6:18 praying at all times in the spirit with all prayer and supplication to that end keep alert with all perseverance making supplication for all saints and also for me that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly and to proclaim the mystery of

the gospel for which i am an ambassador in chains that i declare it boldly as i ought to speak even paul probably the most bold confident christian there was grace says i need you to pray that i continue to not buckle under the weight of the war that i don't become afraid of what might happen to me so paul i think an application here wants us to keep our eyes focused on the work we are involved in our entire lives are to be about the message of hope we believe it we walk in light of it we share it and ultimately we die for it that's the part that's hard what's interesting is i guess if someone in your mind and logically i've done this before yeah i guess if i'm thrown into a prison i got a gun put to my head i guess i'll i'll die for it that's the logic but jesus calls us to die for it every day and every decision that we make we're thinking when i get to the final moment and i will suffer then i'll die for it but he's like no i want you to lay your life down now your life is of no value if you're dead i'd rather you lay your life down now and it's a value now this is why first or second peter he says that if you're not producing the fruits of the spirit you're you're ineffective and unfruitful not in saving yourself but you're ineffective and unfruitful in the advancement of the gospel to the church and to one another so let me ask you this just to help us process how does this work what brought you hope this week what got you motivated and up out of the bed and thinking about life what allowed you to find this sense of like calmness and rest if it wasn't the freedom found in the gospel and the hope of the future that you have with him you're about to experience a crisis of faith why because you have been duped by the evil one to find rest in something other than jesus these people who are abandoning the faith or deconstructing when you listen to the faith that they're destructing from that is not the faith that i see of the bible it's a false gospel when we seek the world instead of this kingdom it doesn't feel wrong why because everyone's doing it it's easy to do what everyone else is doing because we have a herd mentality even though we like to be unique we're uniquely still a herd preaching the gospel becomes so foreign because you're saying you can't find what you're looking for here but it can be found first john 2 15 this is why this verse now makes sense do not love the world or the things that are in the world if anyone loves the world the love of the father is not in him okay that makes sense why because what the world loves is the opposite because it's under the influence of the god of this world verse 16 for all that is in the world the desires of the flesh the desires of the eyes and the pride of life is not from the father but it's from the world the highlight this verse verse 17 and the world is passing away along with its desires but whoever does the will of god abides forever that's the part that's the lie he convinces you to love affectionately give and spend your energy for things that will not last so at any moment this week if your hope and your joy if your comfort and rest was in something here you believed the lie and at any moment you found your hope in

your bank account or in your health or in your job or it doesn't matter your government john's like they pass away but the hope of the gospel and the relationship that we have with christ does not pass away i think what's hard about what i'm presenting and i know this there's really two options we want there so badly to be a third option john can there not be a third option there is not this isn't like a game like this is the scary game and this is the fun game we can't switch shows on our favorite network we can't turn to the hallmark channel every time we're discouraged the nightmare that we want to wake up from doesn't seem to happen you you were like me i know you were when you were a kid and you knew something creepy was coming into your room what was the first thing you did somehow psychologically that made all the danger go away i'm cloaked in the sheet but we do pull the sheet up over our head do you know what it's called the righteousness of christ it's called the armor of god the thing is our eyes are open to the danger that's why we cover ourselves but what you're describing is john don't talk this way it messes with my life i like the way my life is but what you're describing it sounds scary and demonic and realms i don't care about that stuff just tell me that jesus loves me he's gonna make everything okay and then i get to be with him in heaven all the rest of it i don't need it messes with my life i'm not messing with your life he's like you aren't wrestling with the problems of your flesh you're wrestling with the world that is far more powerful and dangerous ignoring it doesn't make it go away unfortunately if you've lived your life and you're aware of the dangers of it this is why peter calls us to not be intoxicated with it this is the last verse i'm going to read for you this morning is really is an introduction to our series and peter just turn with me to first peter chapter one and then we'll finish our time this morning first peter chapter one in verse 13 he says therefore preparing your minds for action and being sober minded what's the opposite of sober intoxicated this is why he says paul says that we are to not be drunk with wine but we are to be what filled with the spirit that means sober minded means you're alert you're aware you can see if you are consuming the world's lies and you believe them and you endorse them and you practice them then you are not sober minded so he says therefore preparing your minds for action which means there's going to be a war we're going to be engaging in this word war and being sober minded set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of jesus christ i'm going to tell you this right now there's a lot of fear mongering going on with the war in israel there's a lot of things being said and if you're like oh man the world's coming to an end it's been coming to an end since paul wrote first and second thessalonians when john wrote revelation he's like yeah end of times is here and it's been here for 2 000 years every time we go into a war some guy gets super smart like 88 reasons why god's returning in 1988 he's returning when we don't know but

[40 : 28] the hope is that he's returning where does he say set your hope on the war that is about to break out no he's like set your hope on the on the grace that the not just some of your hope fully which means you don't think about your health this is so hard listen for those of you that know me well preaching is the great act the greatest act of hypocrisy on the planet do you know this i have to then try and practice what i preach do you know i like to preach about grace a lot because i often struggle to practice what i preach i'm about to tell you something that i struggle with right set your hope fully on the grace that is to come which means is that you do not have to hold tightly onto anything in this world and it can be spent and used for his kingdom so you have two options you can either believe the word of god and have real joy and rest in in a world where people are burying their children where people are being abducted and aborted it's not it's it's it's a mess this world is a mess and jesus has been fighting the one who caused the mess back in the garden he's still causing the mess today and the hope that it is not well we hope we win the hope is we win keep your eyes on that do not allow him to show you the beauty of this world which he has tainted and distract you of thinking that you can find rest here you cannot find rest here this is why jesus says come to me and you will find rest so for those of us who feel this draw typically it's the people who have loss their lives have been turned upside down something's been taken from them they look at their life and there's nothing more to find joy in here these people this verse becomes their life but for those of us who still have something to live for we will be here to catch you when everything crumbles because it will everyone dies everyone suffers the world does not function like it's supposed to people who want to have children cannot people who have them lose them it's not a safe place to live but it is a place that god has purpose and his purpose is that we his children take the rest of the message of christ and we deliver it to those who are hopeless and we bring them into this house and we protect them for the rest of their life now that sounds like a life worth living for let's pray father we're so thankful that you have not called the righteous today for i am not righteous father you you have not called those who are strong for i am weak lord you have called those who are your own and then you fill us with your love and your strength and so father we stand in the strength of you today give us the hope hope a sure hope that we might encourage each other and then take this message to the world encourage them as well in christ's name amen thanks for listening to the sermon podcast of grace reformed church in spring hill tennessee where everyone is in equal need of grace to plan a visit or to learn more about us visit our website at grace reformed org you