

# Before the Battle Begins

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 08 June 2025

Preacher: Dr. Wes Feltner

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Who's ready for a new series?

What if it's really bad? What if it's really bad? Like, what if you're at the end of the series and like, I would have taken my applause back? All right? No. Anyways, go back to, or turn to Ephesians chapter 6.

Ephesians chapter 6 is where our new summer series is going to be all summer long. We're going to be working our way through a series called The Armor of God.

And there really has been a lot of kind of pre-series excitement for this, which I'm grateful for. I think there's just a lot of you that you realize the reality of being in a battle every day.

[ 1 : 33 ] And to have the encouragement of God's Word, to know that you have been equipped for that battle with the armor of God. And so what I'm going to do tonight, and I really think this is probably, it's hard to say, but maybe the most important, like week one's the most important of any week in this series.

Because what I want to do is kind of introduce this passage and kind of lay down the context of what's going on. That does mean it's going to be a little bit more teaching.

There will be a lot of information, but you can go online and kind of re-watch it and jot notes down and all of that. That's because there's no way I can slow down. It's already going to be two hours. So, but I say it's so important because, you know, one of the things that I get a lot is, you know, sometimes people will say, like, you take a very familiar passage and I just see it in a whole new light.

Well, really what's happening there is you're understanding the context. What a lot of people don't understand when they're studying the Word of God is the context. They read it and they understand it at a pretty surface level, but when you really understand the full context of something, it comes alive.

[ 2 : 49 ] And so tonight what I'm trying to do is just lay down that kind of introduction foundation of the context of what's happening in this passage around the armor of God.

And so let's dive in because we do have a lot of ground to cover. And so let's look at just the first few verses of this section of Scripture. And I'll invite you to please stand as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Paul here is writing to a church in Ephesus and he writes these words. 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 rulers, against authorities, against 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.

[ 4 : 07 ] This is God's Word. Let's pray together. Father, as we begin this series, we ask your blessing on this. Teach us. Teach us. Teach us. Teach us.

From your Word, what it means to take up the whole armor that you have provided for us. Help us tonight understand even just the beginnings of what this battle is all about.

We give you the glory for everything you teach us tonight. And we just ask God that your Spirit would come and guide us into truth. And we pray it in Jesus' name.

And God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. Amen. Ishmael was 17 years old when he arrived in New York. He was immediately enrolled in high school where he immediately began to struggle with relating to all of the other problems that most American teenagers are

dealing with.

Things like, what should I wear? And how do I look? And what music should I download? And why is my cell phone so slow? Those kinds of things he didn't relate to at all.

[ 5 : 16 ] And that's because Ishmael's childhood was very different than most American teenagers. He grew up in Sierra Leone. And he grew up there during the 90s when the country was being ripped to shreds by civil war.

In fact, at a very young age, Ishmael was forced to be a soldier. He had seen things that children should not be forced to see.

He had done things that children should not be forced to do. And by age 16, having witnessed his entire family killed, Ishmael was all alone.

That's when a woman from America by the name of Laura Sims adopted him and brought him to New York. And at first, Ishmael struggled to fit in, but eventually he began to make some new friends.

But he was always cautious to never talk about his past. One day, Ishmael was invited by a group of friends to spend a weekend playing paintball.

[ 6 : 26 ] He'd never heard of paintball. He didn't know what paintball even was. But his friends convinced him that it would be fun, and so he decided he'd go.

They arrived at the facility on a Friday night. Their plans were to begin playing Saturday morning. So he spent his Friday evening charting out the field and putting together his strategy.

Come Saturday, Ishmael won every single game. I don't even think he got shot one time. He finally set out to give everybody else a chance.

Afterwards, they asked him, Are you sure you've never played paintball before? And Ishmael just smiled. Upon reflecting on that experience, Ishmael said, I learned something very, very important that day.

He said, I learned, quote, There's a big difference between pretending to be at war and actually being in one.

[ 7 : 37 ] That's true, isn't it? It's true. It's true in a lot of different... I mean, it's one thing to kind of play house. It's another thing to actually raise a family.

It's one thing to play a video game, a racing game. It's a totally different thing to be in a real race car. It's one thing to excel at school.

It's another thing to have to take all that knowledge and put it into practice in the real world. It's one thing to sit around and punch bags. It's another thing to actually get in the ring and fight.

Faith family, listen to me tonight. There are a lot of Christians who seem to pretend they are at war having no idea the real war you're actually in.

This is not pretend. This is real. And that is exactly what Paul addresses to these Christians and to us here in Ephesians chapter 6.

[ 8 : 40 ] This passage is so well known for being a passage about spiritual warfare. About teaching the Christian the war that they are in.

And listen, Paul uses some very intense language in this passage. Language like be strong and put on the full armor and be cautious of the schemes of the enemy and flaming arrows and how we wrestle, we fight with these things.

This is very different than illustrations Paul uses in other parts of the New Testament like a farmer working in a field or an athlete that's working and training for a competition.

Paul here wants the Christian and if you're here tonight and you're a follower of Jesus, it applies to you. Paul wants you to know you are a soldier at war.

And it is not pretend. It is something we must contend. Now some of you don't like this kind of language. This is not imagery that you are very comfortable with.

[ 9 : 51 ] Some of you do not like conflict. You avoid conflict at all costs. Some of you even hate the idea of war. Some of you may even consider yourself a Christian pacifist.

Quick to quote Jesus' words in the Beatitudes. Hey, blessed are the peacemakers. I mean, after all, aren't Christians supposed to bring peace to the world?

And my answer to that would be yes. But that misses the entire point of what Paul was talking about in Ephesians 6. Notice it here on the screen. Listen, faith family, Paul is not talking about a war that we take to the world.

He's talking about a war that has come to us. We are to take peace into the world. Blessed are the peacemakers. But that's not what Paul's talking about.

He's saying, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, a war has come to you. And you had better be equipped.

[10:53] You had better be ready for this fight. Hence the command, stand firm and be strong. Listen, whether you like it or not, whether you even see it with your own eyes or not, ever since Genesis 3, we have been in a spiritual war.

And this imagery of warfare, this imagery of battle is something that runs throughout the biblical narrative. For example, in Isaiah 42, the Lord Himself is described as a mighty man.

A man of war who stirs up his zeal. Psalm 35, verse 1 says, Contend, O Lord, with those who contend with me.

Fight against those who fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler and rise up for my help. In Psalm 18, 28, and 59, Christians are even referred to as God's soldiers, His servants, His troops.

You come to the New Testament and Jude uses language like this in Jude 3. Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you to appeal to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

[12:17] Peter, in that well-known verse, chapter 5, verse 8, speaks of you having an adversary, the devil, that roars around like a lion seeking people to devour.

And then there's Revelation 12. Really, in this apocalyptic imagery, gives us the full picture of the spiritual warfare that Paul talks about in Ephesians 6.

Here's the imagery that he uses. Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make what? War. You've already fallen asleep.

Come on. War on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

My point here at the very beginning is to say the entire biblical narrative gives us this imagery of a battle, of a war that we are in, and we must come to grips with that reality.

[13:20] It doesn't do you any good to pretend. You must accept this reality as a follower of Jesus Christ and prepare yourself for battle.

The good news is, Faith Family, and this is really good news, are you ready? God hasn't left us unequipped. He hasn't left us to defend for ourselves, and over the next few weeks, we're going to look at each and every aspect of this armor that God has given us so that, and this is why I hope that you'll be, even if you miss a week, you'll be engaged online, be here as often as you can, is because my hope really is by the end of these next few weeks, you will be strong in the Lord.

Wouldn't that be a good thing? Anybody weak tonight? Like, wouldn't it be good to kind of be strong in the Lord? And to feel like you're standing firm in the midst of the battle.

Well, that's what we're going after, and so tonight, I'm simply going to answer three questions by way of introduction. These three questions really should be three sermons. I don't know why I do this this way.

It really should be three sermons, but it's going to be one, and we're going to answer three questions, and here's what they are if you're taking notes. Very simple. One, who is the battle with? Two, what does the enemy want?

[14:45] And three, how is the victory won? Simple enough? You with me? Say yes. Who's the battle with? What does the enemy want? And how is the victory won?

Let's look at verse 11. Ephesians 6, verse 11 says, For we do not wrestle against flesh, or it says, 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 we wrestle against rulers and authorities and cosmic powers that are over this present darkness against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

So the first question is, who is the battle with? Who does Paul identify here as the enemy? Well, it is very, very clear. It doesn't take a degree in seminary to figure out that Paul says this is a spiritual battle.

This is a spiritual battle. What I mean by that is it's not a battle of the flesh. He'll even go on to articulate that. This isn't a battle against other human beings.

[15:51] This is a battle against spiritual beings. Now the reason why that's important to point out is you do realize there is a battle with the flesh. Romans chapter 7 would be a good example of that

where Paul will even use war imagery that there's this thing, this power of sin that dwells in my body, in my flesh, and I wage war against it.

I end up doing the very thing that I don't want to do. You know what I'm talking about. It's a battle of the flesh. That's not what Paul's talking about here. This is not a battle with the flesh.

It's not a fleshly battle. This is a spiritual battle. The language of the text is schemes of the devil, powers and principalities, authorities in the heavenly places.

And of course, this may be very strange language for some of us, but it's certainly not to Paul. I mean, it's all over Paul's letters. Here's just a few examples.

In fact, back in earlier in Ephesians in chapter 2, he talks about the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that's at work in the sons of disobedience.

[17:05] And then in chapter 3, he talks about these rulers and authorities that are in the heavenly places. Pat, in his sermon last week in Colossians 2 verse 8, Paul talks about this.

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy, empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world.

And then in Galatians 4, in verse 3, he speaks about these elementary principles that are in the world. In 2 Corinthians 4, 4, he talks about the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers.

And of course, I'm leaving out a lot of others. My point is, is Paul is very clear in many other places that there's this battle against powers, principalities, and evil forces.

Let me kind of summarize it this way. Are you listening? Say yes. There is real evil in the world. There is real evil.

[18:11] And evil forces. And evil powers. And evil beings that your eyes do not see, but that does not make them any less real.

This is the reality. This is the battle we're in. And if I were to ask you, or most any Christian, well, who are these spiritual beings? You'd probably say Satan and demons.

Right? And that's what most would say. And that's true. Certainly that's true. And we'll mention that. My point is not to say that's not true. My point is to say that just doesn't go deep enough.

It's really not a thorough enough understanding of what Paul means here by rulers and authorities and cosmic powers and spiritual forces.

So what I'm going to do tonight, very simply, is to give you a kind of an introduction or a taste of what Paul means here by these spiritual forces.

[19:14] To take us a little deeper than just Satan and demons. Okay? Now, shameless plug, I don't know, it's been a year and a half or more ago, I did a Tuesday night class called The Spiritual Realm.

How many of you, show of hands, went through that class? A plus to every one of you for remembering. Okay? You could come up here and teach this. The rest of you, I would refer you to go to our YouTube channel, click playlist, and you can actually go through that course online for free and you will get a thorough, a much more thorough understanding tonight of what this is about than what I'm going to give you now.

But for the rest of us, here's just kind of the basic foundation. You ready? We ready? Here we go. Let's go back to Genesis 1. Okay? Genesis 1, what does God do?

He creates two realms. He creates two realms. A heavenly realm or a spiritual realm and a physical realm. You know this. In the beginning, God created the, say it with me, heavens and the earth. There's the two realms. A heavenly realm, a spiritual realm, and an earthly realm. Well, in these two realms, God creates beings.

[20:31] In the spiritual realm, there are spiritual beings. I went to seminary for this, so this is really insightful. In the spiritual realm, there's spiritual beings, and in the earthly realm, there's earthly beings.

We call them human beings. Us. Okay? Two realms, two beings. Unfortunately, when we talk about spiritual beings, we almost exclusively talk about angels and demons.

Like that's the only two categories. And it really, really is short-sighted. You're not understanding enough of the biblical narrative about what these spiritual beings are.

Again, I don't have time to go through all of them in great detail, but I'll introduce you to some of them. One, for example, is called the Elohim. Now, in the Old Testament, this is going to be referred to as the sons of God.

The sons of God. These are spiritual beings, created spiritual beings, that are referred to as gods. They're created gods. They're not the eternal God.

[ 21 : 38 ] There's only one true God. Amen? But there are created gods, these Elohim, which are known as the sons of God. And then there are cherubim.

We mostly see them in the throne room of God when you see certain visions, like in Isaiah 6. And then there are angels. It's a bit of an unfortunate title because angel really isn't the title.

Angel is the function. Because angel just means messenger. And so these spiritual beings really aren't angels. They're messengers.

That is, just like the cherubim, their function is in the throne room of God. These spiritual beings, their function is to deliver messages. Are you with me? Say yes. I haven't lost you yet, have I? And so my point here is just to give you a little bit of a vision that there are lots of different categories of spiritual beings. It's not just Satan and his minions. Okay? Just don't ever say minions around me.

[ 22 : 41 ] Like, it makes me think of despicable me. Okay? So, it's these groups of spiritual beings. Now, in Genesis 3, hang with me, in Genesis 3, some of these spiritual beings seek to undermine God's authority by attacking human beings.

You with me? Spiritual beings go after human beings to disrupt the order of God. Why? Because they are envious that human beings bear God's image and they don't.

They were created first, but they feel they're being treated last. Tell me where you've heard this before. Human beings in the order of creation were created last, and they're treated as though they are first because they bear God's image.

And just like Cain after Abel, just like Joseph with his older brothers, just like the older brother and the story of the prodigal son, and on and on and on we could go, the older despises the younger and goes after him.

And so, entrance into the garden, the serpent. The serpent, Satan here, who would have been a cherubim figure, so this would have been a winged creature.

[ 24 : 08 ] I wish there were a little more wings on this to give you a full understanding of the type of spiritual being that Satan is, but he's a winged creature. That's why, by the way, that when Satan is cursed, he's cursed to the ground.

Right? Because he's a flying creature. He's a flying spiritual being that gets cursed to the ground.

It's, by the way, why John, in the apocalyptic vision of Revelation 12, calls Satan a dragon.

A dragon. It's this winged creature. This winged spiritual being. All that was free. You don't have to remember that, okay? What's the goal? What was the goal of this spiritual being?

His goal was to divide God and man. You've got to listen to this. This is so important. Tell me you're having fun already, right? He wants to divide God and man.

Human beings get cast out of the garden. And he wants to divide human beings. Adam and Eve now have what? Enmity between one another.

[ 25 : 20 ] So all of this is going after God's original design that God would dwell with man. We want to break that up. He creates this. A man shall leave a father and mother.

They'll be joined together. They'll become a one flesh union. And I want to tear that up. So the spiritual beings are going after God's order by trying to disrupt it.

That's Genesis 3. Genesis 6, again, spiritual beings seek to disrupt and divide the human line, which is leading to the Messiah.

The sons of God, these Elohim, see that the daughters of men, human beings, are attractive and they bear children with them.

Why? Why? To pollute the messianic line. They've already disrupted the order. They don't want the order to return. They know there's this promised seed and He's going to come to do something that I'll talk about here in a few moments.

[ 26 : 21 ] And they want to do everything they can to go after human beings and disrupt this from happening. So what does God do? He sends a flood and He starts all over with a brand new Adam.

His name is Noah. You with me? Genesis 11. At the Tower of Babel. Spiritual beings lead human beings in another rebellion.

They are seeking to establish a new Eden. That is this mountain. This mountain to the heavens. They're trying to get back from where they had fallen in Genesis.

Now while Genesis 11 focuses purely on the human role, Moses tells us in Deuteronomy that heavenly beings, spiritual beings were involved.

Look at Deuteronomy 32, verse 8. Remember the days of old. Consider the years of all generations. Ask your Father and He will inform you. Your elders and they will tell you.

[ 27 : 25 ] When the Most High, that is Yahweh, allotted the nations, that's what happened at Babel, and set the divisions for the sons of humanity, human beings, He fixed the territories of peoples, that is all the nations, according to the number of the, say it, sons of God, the Elohim.

Now there's a lot there. I don't have time to unpack, but just listen. Lean in. Lean in. The point here is that as a result of Babel, these rebellious, evil, spiritual beings are divided among the nations.

Why is that relevant for us? It's relevant because this is why the nations rage. This is why there's been a history of war. This is why there's been corruption in every civilization.

This is why the world is full of evil, because as Paul says, there are rulers and authorities and cosmic powers that are over this present darkness.

There are spiritual forces of evil from the heavenly places. That is, these fallen, evil, spiritual beings are still operating today.

[ 28 : 44 ] They're everywhere among the nations. Wreaking all kinds of evil in the world. And Paul gives special attention to one of them in verse 11.

The adversary. That is, the devil. That's what devil means is adversary. The roaring lion of 1 Peter 5. The dragon of Revelation 12.

What we would call the Satan. Satan. Jesus even refers to Satan multiple times in the Gospels. He's tempted by Satan in the wilderness.

In fact, Jesus' very ministry in part was to disrupt what Satan and the spiritual beings did. Look at what John says in 1 John 3 verse 6.

The reason the Son of God appeared was to do what? Destroy the works of the devil. Everybody take a deep breath.

[ 29 : 42 ] Breathe out. Are you taking all that in? I got good news for you. This is what you're up against. You.

Me. And this church is up against that. It's encouraging, isn't it?

It makes you want to crawl under your chair and cry. It's heavy. It's big. It's deep. It's historic.

It's dark. And it's real. And the reason why I take the time to expand our biblical understanding of this rather than, well, it's just Satan and demons.

No, no, no. It's way bigger than that is because I want you to feel the weight of Paul's point. Look at Paul's point in the beginning of verse 12. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood.

[ 30 : 48 ] Like, like, like Paul wants the Ephesians to say, like, I want you to know what you're up against. It's not one another. Are you kidding me? I mean, you look across your church and you think that's your enemy.

You look across the political aisle and you think that's the enemy. You haven't gone deep enough. Oh, no. It's bigger than this.

Paul's not suggesting that we don't have human opposition. My goodness, if anybody had human opposition, it was the Apostle Paul. Stoned and put in prison and persecuted at every turn.

No, no, no, no. Paul is not saying there's no human opposition. He's saying that human opposition isn't merely human opposition. That's a good place for an amen, but that's okay.

Like, if you, if you, like, I really hope we will wake up to some of this. If you really think your issue is politics, if you really think our problem is Putin, if you really think our ultimate issue is ex-spouses or racist or angry clients, if you think that's who your battle ultimately is with, you don't have spiritual eyes.

[ 32 : 08 ] We're not wrestling against flesh and blood. Yeah, there's human opposition in the world, but human opposition is not merely human opposition. It's a war.

It's a battle. and it is way more real than you even realize. Faith family, look at it on the screen.

It's easy to create a devil out of another human being when your world view doesn't include a devil. Let me say that again.

it's very easy to create a devil out of another human being when your world view doesn't have a devil. This guy is an atheist, but he makes a really, really correct and insightful point.

His name is Andrew DeBlanco. He wrote a book called The Death of Satan. Again, he's a full-blown atheist, and this is what he writes. Listen. The gulf has happened in our culture between the

visibility of evil and the intellectual resources to cope with it.

[ 33 : 21 ] We don't believe in cosmic evil. He's writing that as an atheist. We do as Christians. He doesn't. We don't like to use the term evil because it assumes moral categories.

We'd rather use medical terms like dysfunction or pathology psychology. However, it has gotten harder and harder to reduce such things as the Holocaust and serial killers as merely psychological. It's really insightful. In other words, if you don't have a world view that includes these spiritual beings, you don't have a way of actually believing in real evil.

you're just left with a natural world. And now we are one another's enemy. If you reject the supernatural, you can't have any true transcendent good or evil.

So this is who the war is with. Do you feel the heaviness tonight? I feel it. This is who it's with.

Here's the second question. What does the enemy want?

[ 34 : 35 ] What does the enemy want? If the battle is with these rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces, what do they want? What are they after? Hang with me.

You still with me? Just go ahead, take out your email, delete your reservation that you have here in a little bit. Let's just hang out a while.

Okay? I'm going to preach the full version for Saturday night. I don't know what Sunday's going to get, so you get it all. Here we go. What does the enemy want?

If that's who the enemy is, what does the enemy want? Now, notice the phrase in verse 11 that says, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

So they're after something, these spiritual beings. And if we're not careful, this is where I'm afraid most teachers of Ephesians 6 are going to go off the rail.

[ 35 : 33 ] Maybe not off the rail in that they're wrong, but off the rail in that you missed the main point. Because I'll hear people say, well, what they're really after is to get you to not understand your identity in Christ.

And what they're really after is they want to wage war with your mind. Listen, all that stuff's true. It's just not the context of Ephesians. And we'll talk about some of that, but we're at least going to start by the main point.

The question we should be asking is, what does Paul mean? Or, and we ask it a different way, why in the world does Paul bring this topic up at the end of the letter?

You notice the word in verse 10, finally? It's because he's closing the letter. He's finishing an entire argument. And so we're not going to understand what comes after finally if we don't understand what comes before finally.

Are you with me? So what's the point? Put your seatbelt on. Paul spends the first three chapters of Ephesians making one big main point.

[ 36 : 50 ] He's describing a new humanity. That is, you're not going to believe this, like Jews and Gentiles have been brought together in one body.

It's crazy, isn't it? These two, listen to my language, these two groups that have been divided are now made one.

Listen to what he says. Chapter 2, verse 13. But now in Christ, you who are once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace.

He has made us both, say it, one. And he's broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law and the commandments expressed in the ordinances.

That he might create in himself one new man in the place of two, so making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing hostility.

[ 37 : 55 ] Do you know what this new humanity, this what we call the church, this people of God, this Jew and Gentile in one body, do you know what the church does?

Look, verse 9, chapter 3, to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for the ages in God who created all things, get this, so that through the, this one new man, so that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known.

Oh, oh, oh, to who, to who, who will the manifold wisdom of God be made known to? The rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.

Oh my, oh my, God is doing a work through Jesus Christ in making one new humanity and this one new humanity is revealing to these spiritual beings the manifold wisdom of God.

In other words, do you know what Jesus did? Do you know what Jesus did? He reversed Babel. At Babel, the nations were divided.

[ 39 : 19 ] In Jesus, the nations are made one. It's why we're to go make disciples of all nations. At Babel, languages were given for confusion.

At Pentecost, God gave languages. We call them tongues. They were not gibberish. They were not nonsense prayers that you pray in your prayer closet.

They were the ability to speak languages for the purpose of preaching the gospel to the nations. He's reversing Babel so that every tribe, nation, and tongue will be brought together in this beautiful unity of one people in Christ.

And those people, that people, that one body, will display to those spiritual beings the manifold wisdom of God. God. This is why, church, Ephesians 4.2, with all humility and gentleness and patience bearing with one another in love, I hope you're listening, faith family, you should be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

Because there's one body and one Spirit just as you were called to one hope that belongs to your call. There's one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

[ 41 : 08 ] What's the point Paul is making? It's all about the unity of this new humanity called the church.

And you ask, well, how do I maintain that unity? Is it helpful to kind of see how the argument unfolds? It kind of like makes sense of things like this.

You want to maintain the unity of the Spirit? Then do things like this. You know, be angry but don't sin. And don't let the sun go down on your anger.

Because when you do, guess who you're giving an opportunity to. Powers. Rulers. Spiritual beings. Give no opportunity to the devil. And I'll go on.

[ 42 : 13 ] Don't let any corrupt word come out of your mouth but only what is good to build up one another. Chapter 4. 29. Be kind and tender hearted to one another and forgive one another as Christ has forgiven you.

Chapter 4. 32. And edify one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Chapter 5. And husbands love your wives and wives submit to your husbands and children submit to your parents and bond servants to your masters.

Why all of these instructions? Because we are to preserve the unity of this new humanity. You still with me?

Why the armor then? You know because Paul had nothing like he had to reach 2,000 words and he's like shoot. I need 200 more words.

I better just come up with something. He's just tack it on at the end. I haven't addressed spiritual warfare. I better include it. No.

[ 43 : 20 ] Finally. After all of this finally church be strong in the Lord and put on the whole armor of God.

What is Paul saying? He is saying this because Jesus has made us one. You can bet your sweet buns the evil spiritual beings want to divide us.

It's what they did in Genesis 3 in the garden. It's what they did in Genesis 6 in the days of Noah. It's what they did in Genesis 11 at the Tower of Babel. Here it is.

If they tried to divide the first humanity, they will certainly try to divide the new humanity, but we must be strong in the Lord and stand firm.

How? By putting on the whole armor of God. Paul's point is that every day you will face, notice it on the screen, demons and deceivers who are seeking to divide.

[ 44 : 38 ] What is this enemy after? Yeah, your identity. Yeah, your mind. I don't disagree with that, but do you know what they're ultimately after in the context of this book?

Our unity. They'd far rather us fight one another than fight them. And they've done a really good job of it throughout the history of the church.

Because the church has continued to think that our war is with flesh and blood. And we have failed to see who the enemy really is and what the enemy really wants.

And it makes perfect sense to the military imagery of this time. I'll talk more about this in future weeks. But listen, in our day, military soldiers can often fight in small groups.

We might even have a single sniper. It's not how you would fight in the ancient Near East. A Roman army, which is what this armor is coming from, a Roman army fought together.

[ 45 : 55 ] Somebody say preach, preacher. Together. Their whole armor was made in such a way that they would stand shoulder to shoulder and become an amazing force.

The whole design was unity. It's why, notice it on the screen, Faith Family, an army divided is an army defeated.

who's the enemy? We've answered that. What does the enemy want? And here's the final question. This will be it. Here it is. Look at verse 10.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. I close with, how is the victory won? How is the victory won? Paul says to be strong in the Lord.

I think if you've zoned out, what do you do? Zone back in? I don't know how you could have zoned out. But this is really important. Maybe, yes, I'll go so far as to say more important than the other two points.

[ 47 : 08 ] And once again, I'm not going to get into the armor until you understand this. Because here's what's going to happen, I've seen so many preachers do it, is you're going to turn the armor of God into a Christian to-do list.

It goes like this, man, I really got to read my Bible more. I need that belt of truth. So I really need to read the Bible more. I'm not reading the Bible enough, I need to read it more. And I really need to be a better person.

I'm supposed to put on the breastplate of righteousness, and so I really need to be more righteous. I need to be better. I've got to tell more people about Jesus. I haven't shared my faith in a week. I've got to tell more people about Jesus because the armor is the gospel of peace.

And on and on and on and on will go. I've got to read my Bible more, I've got to be better, I've got to do more. By the way, those are great things. I hope you do read your Bible more. I hope you are a better person and I hope you share the gospel every day.

But that is not what the armor of God is about. I'm going to say this, I'm going to give you a few scriptures and I promise I'm doing it. Can you hang with me? Come on, this is so important.

[ 48 : 16 ] Here it is. Paul, Paul is not recreating the armor, he's referencing it. This isn't new. Paul's just quoting what they already knew mainly from Isaiah.

Paul loves Isaiah, by the way. Paul is like cut and paste Isaiah. Let me give you just a few examples. Hang with me. Isaiah 59. Isaiah 59. Justice is turned back and righteousness stands far away for truth has stumbled in the public squares and uprightness cannot and truth is lacking and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.

The Lord saw it and it displeased him that there's no justice. And then he saw that there is no man. That is no one. No one can solve the problem of evil.

No one can solve the problem of injustice. And he wondered that there was no one to intercede. Then his own arm brought him salvation and his righteousness upheld him.

He put on righteousness you're kidding me as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on his head.

[ 49 : 44 ] The point? There is no human being that can solve the issue of unrighteousness disorder and evil so God sent his own self his own arm one who wears the armor of God.

Oh I ain't done yet. I ain't done yet. I ain't done yet. Isaiah 11. Isaiah 11. There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse. A branch from his root shall bear fruit.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of wisdom understanding counsel, might knowledge and fear of the Lord. That's the seven spirits of the book of Revelation. That's free.

Keep reading. With righteousness he shall judge the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist and faithfulness the belt of his loins. In other words Isaiah speaks of the coming Messiah who's going to come from David's line and what is Messiah wearing?

[ 50 : 58 ] The armor of God. One more from Isaiah. Isaiah 52. Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day thou shalt know that it is I who speak.

Here I am. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who bring good news. Who publishes peace. That's a direct quote in Ephesians 6. 15.

Who brings the good news of happiness. Who publishes salvation. Who says to Zion your God reigns. Listen. Isaiah 52 speaks of one who will bring the good news of peace. Who publishes salvation. Who is that? How does he do it? He was pierced for our transgressions. Isaiah 53. This is why Paul can say in Romans 13 the night is far gone the day is at hand so then let us cast off the works of darkness and do what?

[ 52 : 05 ] put on the armor of light. Come on somebody say preach preacher. Say preach preacher. What does it mean to put on the armor of light?

To put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to me before we break down every piece of armor in the next few weeks.

I'm going to get one thing very straight. Here it is on the screen. Victory is not found in pieces of armor. Victory is found in the person of Jesus Christ because he is the armor.

He is the armor. And you cannot fashion the armor if you have not faith in Christ. You cannot fashion the armor if you have not faith in Christ.

I don't care how many times you read your Bible. I don't care how good you are or how much you share. Put on Christ.

[ 53 : 17 ] He is the armor of God. And he is oh I end with this I promise. He is the one Colossians 2 15 who disarmed the rulers and authorities who put them to open shame.

He triumphed over them. Ephesians 1 20 He was raised from the dead and he is seated at the right hand in the what heavenly places.

And he is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and he is above every name that is named.

And not only is that the case in this age but that is the case in the age to come. The reason why you have nothing to fear in this battle is because when you have put on Christ you have put on the one who reigns over the spiritual beings.

So whether we acknowledge it or not whether we see it with our eyes or not we are in a battle. It is a battle against spiritual evil.

[ 54 : 36 ] Evil that wants to divide you from God and divide you from one another and destroy everything that is good and godly. And we have a choice to make.

We can sit here and pretend or we can stand firm and content. And my prayer is that over the next few weeks we will stand up and we will stand firm not by becoming a better shot but by learning to rest and be strong in the Savior who has already won the battle.

and all God's people said Amen. Let's pray. And Father now we enter into a time of remembrance where we are reminded how that battle was won.

As Jesus came and died to destroy the works of the devil to disarm these evil forces these spiritual powers that cause the nations to rage and you through the cross are taking all of this division and destruction and you have made a new creation.

Because if anyone be in Christ they're a new creation. The old is past. Behold all things become new. We are brought into this one new humanity. And the moment that happens there's a bullseye on our back.

[ 56 : 20 ] It's not a war we take to the world. It's a war that's come to us. But greater is he that's in us than he that's in the world.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.