

Spiritual Warfare: Where's the Battle?

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- [0 : 0 0] So, this morning we are actually starting off a new series on spiritual warfare. On this subject, the late, great C.S. Lewis wrote, there are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall in regards to the devil.
- One is to disbelieve in his existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.
- They, being the devil and his minions, themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight.
- Spiritual warfare. Is there anything that seems to be more confusing amongst Christians? I'm sure if you take a poll and you ask them different opinions, different ideas will surface.
- A lot of times those teachings have come from one, biblical study. Others is what others have taught them. For some, by books they have read.
- [1 : 2 5] But still a lot of people find this subject perplexing. And for others, it is simply ignored.
- If I am to ask you on the subject of one to ten, where does it rank in the importance of Christian doctrines in your life?
- Even when I say that word, spiritual warfare, what are you thinking about? Do you think of Christian persecution? Do you think of your own personal sins?
- Do you think of demon possessions? Perhaps you think of physical affliction? The occult? Witchcraft? Do you think about what a friend told you about a story?
- Or perhaps you, thoughts of spiritual warfare go back to a book you might have read by Frank Peretti. And maybe for some of you, the question is, is it even real?
- [2 : 3 2] Is this something that I, as a believer, really need to bother about? The truth of the matter, it's usually dependent on several things.
- But the two most important things is, one, if you come from a, we'll just call it Baptist circles, this subject does not get mentioned very much.
- It is certainly believed in, perhaps thought upon, but practically speaking, not an everyday part of your thought or your vocabulary.
- If you or a friend come from, say, a vineyard background or a like-minded church model, they actually have specialized training in all sorts of spiritual warfare issues.
- Something they take quite seriously. And this, their differing views is usually shaped by their understanding of the kingdom of God.
- [3 : 3 6] So, where are we to land on the subject? Are we supposed to be in that topic where we really don't believe them too much? Or as C.S. Lewis, we develop an unhealthy desire.
- Where's the middle ground and how do we get there? Well, I think you obviously know we're going to go to God's word. And God's word is very clear on this one issue.
- You, as a believer in Christ, are hated by Satan. You are hated to the depth and the core of his being.

There is no ignoring this fact. Why? Simply put, you are the workmanship of God. You are created in Christ Jesus.

You are actually snatched from the power and domain of darkness the moment you became a Christian and placed in light.

[4 : 37] You deserted Satan. You fled his territory. You testified as Peter did when Jesus Christ asked him, Who am I?

Responded, you are Christ, the Son of the living God. Satan hates you because Christ lives within you.

And because you love Jesus. But the reality is Satan wants you back. Like he asked Jesus to sift Peter like wheat.

Like attempting through the entire book of Job to get Job to deny God. Satan wants the very same thing of you.

The book of the Bible is full of Satan. From the very beginning in the garden, when Adam and Eve walked, the slithering serpent made his way to them.

[5 : 41] To the very end, we will read of great battles. Cosmic battles. Where people here will die.

Satan is a fighting foe. Let me give you a few verses. James 4, 7 says, Submit yourselves therefore to God.

Resist the devil and he will flee from you. If you are to resist, that means he is attacking. 2 Corinthians 10, 3-4 says, For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.

So there's this war here. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

There's battlements. The idea that there's ideas contrary to us. 1 Timothy 5, 15. He simply says, Some have already strayed to follow Satan.

[6 : 46] Satan is drawing a people. These are people who were once believers, who testified to Jesus Christ, who testified to his goodness, who lived in community. He was able to draw them to him.

That means he deceives, he lies. He whispers in our ears, Come, follow me. 2 Thessalonians 2, 9 says, 2 Corinthians 2, 11 says, So that we would not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs.

That means he has plans, schemes, methods, tactics, which he uses, not against evil people, not against people who live in far off places, but you.

Schemes, dangers, traps, lies. 1 Peter 5, 8 says, Be sober-minded. Be watchful.

Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

[8 : 15] You are on his lunch menu. Scriptures teach us quite clearly through these verses that we are opposed by a living, resilient, attacking, intelligent, resourceful, cunning enemy who can outlive the oldest Christian, who can outwork the busiest Christian, who can outfight the strongest Christian, and outwit the wisest Christian.

Like it or not, we are at war. You cannot ignore it like someone walking through the fields and hills of Afghanistan and say, There is no war when there's war been around you for centuries.

Theologian St. Clair Ferguson, if you are unfamiliar with him, has written a great many books, very incredible books, just to helping us understand God and his teachings, has written this book on maturity, which is about growing up and going on in the Christian life.

He describes maturity as having a fully developed Christian character that expresses itself in consistent Christian living.

Why is he talking about maturity? Well, Paul tells us in Colossians, both in Colossians 1.28 and Colossians 4.13, He simply states, Paul says, For this I toil, struggling with all God's energy, that he powerfully works within me.

[10 : 14] The goal he's referring to here is, As teachers, believers, we are to be presented to God fully mature. And Ferguson argues, quite compelling, that understanding spiritual warfare is one of the primary pillars of Christian maturity.

One of the primary pillars of Christian maturity. If you do not get a handle on understanding spiritual warfare, you don't have a full deck of cards.

You don't have all six bullets in your six-shooter. You're missing something. That knowing how to fight the enemy is spiritual battle is one of the keys to spiritual maturity.

How many of you even thought about that? That understanding spiritual maturity or spiritual warfare is a means to Christian maturity.

Well, this morning we're going to look at the Bible's most complete text on this issue. This is going to be the foundation, the pillar for everything that we're going to learn in the next several weeks on this subject.

[11 : 35] It is a great piece of literature. Turn with me to Ephesians 6. We're going to be reading in verse 10 and 20.

I am not unaware that we were last in Ephesians 4 at the end of it, and we've skipped over chapter 5. We are going to be going back to chapter 5 once we are done this section.

So don't worry. So I want us to go back to this text of Ephesians 6, 10 to 20, and I want to read it to you. 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.

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.

[12 : 56] 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 prayers and supplications. 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 may declare it boldly as I ought to speak.

There's three primary commands he's giving to us here. One, be strong. What are you going to do? We're in a spiritual battle.

You need to be strong. Well, how do I go about being strong? One, depending in the strength of his might. And why are we to be strong?

[14 : 23] Because we are in a battle, not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

My friend, we do not fight a human enemy. So where do we begin to understand this subject of spiritual warfare?

Today, what I want to do is I want to outline this series for you, and I want to give you what is called a four-point working definition of what spiritual warfare is.

So that's my goal this morning. So we're going to begin at verse 10 of Ephesians 6 here. And I want you to pay attention to one word in this verse, which gives us an understanding of this subject written here.

It is the first word. It is the word finally. Finally. Finally. Finally actually gives us an understanding of where to begin.

[15 : 42] This word finally can mean a few different things. One, it can mark the end of a thought or a story. It could be Paul letting us know that he is winding down this letter, and he has a final point.

It could be an add-on idea or the decisive end. But this is actually not what Paul has in mind here when he says the word finally.

There's actually another word that's not actually used in the English language that when you look at earlier translations of the Bible they use. And it's the word henceforth.

Henceforth. And what that word henceforth means, it means everything that I have taught you leading up to this point, you now need to take into consideration before we go any further.

Henceforth. From now on. From this point forward. This word. Upon taking all that I have written you, everything that I have said, I need you to take this into consideration.

[16 : 54] This word provides the proper framing for this passage. What Paul is doing here with this simple word is providing you and I with a context of what is going on here.

And there's two very important contexts for us to understanding this text and helping us understand this subject.

So first, we need to go into the context to who is this letter written to. We know it's the letter written to the people who were gathered in Ephesus.

Ephesus. Ephesus is located in modern day Turkey. It is, historians believe that it was actually the third largest city in the Roman Empire.

It was a part of what they called Asia Minor. It was a major port city. It was previously owned and ruled by the Persians, the Greeks, and now it is ruled by the Romans.

[17 : 59] And there's three things that significantly stand out about this city that really helped us to understand. One, they believe that over a quarter of a million people lived in this city. Massive, massive amounts of people living during this first century.

The second thing, it had what was known as the largest arena in the world. It could fit over 50,000 spectators. So when they wanted to draw the city together, they could hold, it was like an auditorium of 50,000 people.

And the third thing that we need to understand about this city, it was home to the temple of Artemis, or as the Romans called it, the temple of Diana.

I touched on this a couple of times over these last couple of months on this subject. A few more details about this temple. This temple measured over 93,000 square feet.

It had over 127 marble columns, each adorned with jewels and precious minerals from foreign kings.

[19 : 11] Basically, that means it was gold and silver laden. It was considered the seventh wonder of the world. Each column was over 60 feet in height, and this city, this temple, sorry, dominates the city.

In fact, the inhabitants believed it was this temple that made their cosmic resources, their beliefs, stronger than anybody else's.

It was the center of astrology and of evil spirits. In fact, it was known that they had these Ephesus medals or medallions that you could get special jewels and inlays to protect you from certain spirits.

It was pervasive in this area. It was the center for magical practice in the area, and as one historian noted, it was the most hospitable city and culture to magicians, sorcerers, and charlatans.

What's interesting is that Rome opened their gates to any foreign god, but in this city, they believed the god of Artemis ruled over all, and it was her chief cult.

[20 : 33] This is the city to Paul is writing this text to. How crazy is this city?

Take a look in your Bibles. Turn with me to Acts 19. Acts 19. We're going to spend a little bit of time in Acts 19.

You're going to need to read along because I want you to see what happens to Paul because it's a great story. Of course, it's a great story, but it actually tells us, communicates to us some of the crazy things that went on in this city.

We're in Acts 19. We're going to look at verse 8. We're going to begin in verse 8. Here it says, and he. This is Luke writing the story of the early church, and Luke is recording Paul's journeys, and he's now in Ephesus, and he said, and he, being Paul, entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.

One of Paul's first tactics when he went into a city and proclaiming Christ, he went to the synagogue. Why? He's a Jew. That's where Jews are. They already believe in God.

[21 : 50] They have an understanding of the Old Testament, which in their minds is the First Testament, right? That was the word of God. So he goes in there, teaches that, and he shows the connection to Jesus Christ.

So this is one of his first methods that he uses to proclaim the gospel. This was his pattern as there was a large Jewish diaspora all over that part of the world.

Now, look at verse 9. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the way, and the way is actually the early term that they used for Christianity, the way, right?

Jesus Christ said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. So that's how it was referenced. So he's speaking evil of the way before the congregation.

And it said, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This Tyrannus, this hall, was actually a famous auditorium where performing orators and philosophers would come and debate the things of life.

[23 : 00] So all these years, Paul has said, all right, you Jews, you've had your chance, you kicked me out, I'm now going to go reason with the Greeks and I'm now going to share the gospel with them.

So he's kind of going to teach and share there. And it says, this continued for two years. And notice this, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Amazing. The gospel has gone forth. And we read continuing in verse 11, and God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, I adjure you by the name Jesus whom Paul proclaims.

Now what they're doing is they're seeing Paul going around battling demons, demon-possessed men. And he's obviously calling on the name of Jesus, that power dealing in this part of spiritual warfare.

[24 : 28] Other people are watching him. So guess what? They're going to try it too. Verse 13, it says, then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of Jesus over those who had evil spirits.

So people who had evil spirits were quite prominent in this culture. And they sang, I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.

And it says, verse 14, seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. But the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?

And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them. So this is one possessed man leaping on seven men, overpowered them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

They got their you-know-what handed to them, right? Like they were beaten down. So verse 17, and this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, and fear fell upon them all.

[25 : 52] And the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. Also many of those who were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices.

What we need to understand that's going on here, when you lived in that era, when you heard of another God, you didn't have to abandon your God, you just added another God to your other God.

So you might have your little, I don't know, I doubt they had fireplaces, but, you know, put a little idol there and they could add another little idol that they got to know and maybe another merchant came through and taught and did something.

So they'd put a little idol up there and they would have this little group of idols there that they were worshipping. And I'm sure many of them simply just kind of added Jesus to that.

But as they got to see the power of the living God doing incredible things, guess what they started to learn? They just started throwing out all those other idols and knowing and understanding that there was only one God.

[27 : 10] And by this we get to see these works of repentance that are being worked out in them, right? Verse 18, they confessed and they divulging their practices and a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.

This is a powerful moment that we're seeing here. and they counted the value of them and found it came to 50,000 pieces of silver.

That's mega money. And that's the power of God getting people to turn back on those things that they once held dear. Verse 20, Luke records to us, so the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

how much did the word of the Lord continue to increase and prevail mightily? Skip down to verse 23. About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the way, concerning Christianity.

For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. these he gathered together in the workmen of similar trades and said, men, you know that from this business we have our wealth.

[28 : 41] And you see in here that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people saying that gods made with hands are not gods.

So those little trinkets, those silver, those statues they would have put out, they were using silver to make them. They would make these little trinkets of Artemis made of silver, but so many people got saved that nobody wanted these trinkets anymore.

Okay? It's like, I don't know, if you ever go to Victoria and you're downtown, you know, every shop sells Canada shirts, right? Everything is very touristy, kitschy, all those kind of things.

All of a sudden, no one's buying anything. It would wipe out all those businesses down there and that's what Paul's teaching, people are starting to live by, is now starting to affect the economy of this city.

So this man is raising this riot. So this is what's going on. So this riot ensues is a man.

[29 : 55] It turns out that Paul's disciples, we later learn, if we look at verse 35, are all taken, and they're taken and captured, and they're placed in that auditorium that I talked about that's seated over 50,000.

We don't know if it was 50,000, but the whole town gathered, town, city, let's be honest, Squamish is a town, right? 250,000 is a city.

Okay? All these people are there. What's interesting, Luke records for us, that Artemis, or the man who brought the first charges, but he was Jewish, and they didn't want to accept his testimony in this place, and it reads here, verse 35, that the town clerk, so someone who's representing the government, comes here to speak.

It says, men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?

Sacred stone most likely being a meteorite that fell down. We see the same lie, if you guys know anything about Mecca, in Islam, in Mecca, the center is a large meteorite.

[31 : 17] That is the center which they come, that is where the worship is centered around. In verse 36, he said, seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash.

But he says something very intriguing in verse 37. for you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemous of our goddess.

This is the spiritual reality in which we find this text of Ephesians 6 in. it's written to a church most likely these people had idols in their home.

Most likely had magic books and if it wasn't them, their friends and family did. It was the center of the occult. It was normal to see demon possession.

it was normal to see accusations made by evil spirits. So think of it this way.

[32 : 40] If all these people come from such a visible understanding of spiritual warfare, it is running loose. Let's just say it's running rampant over this whole city.

How does Paul attack it? Think about it. Is he giving them instructions and binding demons? Is he giving them invoking special prayers that make demons run away?

Does he ask them to do exorcisms or the like? Notice he doesn't mention any of this in this text.

We don't learn to rebuke demons. We don't learn certain special words of incantations. We're not told that we're to speak out against demons.

And notice he doesn't even speak out against the greatest false religion in that area. He just simply preaches Jesus Christ.

[33 : 46] Christ. And why is there power in that? What did we learn in the first three chapters of Ephesians? About how God is so instrumental in our salvation.

Right? That before time existed God had adopted us. Right? Jesus Christ redeemed us. And the Holy Spirit calls us.

Amen? So there was this time of salvation that we are drawn to. So this provides the first understanding of the context of spiritual battle.

But even more than that I want you to see something else. Take a look. Let's go back to Ephesians. What I'm trying to get at here is there is a place for spiritual warfare.

And if there was ever a place that Paul could describe where the height of spiritual warfare is he would have talked about Ephesus. But he doesn't. He talks about something completely different.

[35 : 05] Remember we began with that word finally. Hence forth. What is the teaching that Paul has been doing up to now into this letter of Ephesians?

The first three chapters has been on salvation. It is what God thinks of you. That's where he's spending his time. That you understand God's great love for you.

That he called you to him. That you might be called sons and daughters of God. But look at verse 1 chapter 4 of Ephesians.

We were here a couple of months ago. It says, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

With all humility and gentleness with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the spirit of the bond of peace.

[36 : 20] You know where the spiritual battle is? Life. He's calling their attention after teaching them. Take a look at verse 1.

It says, walk in unity. Where is the battle against? the church. Satan wins when the church divides, when there is no unity in the body of Christ.

The second thing that we understand is take a look at verse, if we look at 417, there's a command, walk in holiness. Satan attacks our testimony.

Now, I know we skipped chapter 5, but there's several important points here that he tells us in chapter 5. Walk in love, walk in light, and walk in wisdom.

You know where our life is? Our marriages. Husbands, love your wives. Wives, submit to your husbands. Children, obey your parents.

[37 : 29] Parents, don't exasperate your kids. He talks about the slave-master relationship, and we've talked about that in the past.

That relationship is not the relationship that we see that happened in the United States, or even in the earlier foundations of our country. It was an entire different economy of scale and how it worked, but we could equate that to the employer-employee relationship.

How many of us think of spiritual warfare, let's just say it's Thanksgiving, you're going over to a friend's place or your family members, and you know they're not believers.

And you know there's an opportunity to share the gospel. And in your prayer, Lord, keep Satan away. Right? Perhaps you're performing musically or speaking.

You're doing a spiritual exercise. You might start thinking, you know what, Satan does not want me to do this. Satan does not want me declaring his word.

[38 : 36] He does not want me sharing my faith. So we put these certain actions in spiritual categories. And once they're in these spiritual categories, we believe that this is where Satan attacks.

Right? Sometimes I know one guy, he wishes he could be a monk. He loves Jesus. He came to Christ at 40 years of age. He was a professor of philosophy, threw that all out, wanted to do something fruitful with his life, decided to become a doctor at the age of 40, works in emergency rooms.

But he really wishes he could be a monk. But he says, I've got three kids so I can't. Right? But in his mind, that would be the most wonderful spiritual activity that he could ever do.

how many activities that we do that we think are spiritual that Satan comes against us with.

But that's not what Paul is telling us here. You know what the spiritual activities are? Being a part of the body of Christ.

[39 : 48] Spiritual activity is loving your wife. spiritual activity is a wife submitting to her husband and coming over that authority and forming a family.

A spiritual activity is loving your children as God has called you to love them. Spiritual activity for parents is, for the kids is to honor and obey their parents.

A spiritual activity is to be a great employer. To treat your employees with justice. And for employees to give all that they have for the responsibilities that they have.

Now, honestly, who thinks of those things as being spiritual activities? activities. We often say, man, I can't wait.

I'm going to give up some hours at work so I can go do something spiritual. The reality is those are spiritual activities.

[40 : 55] Being a godly wife, being a godly husband, being a godly child, being a godly parent, being a godly employee, being a godly employer. And where does Satan mount his attacks?

Right there. Think about it. Where do you lose your patience the most? Where do you experience anger?

Where do you feel proud? Where do you fight humility? Where do you become impatient?

See, think about this. Paul is writing this letter to a group of people who were part of evil groups. Many of them, I'm sure, would have been possessed or knew people who were possessed or under the influence of Satan.

There's no command to say, stay away from the temple. That will keep you closer to God.

[42 : 07] Many of them are recent converts. These people know demonic influence that you and I, for the most part, do not know.

They would have a dread of demons and darkness. And they would not want to go back to that life. Does Paul begin with, hey, listen, the world of evil spirits is one huge untruth in a mere figment of your imagination?

No, he doesn't at all. In fact, he tells us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and authorities, against cosmic powers, over this present darkness.

In fact, he affirms it. But we read in this context of this letter of Ephesians that the spiritual battle is everyday life.

And the instructions that he offers here is not only great for our life, but it handles everything else as well.

[43 : 19] It's not when you think you're doing something spiritual or pray for God to protect us because Satan doesn't like that I'm going to be a missionary.

But the spiritual activities that Paul is addressing here is our everyday lives. Bible study. So today, this is the framework that we are working from.

So today, if you notice, if you're taking notes, if you're in a growth group, you want to take these notes because this is part of your discussion for this week. But there's four main definitions that I want to give you working understanding of spiritual warfare.

warfare. I'm actually taking these from a biblical counselor named Dave Powelson who recently went to be with the Lord and he wrote this final book dealing with this.

And he offers us four different aspects or definitions of spiritual warfare. And I want to read them to you. There's four of them. The first one is spiritual warfare is a metaphor for standing on the Lord's side.

[44 : 36] It is a metaphor for standing on the Lord's side in the epic struggle between God and Satan. It's a metaphor for standing on the Lord's side.

The reality is Satan is in a battle to get you back to him. He wants you back. Two, spiritual warfare is a moral struggle.

Spiritual warfare is a moral struggle. It is a conflict over who you are, what you believe, and how you live. Notice all those three questions are connected to the first three chapters of Ephesians.

It's a moral struggle. It's a conflict over who you are, what you believe, in how you live. And we see this, that Satan attempts to use our sufferings as an opportunity or occasion to get us to stumble into darkness.

That's what the devil uses struggles with. This is what Satan attempted to do for Job. He poured on such great affliction on him, wanting him to deny God.

[45 : 56] Praise God he didn't. But that's what Satan wants to do. The third working understanding is spiritual warfare is a synonym for the struggles of the Christian life.

When you hear spiritual warfare, you need to hear the word Christian life. My life is spiritual warfare. There are no special occasions where Satan just shows up, we all of a sudden recognize him, and we say the right prayer, utter the right words, or use some special technique.

Spiritual warfare is ultimately a worldview. It is an understanding of biblical truth. And the fourth aspect of spiritual warfare is a battle for lordship.

It is a battle for lordship. It is an ultimate battle on who you will serve. In whose image are you made?

Will you resemble the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep? Or will you be more like Satan, the liar, and the destroyer?

[47 : 19] This is a battle for all of your life, not just for a few odd and bizarre moments. Spiritual warfare is every day.

And it is a battle, moment by moment battle, of who will we serve. So, as we go into this subject, there's going to be four essential areas that we're going to cover.

All right? So today is the context. And this context, this understanding of who the people and what they've been taught matters immensely in understanding Paul's teaching on this subject.

Two, we are going to look at the command of God for the battle. We're going to look at God's commands for this battle. These aren't suggestions.

These aren't a few ideas that he throws out. But we're going to see their direct imperatives. These are commands that we are to do for this battle.

[48 : 28] We're also going to learn about the conflict. We're going to learn about the schemes, the methods, the tactics that Satan actually uses. The Puritans wrote thousands upon thousands of pages which prove for us they're like a goldmine of information for us that help us in understanding some of Satan's methods and how we counter them.

And fourth, we're going to spend some time in God's wondrous provision for us as the children of God through the armor of God. So for the next several weeks that's what I want to cover for you.

My desire is I pray that this will answer questions, give you an understanding, but ultimately present you with how are we to live. I don't know, some of you might live in fear.

Some of you may think about this. Some of you may not think about it. I know as I've been studying this, there's been times where I've been on my knees broken over areas of my life that I did not even see as spiritual warfare.

And it's totally changed the way I pray and approach certain things now. My desire is that it would be life-changing for you as well. So we got food that's waiting for us to be eaten.

[49 : 55] So what I'm going to do is I'm going to pray, we're going to give thanks for the food, we're going to sing a song, and then we go eat. Does that sound all right?

And I think...