

# A Call To Arms

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Ephesians chapter 6, verse 10. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His Son. 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 of 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 stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

This is the Word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. In 1974, a Japanese soldier surrendered and stopped fighting World War II, a war that had ended nearly 30 years before.

[ 1 : 24 ] Perhaps you've heard the story of Hiro Onoda. In 1944, he was sent by his commanders to an island in the Philippines. His orders were to resist the Americans and keep on fighting.

Six months later, the war ended. But Hiro never got the news. For more than 30 years, he kept fighting the Second World War.

At one point, the Japanese army flew over the island dropping leaflets, telling him the war was over. But he thought it was a trick from the Americans.

Many years after that, they brought a sound system and his brother to the edge of the jungle, saying, Hiro, come out! Come out wherever you are!

For 30 years, he would sneak into the village at night, steal food, fire shots. Now and then, he kept fighting.

[ 2 : 30 ] He didn't believe. In 1974, they found his commanding officer. If you know anything about Japanese soldiers, you would understand this. He went into the jungle and ordered Hiro to surrender.

Because of the way authority is in that culture, he did. But for 30 years, he fought a war that didn't matter.

For 30 years, he fought a war that was over. This morning, in our verses, the Apostle Paul is urging us to avoid the opposite danger.

These verses alert us that we're not vulnerable primarily for fighting a war that's already over, but for failing to fight a war that continues. Paul is bringing the book of Ephesians to a close.

This is the final exhortation. In many ways, just one final sentence. Finally calling them. You know, in so many ways, the book of Ephesians has been a tour de force, telling us all that is true of us in Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 34 ] We've said that again and again. Ephesians is about identity. Who am I? We'll find out in the pages of Scripture. It says we're once orphans, but now we're sons and daughters.

Once slaves, now redeemed. Once dead, now alive. Once lost, now found. Members of the household of God.

Once captives, now vital gifts of God to the body of Jesus Christ. Once ignorant, callous, separated from Christ, now imitators of God.

Once darkness, now light in the Lord. Once caught in the dead-end games of debauchery, but now filled with the Spirit. Sealed with the Spirit unto the Lord.

Paul prayed that we would have power to understand the greatness of what He's done for us in Christ. And surely after 28 sermons and 5 chapters, you know better of what God has done for you in Christ.

[ 4 : 32 ] How He's clothed you in Christ with a new identity. But we must not be confused, the Apostle is saying. Now that we know who we are in Christ, it's not as if there's a ceasefire.

It's not as if life is smooth sailing. It's not as if life is easy now. The reality that these verses underline is vital. We are at war. Verse 10 functions as a heading for the whole section.

Finally, be strong in the Lord. He's not saying, this is just another exhortation that I have for you. What he's saying is, from now on, devote yourself to these things.

From now on, you must remember that you are at war. Martin Lloyd-Jones says, this is one of the Apostles' most ringing and most eloquent statements of how the Christian life should be lived.

So how should it be lived? How's the Christian life? It's to be a fight.

[ 5 : 44 ] From beginning to end. It's to be a war. It's to be a battle. A wrestling contest.

What's your vision of the Christian life? Does this fit in the Christian bookstore? Sometimes the greatest trouble in the Christian life is failing to remember we're in a fight.

I find Peter's words so helpful. Don't think it's strange. There's nothing strange. What they did to the Master, they will do to the followers. So don't think it's strange.

You know, in so many ways, when we feel a strong headwind, we feel like we're on the verge of collapse, we feel like we're ready to quit. In many ways, the Apostle Paul would say, good, you're right in the center of the will of God.

You're right where you should be. Because there's a battle. And we've got to fight it. You know, the reality is more serious than just there's a war going on, you know, somewhere out there.

[ 6 : 50 ] We must struggle and fight because we have an enemy. We have an enemy within of remaining sin. That's not what the Apostle Paul is talking about in these verses. We have an enemy without in the immorality of this world.

It's Pride Month. We have an enemy without. A world that is not following God. But that's not primarily what the Apostle is talking about here. We have an enemy above. The enemy himself.

The Satan. The devil. We have an enemy. And these verses are not just calling us to warfare.

They're calling us to spiritual warfare. In a world where we're going in wage warfare and the strength of the Lord's saving might.

Wage warfare and the strength of the Lord's saving might. You know, these verses gather together three vital realities in my mind. As I was looking through this, they're very interwoven.

These first three verses that function in the spiritual armor of Ephesians 6. And they hold together three realities. Divine power. Supernatural enemies.

[ 7 : 53 ] And the need for human effort. And so they're intertwined, you know. And I made a little diagram. Oh, it's already up there. So enough of the preamble. You may fire.

This is why I'm not on the design team right here. But the way I, you know, these verses came together for me. And what I'm working from in my mind and heart is divine power.

This was all over these verses and you'll see that. It pushes us out down to deliverance from supernatural enemies. So we have real enemies that we need deliverance from.

And the only way we're going to find it is divine power. But those supernatural enemies continually push us towards human will and desperation. We're trying hard. We realize we have a fight and we must fight it.

And that desperation leads us back into dependence upon divine power. So to me, it's like a three-fold cord that's not easily broken, Ecclesiastes tells us.

[ 8 : 49 ] And that's the way these things come together. These three D's, I think, are so helpful. Deliverance, desperation, and dependence. It's where the Christian life is lived.

It is what defines Christian warfare in my mind. And so you may look at that diagram and think, whatever. But it helps me piece together these things.

And so Christian warfare is dependence on divine power. So what these verses are talking about is some way of living in dependence upon divine power. They are Christian warfare.

What makes it Christian is that we don't look from within, but we look without. We look to the Lord.

We look to His divine power. And the Apostle Paul, when he began this letter, he said that he would pray that we would have ability to understand the immeasurable greatness of His power towards us.

And these verses are littered with power. The Ephesians is littered with power. Able, power, working, strength, might. All the synonyms are running through these verses.

[ 9 : 52 ] But the vital thing for us right here in this context is not just to know the Lord's power, but to know how to come under it. How to experience it. How to live in it.

The power of God is not meant to be outside that we look at. We marvel at the heavens declaring the glory of God and the divine power on display in creation.

But what we need is to live in it. And that's what he's saying when he says, be strong. Now that's a command we've heard before. Be strong.

Shape up. Toughen up. We think. We're so conditioned to believe that what we need to do is immediately look for strength from within.

But that's not the command here for the Apostle. He's saying, be strong in the Lord. It's a passive command. The only way you can obey this command is by not looking at yourself.

[10:50] By looking at power from without. Looking at power from the Lord. Learning how to stand in the strength of another. And surely this is exactly what the Lord was doing when he said to Joshua, be strong and courageous for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

But this one is better because he's saying, be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. The one, the Father has exalted far above all rule and authority and power and dominion above every name that is named.

Not only in this age, but also in the one to come. Be strong in him. What is the strength of his might? You see that phrase, two words for power within that single phrase.

What is it? It's the power of Jesus Christ made available to us. The power of Jesus Christ made available to us by faith. That's this power. So how do we put it on?

Or how do we take it up? And he goes to this image of putting on immediately. You see that in verse 11. Put on the whole armor of God. Verse 13. Take up the whole armor of God.

[11:55] Talking about the power of God wonderfully as if, because it is, outside of us. Something we must come up under. And so he said, put it on. Take it up. He's talking.

He's using a clothing word. Word. Something all of us have to do. Everybody's got to stick, get on their pants one leg at a time. Everybody puts on clothing. They don't just fly on to us.

And so he's saying there's a similar thing going on when you're learning how to stand in the strength of Christ. And he's already said this. Remember he said, put off your old manner of life. Put on your new manner of life in Jesus Christ.

But here, it's not merely put on the new manner of life, but put on the armor of God. The military metaphor comes through again.

Put on armor. We're engaged in a war. We need to prepare to fight. Now many of us envision you see the armor of God. You immediately think of those kids' costumes.

[12:53] You know, I think we have five sets in our house or something. These kids' costumes. The breastplate of righteousness. The helmet of salvation. All those things. We immediately think of Roman armor. But that's not really what's behind these verses.

Roman armor is just protective armor. But that's not the armor here. It's literally all weapons. It's all the weapons you need to protect and to attack.

Because what we're trying to do is not merely protect from the enemy's devices, but we're trying to plunder his ranks. That's what the Lord Jesus came to do.

That's why he says the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Because it's hell's gates that we're going to. We proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and deliver people from Satan unto God.

And so he's saying, put on the armor. The whole armor. All the weapons that you need. And Taylor will answer all your burning questions about all the weapons next week.

[13:54] So power encounters. Here you come. But it's the armor of God. The armor of God. Now Ephesians, as we were talking about last week, was just this city fascinated with power.

Pantheon of idols. That just means, you know, all gods. So, you know, this, this, this, this, this. All the gods were on display.

A pantheon. That's what it's kind of saying. We worship everybody here. You know, that's the way the first century was. They're good with addition. You keep adding one in. They're not good with subtraction. You say, we can't worship that one.

And that's what brought so much trouble for Christians. And so they were fascinated with magic and curses. And we see that in Acts 19. They're obsessed with spiritual warfare. Spirits.

There's exorcists. Jewish exorcists roaming around these days in the first century. And in Ephesus. And so some say that's why the Apostle Paul starts talking about spiritual warfare.

[14:58] That's what's behind these verses. Ephesus was just a crazy place. And that's why he didn't take it up. And other books of the New Testament. He's talking about it here because it fits

there. But that's not true.

I don't think. The basis for this armor that we're going to unpack next week is the Old Testament. See, the ideal figure in the Bible is not a politician, a life hacker, or a social media influencer. Can we all thank God? The ideal figure in the Bible is a warrior king. David was a man after God's own heart. But he wasn't just a songbird.

He was a warrior. He led people into battle. He fought for his people. He paid a dowry of 300 Philistine foreskins for his wife. So too Samson, Gideon, Joshua, Ezra were warriors.

And why? Because the Lord is a warrior. When he delivered them through the Red Sea, Moses said, I will sing to the Lord for he's triumphed gloriously. The horse and the rider, he's thrown into the sea.

[15:59] He was the one fighting. The Lord is a man of war. What's our vision of God? Do we have that vision of God? This glorious Lord is a man of war.

The Lord is his name. The Lord continues to fight. I love the story with the Amalekites. Moses is up there calling them to fight. Raises his arms. Maybe like we do along the sidelines.

Calling them to go into the war. But every time he lowered his arms, they would start to lose the fight. Every time you raise them, they start winning again. His arms got tired, so Aaron and Herb raised up his arms.

Why did they only win? When his arms were raised, because they were weak on their own. But the Lord fights. He's strong. The Lord is a great warrior.

Years and years later, in the book of Isaiah, it's littered with these prophecies. The Lord promises to come and fight. The Lord says he's going to put on a breastplate of righteousness.

[17:02] He's going to put on the belt of truth and faithfulness. The Lord's going to put on the helmet of salvation and fight for his people. But here, the image is not of a heavily armored God coming to rescue us.

The image is of the armor being given to us. What's going on there? The armor of God is the armor he wears.

The armor of God is God himself. It's the eternal security we enjoy in Jesus Christ that makes you able to face down any foe.

It's the strength of his might. It's his armor, his goodness. Christian warfare begins in a way we don't imagine with realizing the complete security we enjoy in Jesus Christ.

The secret is not prayer walks, power encounters, and testing spirits. The secret is learning to live under the shadow of his wing. I remember years ago, I watched two friends die, two good friends die of cancer.

[18:10] Many die of cancer. Many people die of cancer. But it was the way they died that struck me. Without fear. I remember one friend named Doug.

The last Sunday, he came to church. The church I served and led worship. Back in those days, we recited the Heidelberg Catechism Question 1.

And he was standing next to his daughter, who was about five years old at the time. All his hair was gone because of cancer and leukemia and all the treatment.

And we recited, I'm not my own, but I belong, both body and soul and life and death, to my faithful Savior. It continues, He preserves me in such a way that without the will of my Heavenly Father, not a hair shall fall from my head.

His last Sunday, I think it may have been my last conversation with him, he said, you know what my daughter did when we recited that line? She grabbed my head, because he was in a wheelchair at that time, and said, that means your hair is too, Daddy.

[19:23] That may be the most powerful spiritual warfare I've ever been around. because he's realizing his life is completely clothed in Jesus Christ, so much so that the enemy can't even take a hair.

Christian warfare is dependence on divine power. Point two, Christian warfare is deliverance from supernatural enemies.

It's deliverance from supernatural enemies. The second vital reality of these verses is these supernatural enemies.

We need deliverance, you know, these supernatural enemies. We have a great enemy. These words come to us fast and straight. They come less like a letter now, and once the Apostle Paul's kind of meandering along, it seems, they come rather more like the final orders of a general before

he sends them into combat.

He says, these verses underline, the enemy will bring continuous, up-close, unconquerable warfare. The war is continuous. Stand against the schemes of the devil.

[ 20 : 41 ] The emphasis is not on the presence of his schemes, but on the repetition of them. They're plural. They're going to keep coming.

The enemy has many schemes. He's the God of this world. This conflict is a fact of this day. It calls it the evil day. Look in verse 13. You may be able to stand in the evil day.

You know, Paul's already said something similar to that. Watch carefully how you walk because the days are evil. He's not saying, you know, days in and of themselves are evil, but this age is an evil age because the enemy is not completely taken out and thrown into the lake of fire yet.

And so these are the days defined by this conflict. Conflict within, but conflict without between the enemy and the people of God.

And so one of the most important things every Christian must learn is how to tell time. Right now, we're in a time. We're in the present evil age is what Galatians 1 says.

[ 21 : 45 ] We're in this overlap of the ages. Even though we didn't realize that once we became Christians, we walked into a war. Into conflict. Before we were Christians, biblically, we were blind to any conflict.

That's what it felt like when I became a Christian. Don't be surprised. Don't be caught off guard. Our author, our book that we're giving out today, he says, Brian Hedges says, to watch means to watch out.

Watch and pray that you might not fall into temptation. Beware! Your enemies is more unrelenting than the black rider hunting the ring of power.

That's Lord of the Rings. He's more vicious than an angry koba cornered by a mongoose. He never goes on vacation. Watch your enemy because he is watching you.

You know, we get that in these movies. It's creepy seeing when someone wakes up and realizes his enemy is already there and watching him. Well, that's the reality of us in Christ. We're brought into a war in which the enemy is watching, prowling around.

[ 22 : 55 ] Every day you should wake up and say, I have a battle raging for my soul, biblically. So it's continuous. It's up close.

He says, we wrestle. Now Paul's compared the conflict to a warfare. Now he says, it's wrestling. So is it warfare with weapons that we hold out or is it wrestling with hands?

And it seems the apostle is bringing these two things together to help us see that this battle is up close, personal, intense. There's nothing more intense than battles we rage with our own hands.

He's saying, we're not at war with computer program missiles, global institutions. That's not primarily what we should be thinking about. We are immersed in hand-to-hand conflict. We have an enemy who's interfering with daily life.

Interfering with work. Interfering with the home. One of the greatest mistakes we can make in spiritual warfare is to relegate it to the strange and spooky. The weirdos that see devils behind every bush that interpret everything along that grid.

[ 24 : 03 ] One of the greatest mistakes is you cut off so much of the understanding of what spiritual warfare is. It is an up close wrestling with an enemy who is as close as your hands.

So it's continuous. It's up close and it's unconquerable in and of our own strength. Look at the way verse 12 begins. He says, put on the whole armor of God.

In verse 11, you may be able to stand. Verse 12, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

We've read that so many times we might not realize what the Apostle Paul is saying there.

You know, a famous soldier I was reading about this week in Athens once said to his famous or his fellow soldiers before a battle, since we are about to fight let us not in any event think that we're engaging the enemy's gods.

They are flesh and blood like us. What's he saying? They're men like we are. We can take them. We do the same thing before a big game. They're just blokes like we are.

[ 25 : 11 ] We can take these guys. They don't have supernatural strength but the Apostle Paul is saying the opposite. They are not flesh and blood. These enemies are not someone you can conquer on your best day.

If you're prayed up, clothed in your right mind, doing your devotion, these are not the enemies you can take out on your own. He's saying, no, and then he continues, our enemies are rulers against

authorities, against cosmic powers over this present darkness, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

He's underlining the great power of demonic forces. What are they? They're rulers and authorities. He said the same thing about Jesus Christ already.

Jesus Christ exalted above all rule and authority. So He is exalted in heaven. He is the ruler over heaven. Well, there are rulers and authorities over this present darkness.

Jesus is exalted in the heavens and there are rulers and authorities here. Don't be confused.

[ 26 : 26 ] cosmic powers. What's He... That really, world powers. What's He saying? Demonic forces are not local. They're not tribal deities.

This town kind of is into that demonic force or something like that. They are reaching out. They are everywhere. Working. They're not limited to one people or one nation.

Sometimes it can seem that way. Cosmic powers over this present darkness. That's the day we live in.

This evil age. An age of darkness. He continues, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. What it means is not that spiritual forces of evil are in heaven even though they are underneath God's rule and reign.

What He's saying is spiritual forces are in unseen places. The enemy is at work in unseen ways.

[ 27 : 30 ] And behind these forces in this present darkness is Satan himself. Satan, we know biblically, according to Christ, is an angelic creature who has fallen from light.

He's a creature, but he's fallen because of his pride. He rages against the Lord and His people. Throughout Scripture, He is called many things. The accuser, the deceiver, the father of lies, the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air.

Just a way of talking about this day that He rules over. The liar, the tempter, He directs all the unseen demonic forces of this present darkness.

He is behind the atrocity of abortion. He's behind the normalizing of so-called same-sex marriage.

He's behind Pride Month, I believe, and the aggressive assault on human nature created male and female in the image of God.

He's behind the billion-dollar porn industry, damning souls to hell and ripping families apart. We could go on and on. We could talk about what the enemy is up to, but the greatest and most heinous evil the enemy is doing is blinding the minds of unbelievers.

[ 28 : 45 ] That's the way we see it. We have a darkness within. We have a blindness because of our nature. We have a love of the flesh, a love of self.

love of self. But we have a blindness because of the enemy as well. That's the way we see it.

We see that in the parable. We see it most in the parable of Christ, parable of the soils or the seeds. We see it also in 2 Corinthians 4 where he tells us that the God of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers to keep them from coming to a knowledge of the truth.

When we proclaim the gospel, we're proclaiming the gospel to people captive to the devil's will. 2 Timothy tells us. People who are not doing their own will primarily but doing the will of the prince of the power of the air.

When someone becomes a Christian they're delivered from Satan to God. The Lord Jesus called the Apostle Paul when the scales fell from his eyes.

[ 29 : 56 ] Remember on the road to Damascus he said I'm sending you to open the eyes of the Gentiles so that you might turn them from darkness to light and the power of Satan to God.

So this image that we talked about last week that image of slavery to sin we could also say slavery to the enemy to the devil himself and now called out from darkness to light from slavery to the devil to slavery to God.

That is what happens when someone becomes a Christian at one time you were darkness you were captivated by this present darkness enslaved to this present darkness but now you're lighting the Lord and wonderfully Satan and so many of his abilities are taken out he can no longer accuse us before God he can no longer snatch us from the Father's hand nevertheless the New Testament teaches us that Satan is still at work in the lives of Christians Satan seems and there's so much we can say about this and as I said Taylor's going to solve your problems next week Satan seeks to weaken!

to weaken our faith with accusation it seems to me biblically that much of the enemy's work is in the mind it makes sense you know he's an unseen force he's spiritual so much is in the mind he's the

accuser of the brethren that's what Revelation tells us he's the prince of the power of the air 2 Corinthians says he raises arguments against the truth one of the most common tactics of the devil is to assault our assurance with accusation doubts fears false teaching evil thoughts depression and discouragement how do we know it's the devil how do you know that it's the devil or just kind of working up from within I think you know it's the devil if you hate what you're thinking because the flesh loves the flesh but you hate that I think it's the Lord throwing it at you you know fight the good fight of faith take every thought captive it's what the Bible would say it's a battle for the mind it's where it rages and often does

Satan also he weakens our faith through accusation he seeks to snuff out our faith with pleasure he weakens it through accusation he seeks to snuff it out with pleasure the thorns that choke out the seed from barren fruit of the cares of this world riches and possessions they don't look so thorny to me they don't seem dangerous what's so dangerous about excess income what's so dangerous about extravagant self-focused vacation what's so dangerous about nice possessions they don't look like thorns but eventually all of them begin to whisper in unison you don't need God you don't need to be so committed to him so committed to what he's doing in the world keep that dollar for yourself build bigger barns that didn't go so well for the rich fool the Lord and I think

[ 33 : 14 ] Satan's at work in pleasure he does so much work rest relax eat drink don't worry about that but if he cannot snuff out our faith with pleasure he seeks to destroy our faith with pain 1 Peter says this so well says be sober minded be watchful your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour resist him firm in your faith knowing that the same kinds of sufferings are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world what is it what's going on so he's seeking someone to devour you see that in the second sentence your adversary is prowling around seeking someone to devour well how does he devour what is he doing that devours resisting firm faith knowing the same kinds of sufferings and so this devouring happens through suffering we know from revelation that he can put people into prison and so the devouring happens through suffering he calls it to the saints and so the Lord or the Satan is doing his best work in suffering we see that in 2 Corinthians 12 where the apostle says he had a thorn in the flesh a messenger from Satan to harass him what is Satan doing most often he's doing his work through suffering there's few songs that capture the pain of suffering for me more than

I dreamed a dream from the musical Les Miserables got popular a number of years ago when Hugh what's his name was in it Hugh Jackman was in it and played Jean Valjean but I Dreamed a Dream is one of the most devastating songs I've ever heard in my life the character Fantine loses her job and is forced to prostitution to survive she has a young daughter so she's forced to earn money in that heinous way to provide for a child and after enduring that wicked act she sings a song she sings this song I Dreamed a Dream the song begins bright begins beautiful you know she talks about a day as a kid when dreams were coming true she says there was a time when men were kind when the world was a song and love would never die you know you've had seasons like that man we're invincible everything's great sun's shining down on me she said there was no song unsung no wine untasted she's just enjoying the blessings of life and then she says times change things change darkness and pain begin to enter she says the tigers come at night they tear your hope apart they turn your dream to shame her lover stole her children and left her all alone she concludes the song and says

I dream my life would be so different than this hell I'm living in life has killed the dream I dreamed now you may think I can't relate to Fantine I haven't endured stuff like that I haven't been forced to prostitute myself but the New Testament never says that to you it never says you should look at someone else's suffering and say I shouldn't think deeply about my suffering because my suffering is not their suffering instead the reality is we all have dreams we all have hopes and plans we have things we think we were born for but life has a way of making us suffer taking what we want giving us what we don't want whenever that happens that's suffering and whenever that happens that is where

Satan is doing his deepest darkest work whether you're suffering his cancer or criticism sickness or slander death of a close friend or discouragement financial loss or loneliness uncontrollable fears or anger what you are suffering is not the most important thing you can get that out of your mind it's not the most important thing the most important thing is that Satan is behind that work seeking to destroy your faith seeking to get you to ask questions like does God really want what's best for you does God really care about you is God really watching after you surely if he were watching this

wouldn't happen this heinous evil wouldn't happen but that's not what the Lord is speaking to you that is what the enemy is speaking to you to devour your faith I love what the Lord said to Peter Satan demanded to have you Peter but I

I prayed for you that your faith would remain strong and that's what the Lord wants to say to you the devil prowls around he knows your address the Lord is praying for you that your faith would remain strong so we have to prepare to fight it's Father's Day I wonder if our home lives like it's a home at war are we the ones leading the fight girding up the loins of the people in our household with the truth of the gospel preparing the people of our household for the seduction of pleasure of success and popularity power and all these things this list that keeps going on that will destroy you we're preparing our people to suffer one of the greatest gifts you can give your kids is talk about suffering why not so you can be just pessimistic and sad all the time you know but so that you're preparing them for real life life is not a flowery bed of ease prepare your kids for it and the battle is not just when you don't get the promotion you want the main battle is the enemy so prepare them there's one way to survive this war that's to take up the armor of God we need deliverance from God we need we're desperate for him and we depend on him point three

[ 40 : 41 ] Christian warfare is desperation and human effort the third vital reality for Christian warfare is desperation I mean if you're not desperate now then I don't know how to help you you know you should be desperate this is serious you're not wrestling against flesh and blood you're wrestling against something more serious you think your problem in your marriage is just your spouse and their issues or something like that no you have an unseen demonic enemy at work seeking to divide what God has joined together that's what he always does and so your enemy is more than flesh and blood you should be desperate we should be desperate as a people and Christ tells us we got to take up this armor it begins with human effort or includes human effort he says verse 11 put on the whole armor of God that you may stand verse 13 take up that you may withstand in the evil day you know wonderfully in our church we celebrate the absolute sovereignty of God and yet we don't celebrate in such a way that we minimize man's responsibility and that's what we see in this passage we got to take up the armor!

of God there are people that will not endure because they did not obey this command I feel like as Christians we often live like there's only two responses either I rock or I stink if I rock at something if I'm good then the Lord is with us he's with me we're rocking and rolling everything's great but if we stink then we quit we're done lowering the snake's belly I'm not getting out of bed today but the Christian life cannot be lived in any either extreme Christian lives Christian lives live right down the middle you will never do anything for God that doesn't need to be washed in the blood of Jesus Christ no Bible study no day of parenting no good work no service nothing all you do is imperfect blemished and so you got to take it up you got to fight where you are you got your demons but you got to get out of bed and fight you got to lay hold of the truth of

God and scripture you got to learn how to run and hide you know you got to learn how to hide in the shelter of his wings it's one thing to know where the refuge is it's another thing to know how to run into it I remember one night or one late afternoon we had backpacking with my son through the Grayson Highlands State Park and you know it's about to be a big issue in my parenting about to be fired from my wife but we got up there and a storm came on us and it was March and it got really cold you know in the 40s we didn't have anything but shorts and had some wool socks and it started hailing and I remember putting my wool socks on my young son he's like seven years ago he's shivering in the rain and the hail and I'm you know there's these moments as a dad when you're like I gotta get off this mountain by golly there's one thing I gotta do I'm a dead man in so many ways and it's just hailing down on us we're running through this rock field and suddenly it just came down really hard we saw this cleft in the rock and we run up there hide under the cleft as the hail keeps pounding down on us when in many ways that's what these we did get off the mountain by the way and the sun's still alive but that's what's going on in these verses there's a hail storm going on the main point is not you summon your inner strength but you know where to run you gotta run to the shelter you gotta run to the Lord you want your family to withstand the evil day you wanna stand firm you want your family to take captive every thought to turn away from the wrecking ball of anger wrath and bitterness you want your children to avoid the easy life of snares of popularity and possessions you want the good of assurance you gotta fight you want a satisfying marriage you want peace and contentment the battle rages right before your eyes all week long this is the path the Christian life is warfare and you gotta wage it nothing the Lord does in this world is done without

cooperating with our response and our labor and that's what he's saying here so wage the good warfare and the strength of the

Lord's saving might be strong in the Lord and the strength of his might that's a great verse to commit to memory hold it this is what you must do from now on from now on you might think of that dumb song from now on this is what you must do until you see him face to face too many have already made shipwreck of their faith let it not be said of us Father in heaven we cast ourselves onto you we need you we rest in you we hide in you the name of the Lord is a strong tower and the righteous man runs to it and is safe Lord we want to be safe in this storm Lord we want to learn how to walk as though someone were walking in us and working through us we want to learn how to abide under the shadow of your wing we want to learn how to cling to you to sing for joy underneath your mighty hand to cast our anxieties to you so that you might exalt us at the proper time [ 46 : 35 ] Lord help us there's a new way to be human we want to walk in the power of Jesus Christ come by your spirit we pray help us we pray for the glory of Christ and for the taking down of our enemy in Jesus name amen you've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at [trinitygraceathens.com](http://trinitygraceathens.com)