

# Eph. 6.10-17 Donned for Spiritual Battle

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] If you've read many battle narratives, especially pre-modern battle narratives, you'll probably notice how through the narrative they're able to describe in detail things that are occurring and the effect that has on the senses.

For example, if reading about a battle which occurred and lines are formed in defense against an invading army that's coming to destroy the people, as they line up and prepare themselves to wait for the advancement of this opposition, the battle narratives draw out specific details and the effect that that has on the emotions, on the senses of the people.

I might describe, for example, how perhaps they cannot see the advancing army, but what you can see is the dust that's rising off the ground across the whole horizon, which just shows the vastness of the army which is coming towards, which would be quite intimidating.

And as such, the people's senses, the tacky psyche, the fight or flight might start to kick in and they might get a little antsy and perhaps breathing might change and the pulses might quicken and breathing become shallow and palms become sweaty and the people become anxious and nervous.

And the command is given. And what's the command that's given? They tell them to stand the ground. They tell them to hold. And then as the enemy advances, the enemy army advances even closer, they start to see thousands and thousands of men advancing towards them in arms.

[ 1 : 4 0 ] And as they're advancing, they describe the sound, how it's thundering or how it's like a forceful waterfall, the sound of thousands of footsteps or horses hooves against the ground and the dust rising and what it does to the senses of the soldiers who are trying to stand their ground and how the senses, they start to lose dexterity or their fine motor skills.

And fight or flight will want to kick in. Maybe they'll want to desert, to turn around and to run and leave a vacancy in line where they're at. Or maybe they might even have the fight tendency, perhaps out of misplaced zeal or out of anger to charge without the line and without the support of their line, of their army.

So the command is given still to hold. Perhaps they have bows, perhaps they have muskets, they might be tempted to fire too soon before the army is within range because of the anxiety, because of the nervousness.

But in doing so, it would be of no effect. And then they wouldn't have the opportunity. Perhaps they're told or commanded to wait till you can see the whites in their eyes, these descriptions which help kind of put you in place and understand the need for them to be strengthened, to find courage. They're commanded in ways to give them courage, to give them strength and to hold. You probably recall in reading these battle narratives how they're continually told to hold, to hold.

[ 3 : 1 2 ] And when they're advancing, to hold still until at just the right time. So also, the church in this present evil age, in this spiritual battle, is given the charge to stand firm.

You'll notice in verses 10 to 17, the church is told to take a stand in verse 11, to stand your ground in verse 13, and to stand firm in 14.

Let's read Ephesians 6, verses 10 to 17. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness 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. Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

[ 4 : 37 ] Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Our great God, we thank you for your word, that which is divine testimony, that we have supernatural revelation. We pray, Lord, that as we seek to understand your word, that you, by your spirit, would lead us into all truth, that you would illuminate your word to us, and make it effectual to us.

We pray, Lord, that you would be at work, that you would use Eve and me, that you would edify the saints, and advance your kingdom. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So, as mentioned, our text this morning will be verses 14 to 17.

And it's a fairly large portion to work through. It will be a faster pace and more of an overview, a high-level overview. But in this text, in these verses, what's going on is that in this present spiritual battle, believers are called to stand firm in the Lord's strength and in the Lord's armament.

So, first of all, there's the call to strength. Secondly, there's the reality of battle. And third, the armament of battle. So, that's the call to strength, the reality of battle, and the armament of battle.

[ 5 : 58 ] Now, you notice the text starts off by saying, finally. This portion, verses 14 to 24, is the end of the letter to the Ephesians.

But it's not an appendix that's tapped on to the end. Rather, by starting off by saying, finally. Finally, what it is, is that it's in light of all which has already been covered.

Faith and obedience. The theoretical and the practical. Right knowledge and right conduct. In light of all of these things. The covenant of redemption. The covenant of grace.

And all that follows out of that. In light of all these things. Finally. And then, my brethren. The book of Ephesians always addresses in the plural.

If you recall in Ephesians 1, it's written to the saints. Saints, plural. And in 2, verse 1. And you, he made alive.

[ 6 : 55 ] The word you in the Greek is a plural word. To be understood as the reader being in the plural. And then also in verse 4, when it transitions into right conduct.

It's, I beseech you to walk worthy. And again, the word you there is plural. To be understood in the plural as the brethren. Finally, my brethren.

Plural, corporately. That is the church. What's not in view in our text is nomadic lone rangers. In battles or in war. Those who are a lone ranger are easy to pick off.

Rather, the call here to stand firm is to stand firm together. To stand your ground with the troops.

That is, with the church. And to not desert the troops. So, the first point is the call to strength.

Thomas Aquinas, in his commentary on this text, he writes this. The apostle has previously written down many general and particular instructions aimed at destroying the old man of sin and encouraging the newness of grace.

[ 8 : 04 ] Now, he speaks of the power by which we must carry out these precepts. For we must trust in divine assistance.

So, the call to strength includes both the exhortation and the explanation. So, first of all, the exhortation and the call to strength.

It says, be strong or be strengthened. And to be strengthened is a call to be courageous, a call to be constant. So, how does one, how does a Christian, how does a believer, how does the church be strengthened to be courageous and to be constant?

There's the internal reality of courage and the external reality of courage. Now, understand when I say the internal reality of courage, I'm not speaking to looking internally, to looking to ourselves for strength or as the source of power.

Such as the world will do with their self-help protocols is to look within or navel-gazing, looking down at ourselves. We're not to look down at ourselves, but here the call to be strengthened is to look not to ourselves, but to raise our gaze, to look up, to look to our source as strength.

[ 9 : 17 ] It says, be strengthened in the Lord and in the power of his might. That is, be strengthened on God's great power. It speaks to the perfection of God's power.

Now, we might say or hear somebody say that God has power. Well, what that's getting at is that God is powerful. It doesn't get to the point.

It's not that God has power because he has a possession. It's not that God possesses something outside of himself and takes it to himself, but rather that God is power.

God is almighty. All that is in God is God. So we're speaking of divine, eternal omnipotence, his perfection of power.

And it says here to be strengthened in the power of his might. Now, we are creatures, and sometimes we may have a tendency to think of God according to our own creatureliness.

[ 10 : 22 ] And as creatures, we are bound by time. We are bound by succession. There is a past, and we cannot reach into the past to change it. We are in the present, and that's the moment which we are in.

There's the future which has not yet occurred to us. And sometimes we have a tendency to predicate this thinking onto God as though he was a creature.

God is not a creature. God is the eternal creator. Now, God's eternity does not mean that he merely exists for as far back as you can think and as far forward as you can think.

It's like God's existence is not bound by time. Rather, God fills all space and time. And for us, while we may have the past and the present and the future, God's acting is not an action which occurred previously and then stopped.

Or God's acting is not something that has yet to happen as far as a perspective as God. Rather, God being eternal, God is pure act. That is, he acts without the restrictions of time.

[ 11 : 28 ] So, where something may have happened in the past and our perception according to a timeline of succession of change as creatures. For example, we can say creation. Or we can say the crucifixion.

Or we could say Christ's return. All these things to us are on a timeline. Either have occurred and have ended or are about to occur and has not yet started. But for God being pure act, his acting, there was never a time where he was not pure act.

There was never a time where he had to start acting and stop acting. So that means there is not a time where we have to wait for him to act. But God being eternal acts according to his perfection of being eternal.

And his eternal acting is omnipotent. God is almighty. His acting and that which we as creatures experience temporally is almighty.

And that is the strength in which believers, which the church, are here called to strengthen themselves according to. Our source, the source of the strength of the church of believers and their call to be strengthened, to stand firm, is in the eternal omnipotence of God.

[ 12 : 40 ] So, a call to strength according to the internal reality of courage, that is divine, eternal omnipotence. And a call to strength according to the external reality of courage, and that is the full armor of God.

The saints, the church, the people of God, the citizens of Christ's kingdom, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, are under the protection of the king. And that king is almighty.

However, being under the protection of the king, we are still called, that is, it is imperative in our text, to be adorned before going into battle.

To be adorned for battle. In Romans 13, 12, it says, Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Our text says, the full armor. There are to be no chinks in the armor, no exposure to which there are weaknesses.

[ 13 : 47 ] Putting on the full armor involves both the defensive armor as well as the offensive armor. So, the exhortation and the call to courage to be strengthened, and next is the explanation.

The explanation for the call to courage. Why it is so important to be strengthened in the Lord and the power of his might. Now, to make the point, let's say the year is 1996.

It's Black Friday. They've just released a new toy called the Tickle Me Elmo. And you make your way to the local Kmart to acquire a Tickle Me Elmo on a Black Friday sale.

So, you go to Walmart, and there's the blue light special. The Black Friday sale, the blue light special of the newly released Tickle Me Elmo.

And you go up there. Believe it or not, you get the last one. There's only one left, and you got it. And you turn around to go to the cashier, and then there she is, a desperate mom, who has to have a Tickle Me Elmo to bring home to lay before the altar of her spoiled, undisciplined child.

[ 15 : 03 ] And you stand between her and that last Tickle Me Elmo. Now, the wrestle that would ensue would be a struggle indeed, but she is not an expert.

However, as much as the struggle would be real, she is not an expert in the arts of grappling or in the arts of wrestling. So, let's escalate it to the point of experts. Let's say you have to compete going toe-to-toe against a professional mixed martial arts title holder.

He is an expert. He is the expert in grappling of those whom are alive, and you now have to go toe-to-toe to him. The struggle would be far more significant than with the mama bear.

That being said, even with the wrestling expert, the leading wrestling expert, the wrestling expert is not the magnitude of the rule and rank of our enemy.

Do you grasp this? We can think about the struggle of having to wrestle against somebody who's alive, and if we take it to the point of the leading expert, professional leading expert in the art of grappling, of wrestling, even that does not compare to the magnitude of the rule and rank of our enemy.

[16:30] And this is important for us to understand. These earthly opponents fall short in comparison to the difficulty, to the strength, and to the rank of the spiritual adversary and the forces of darkness.

Which brings us to our second point, that the call to be strengthened in the Lord is necessary because the battle is real. So, secondly, the reality of battle.

Given the reality of battle, we see the realm and rank of the enemy and the tactics of the enemy. So, what is the realm and rank of the opposition?

It says in our text here that our wrestle is not against flesh and blood. So, understand that this does not exclude flesh and blood, but rather that it is more than just that.

Just as in a battle, there's a rider and a horse, the opposition isn't the horse, but that doesn't mean that the horse is not involved in the battle.

[17:33] Rather, the horse is instrumental to the rider. The enemy is the rider on the horse. It's not the horse, but that doesn't mean the horse is not there. Our wrestle is not against flesh and blood.

And what this means is that the enemy forces goes beyond flesh and blood. It is not only or it is not principally flesh and blood.

The darkness of this present evil age, how far back does it go? What I'm getting at as, in our days, in this time, in the present evil age, the darkness of this present evil age, it goes back to the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

In Genesis 3.15, in the declaration of the curse, what we see is that there will be enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

And then, what follows next? Abel is righteous, Cain is not righteous, and Cain murders Abel. There is enmity, and that enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent continues, and it will continue until Christ's return, which is why all creation groans, and we pray for Christ's return.

[18:56] The darkness of this present evil age goes back to Genesis 3.15, and in our text, in verse 11, we see the devil, that is, the prince of the world, the prince of the power of the air.

And the worldly-minded, or the seed of the serpent, they follow after him. They walk according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air.

And then furthermore, in verse 12, we see listed principalities, powers, rulers, darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

See, the call to be strengthened in the Lord is necessary because the battle is real. Now, if you've read any stories about underdogs, an underdog story, typically, there's a bully, and the bullies in these stories, you notice, they don't try to pick fights with those whom are much bigger and more powerful to them, than them.

They don't try to pick fights with those whom they've lost to before. Rather, they try to pick fights with those whom they know that they can tower over top of. As the church, we need to understand that the enemy is powerful and strong.

[20:15] It is the rulers of darkness, that it is those who rule in darkness. In this listing, the principalities, powers, rulers, darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, this is drawn from something we've read previously in the book of Ephesians.

It probably sounds familiar to you as you read it. It's drawn from 1, 21 to 22. So keep your finger here, we'll return to this, but just flip over to Ephesians 1, 21 to 22, but we'll start reading in 19. Remembering that the call to be strengthened in the Lord is necessary because the battle is real, and it lists principalities, powers, rulers, darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the

heavenly places.

Now let's read 1 from 19 to 22, understanding the exceeding greatness of the almighty power of God. Starting in 19, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe? According to the working of his mighty power, which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

[ 21 : 29 ] Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him to behead over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all and all.

The enemy is powerful and strong, but be assured, Christ is greater. Christ who is king of kings, Christ who is our king is greater.

In Colossians 1.16 speaking of the preeminence of Christ, it says, For by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he may have the preeminence.

[ 22 : 40 ] The call to be strengthened in the Lord is necessary because the battle is real and the enemy is powerful and strong, but be reassured, Christ our king is greater. Our text tells us to put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against what?

To stand against the wiles or the snares. This is in reference to the tactics of the enemy as well as force. You need to understand that the enemy is out to destroy.

The enemy is not out to coexist on the battlefield, which means that the threat is real. The threat of the enemy is real. And this battle is about sin and righteousness.

What he's not getting at here, he's not getting about paranoia, about demons or being obsessed about demons or about deliverance ministries, which seems to go hand in hand with prosperity gospel, which is a different gospel, where they seek to name specific demons and cast them out in various things.

That is not what's in view here. It's not deliverance ministries. It's not paranoia about demons. It's a battle about sin and righteousness. Now, it says, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

[ 24 : 06 ] So speaking about the tactics of the enemy, and the tactics is to alienate from God through disobedience. Now, if you recall certain things we've worked through in the book of Ephesians, in verses 2, 1-3, and 4-18, and 19, is that the devil, the adversary, seeks to alienate from God through disobedience.

Further, like, has tactics seeking to blind by ignorance and corrupt thinking, in Ephesians 4, 17-18, and, furthermore, to cause discord, to cause discord through sins of greed, lies, anger, and related sins, in Ephesians 4, 22-31.

Now, in Isaiah 5, 20, pay attention to what this says. It says, Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil, who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

evil, what does this imply? It means that there are those who do call good evil, and evil good. It implies that there is evil, and that there are those who will call evil good, and furthermore, that there is judgment proclaimed against them.

For there to be judgment proclaimed against them, it must be a reality that there is evil, and there are those, and there will be those, who call good evil, and evil good.

[ 25 : 42 ] Evil does exist. It is a reality that good is called evil, and evil good. And there may be the wiles of the devil, or the tactics of the enemy, both publicly or privately.

Let me explain a public attack of the tactics of the devil. It might be, for example, if you're familiar with the St. Bartholomew's Day, I was going to say what it is, but I'll give it away before I explain it. On August 24th of 1572, there was opposition between Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity. the Reformed Protestants. And monarchy was Catholic, and the Catholic monarchy was seeking to get rid of Protestant Reformed Christians.

What they did was they sent invitation to a marriage to all the Huguenots, the Huguenots in France. so the Huguenots were the French Reformed Christians, Protestant believers, inviting to a

marriage, and it proved to be a ruse.

[ 27 : 09 ] It wasn't a marriage, and bringing together all of these Huguenots, these Reformed Christians, it turned out to be a massacre. It was a massacre where there was so much blood that was shed that those who observed described it as the river running red from all the blood of those who were massacred and being choked with the bodies of those who had been slaughtered.

So we're not talking about a couple dozen, we're not talking about a couple hundred, but it's estimated that it was approximately 20,000 who were killed in this massacre because they were Christians, because they were not Catholic.

And it's a rough estimate, but that whole attempt to exterminate Reformed Protestant Huguenots, it's estimated that anywhere between 30,000 to 70,000 were killed.

This is public. This is a public act of murder, an attempt to extinguish good, to extinguish that which is godly, to extinguish the advancements of the gospel.

Sometimes it's public attacks and sometimes it's private attacks. It's private because it's not private. There is nobody looking. There is nobody around. Nobody would even know. When there is no persecution, but there is ease and comfort and it's not private, nobody even knows.

[ 28 : 38 ] There's public attacks and there's private attacks. So this brings us to a third point, which is the reality of spiritual battle necessitates dawning of armament for battle.

The reality of spiritual battle necessitates the dawning of armament for battle. So we're going to do a quick overview, high level, of the armament of battle. So number three, the armament of battle. It involves the preparation, the protection, and the advancement in battle. Arms are to be taken up. This is analogical language, using body armor, analogically, to understand that which is spiritual. So armor is necessary, armament is necessary. Ephesians 5.15 says, redeeming the time, why? Redeeming the time because the days are evil.

The enemy is strong, evil, and shrewd. You will be assaulted where the weakest, where the most exposed. So, put on the full armor of God.

[ 29 : 50 ] First of all, having girded your waist with truth. Girded your waist with truth. It says, gird your loins, girding your loins is securing clothing under the armor.

Again, remember, this is analogous language, allegorically. Girding your loins is checking and bridling carnal desires. Checking to see what carnal desires are there and bridling living lives of piety.

Girding your loins, having girded your loins with the waist, sorry, girding your waist with truth. It's with truth. It's not a pretense. It's not just something that's a display for those who are watching. It's not just for your parents' approval. It's with truth, not a pretense, but with right, pure, true, pious intentions. Secondly, having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

The breastplate is of righteousness or of justice. Now, as a breastplate covers and protects the organs of the body, righteousness, or the breastplate of righteousness protects the integrity of virtues.

[ 31 : 05 ] But we have to ask the question, what righteousness? What righteousness protects? John Gill, in his commentary on this verse, he writes this, and this is very important.

He says, it seems best to understand this of the righteousness of Christ, which being imputed by God and received by faith, is a guard against and repels the accusations and charges of Satan, and is a security from all wrath and condemnation.

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and third, having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Being prepared and ready with the mind raised to heavenly mindedness, and not consumed with worldly mindedness.

It is so easy for us to be caught up with that which is worldly and to be caught up in worldly mindedness but we are to be caught up with heavenly mindedness, being prepared and ready.

To understand the analogy in battle, like having nails driven through the soles for grip, to get grip, it is the gospel of peace that gives the church a firm grip, that is firm footing and readiness for battle.

[ 32 : 29 ] It might be hard for us to understand the concept of driving nails through the feet, but if you want to have a better understanding of being firm footed, go find a patch of exposed clay, wait for after lots of rain, grab a pair of crocs, put your crocs on and try to portage a canoe and see what it means whether or not you are firm footed, and you will see that it is not the right footwear, it is not the right footwear to be sure footed.

So having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Now it says above all, this is crucial, above all, crucial protection, just as the heart and the brain needs protection in battle, taking the shield of faith.

A shield protects the heart, and faith must be in the heart to protect it. Faith receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption is compared to a shield.

It's used metaphorically as a shield is in battle, so it's faith receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption. And it says, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Now, we're not, what it's getting at, the word for darts, is the sharp pointed arrowheads. So you can imagine, trying to protect yourself while there is arrows coming down on you like sheets of rain.

[ 34 : 07 ] Not only arrows trying to pierce you, but arrows that are on fire. Fiery darts, which are the temptations which inflame man's lusts.

The theological virtue of faith repels that which attacks the faith. The burning carnal desires. Taking the shield of faith. Now, multiple shields, again, the analogy of battle, multiple shields stacked together form a wall in battle.

Each person who has their shield that stacks it and locks them together, when they're joined together, it forms a wall. And then locking them together overhead provides a wall of protection and a protection from a barrage of fiery arrows.

Now, if somebody was to drop their shield or to turn and run, then it would no longer be a wall. The shield, when they lock it together, the shield not only protects themselves, it also protects those beside them.

It protects the line instead of causing there to be a vulnerability in the line. Faith locked together in unity in the church forms a protective wall against burning carnal desires that attack believers.

[ 35 : 35 ] Now, apparently, with the Spartans, it was more serious and dishonorable for them to lose their shield in battle than it was to lose their sword. In other words, it would be better to lose their sword than to lose their shield.

The reason why is because the shield is necessary for the collective responsibility of defending themselves and the whole unit. So, again, by dropping the shield, it didn't just endanger themselves, it endangered the whole line which they were to stand together, locked together. The shield of faith protects the objective truth of the gospel and it is vital to self as well as the entirety of the church. In fact, the Spartans were taught that it would be better for them to return from battle being carried on their shield than it would be to come back from battle without your shield.

Come back with your shield or being carried on it. Again, the shield of faith protects the objective truth of the gospel, vital to self as well as the entirety of the church. This is crucial protection, remember, above all.

So, above all, take the shield of faith and then take the helmet of salvation. Taking the helmet of salvation is being strengthened in hope, the hope of salvation, being reassured that union with Christ means eternally secure in him.

[ 36 : 59 ] Crucial protection. There is armament for defense and there is armament for offense or for advancing in battle.

And thus far it has been primarily defensive and now it transitions, while still defensive, it transitions into that which is offense, which is the sixth, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Hebrews 4.12, it explains that, for the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, is defense against carnality, which strikes back with scripture, against temptation and against false teaching.

It penetrates the heart and fighting against sin, fighting against spiritual powers. So, this being said, some concluding uses to draw out of the text.

[ 38 : 03 ] First of all, we must understand that the battle is won. It is finished. Now, Christ has gained the victory.

If you recall, when we were in Ephesians 4, in verse 8, we saw Christ's victory gifts, that having obtained the victory, as he ascended on high, he gave gifts to men.

Christ's victory gifts. But if the victory has won, why is there still remaining battle? The battle is won, it is finished, and remember, God is eternal.

That which God accomplishes, God's perfect plan of redemption. We are in the in-between, that which has already been accomplished, the kingdom has already been inaugurated, but not yet consummated.

Kingdom citizens are pilgrims in this world, and we are on our way. We are temporal, temporal, we are not eternal, so we experience God's plan of redemption according to time, as it works out in time, but God, remember, is not temporal.

[ 39 : 10 ] God is eternal. The battle is won, it is finished, and we are experiencing God's plan of redemption being worked out in time. The battle is won.

Christ is victorious, Christ is king, Christ is seated on high, with all authority, with all dignity, with all power, Christ reigns. Second of all, this is not literal military arms.

This is not a call to take up literal military arms. The kingdom of Israel is not advanced by military conquest, that is, by sword and spear.

In Isaiah 2, 4, it says, listen to this, they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. The military tools of war are transformed into gardening tools of peace.

Remember, our battle is not against flesh and blood. Israel was advanced, it was expanded, by military conquest, by sword and by spear.

[ 40 : 17 ] The kingdom of Christ, the new kingdom, is advanced not by force at the tip of the sword, but in a way akin to agricultural crop husbandry.

And even still, even in this, it is important to know that there will be opposition. So, we are pilgrims, we are on our way, and on this pilgrimage, there will be opposition in defensively battling against remaining corruption.

Believers who have been regenerated, who have been forgiven of sin, and indwelt with the Holy Spirit, still have remaining corruption. There is still a battle that remains.

The battle is against remaining corruption, as well as opposition and advancing the gospel by the apologetic and evangelistic proclamation of the kingdom of Christ.

The public proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ will face opposition. So, from that, we see the necessity of the church being the pillar and ground of the truth by pure preaching of the word.

[ 41 : 25 ] This means that we need to pray for healthy churches, we need to pray for faithful churches, and we need to pray for the faithful preaching of the word of God. The kingdom is not advanced by the tip of the sword and the spear.

The kingdom of Christ is advanced by the proclamation of the gospel, by the pure preaching of the word. The church is the pillar and the ground of truth. So, we need to pray for the advancement of God's kingdom. We need to pray for faithful churches, and we need to pray for the faithful preaching of the word.

Secondly, in light of this, remembering the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, there will be enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent from Genesis 3.15, from the fall, the result of the fall, the curse, and the sin-cursed world, until the return of Christ, until all things are made subject and brought into perfect unity under Christ.

So, from the time between Genesis 3.15, the fall, the curse, until Christ's return, there will be enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Cain killed Abel. One was righteous, one was not. And even today, there is still this present evil age, there is still enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

[ 42 : 44 ] the reality of forces of darkness and the engaging and approving of public acts of murder out of an opposition to righteousness, justice, and truth shows that we are still in this present evil age.

So, how do we make sense of this? Or what, how do we understand what just happened this week? Well, we know from scripture that to have hateful thoughts about somebody is a violation of the sixth commandment, and that it is considered murder.

There is murder within your heart. This is internal battle, internal spiritual battle. This is spiritual. Furthermore, to act out those internal feelings of hatred and of violations of the sixth commandment is spiritual battle.

The acts of murder is spiritual battle. It is enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Furthermore, public acts of violations of the sixth commandment, public acts of murder is the fact that this is the present evil age.

[ 44 : 06 ] And in this present evil age, there is enmity, and there is opposition and there is spiritual battle. Furthermore, public acts of violation of the sixth commandment, public acts of murder, which is premeditated, determined, carried out in public against someone who is a public advocate of the gospel and of truth and that which is biblically right and just, demonstrates that this is wickedness and there is spiritual battle at play.

the reality of the forces of darkness is involved in the engaging and approving not only has it occurred, there is the public approving and affirming of it.

Public acts of murder, violations of the sixth commandment, out of opposition to righteousness, justice, and truth. That being said, we live in a sin-cursed world.

we know that from Genesis 3.15 to the return of Christ, there will be enmity, there will be sin, there will be wickedness in this present evil age. And this does not mean that God is absent.

It does not mean that God did not see. It does not mean that God is napping. God is eternal. God is omnipotent. God is pure act. And that even all of these acts of wickedness, it is not overthrowing God.

[ 45 : 26 ] It is not overthrowing God's righteousness. It is not overthrowing God's justice. And as we read in Psalm 73, there may be times where it would appear as though the righteous are succeeding.

The righteous have ease. The righteous have long lives. The righteous are fat. They're wealthy. And they're prosperous. First of all, we need to remember that God is judge.

God will judge all wickedness. God will bring all things into perfect subjection. Everything will be exposed. Everything that is public, everything that is private, everything that is outward acts, everything that is internal thoughts, everything will be exposed.

Wickedness will be punished. God is judge. Furthermore, God is eternal. God is sovereign. And that even in all of these things which are terrible and wicked and seems to be approved, even these things, it is not outside of God's prerogative, God's governing, God's control.

God uses all of these things for his glory. And again, we can think of many examples from scripture, but the best one, of course, is the crucifixion. Such an unfair, unjust, heinous, public murder.

[ 46 : 47 ] It was for, in the crucifixion of Christ, it was for the salvation of God's people, for the forgiveness of their sins, for the justification of all of God's people, for the bride of Christ, that they would be presented as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or blemish.

God is eternal, God is almighty, not the forces of darkness. Now, today we have looked primarily at the defensive aspects of the spiritual battle, and next we will look more at the offensive aspects of the spiritual battle, or the advancement in spiritual battle.

So, all that being said, let's ask the question, which side are you on? If you are not in Christ's kingdom of light, then you are in the kingdom of darkness.

Behold, now is the acceptable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel, receive him, rest on him for salvation, and you will be transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and sin and death into Christ's kingdom of light and righteousness and life.

Our great God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for that which you revealed to us in your word. We thank you, Lord, for this call to be strengthened not in ourselves, not in this world, not in worldly protocols, but in the Lord, in your might, in the exceeding greatness of your power, of your eternal omnipotent power.

[ 48 : 16 ] You are the Lord God Almighty. We thank you also, Lord, for this exhortation to take up, to put on the whole armor of God. I pray that you would help us to indeed not fail to protect that which is crucial, neglecting salvation or aspects of salvation.

And I pray, Lord, that as such we would be faithful, that we would have our gaze lifted up to you and seeking, Lord, to not only better see and understand your excellencies and your wondrous works, but Lord, that we might worship you and glorify you and praise you in this life which you have given us, in this pilgrimage, in a wilderness, in which is a present evil age.

And we thank you, Lord, that while there is wickedness now and there is persecution, there is oppression, there is pain and there is suffering, that the hope, the hope of those who are saved, the hope of salvation is in Christ and it is not a dead hope, it is a living hope because Christ is raised from the dead, seated on high with all power, with all authority, as head of the church and all those who are believers, the body of Christ and the church are in Christ and that our victory is in Christ's

victory and our hope is in Christ.

Our hope is in Christ the King who is King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Lord God Almighty, faithful and true. Pray for everyone who is here, Lord, that you would make your word effectual to them according to our needs.

I pray again, Lord, that you would guide us into all truth, not only in now hearing your word, but also as we reflect on what your word says, that you would lead us into this week and help us to contemplate on you, your word, your goodness, your excellencies, your works, and Lord, that we might love you and enjoy you with this life.

[ 50 : 07 ] We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll stand