

Lord, Teach Us to Pray – Part 12
Praying in the Battle – Ephesians 6:10-17
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – July 17th, 2022

Introduction

- What are we to think when it comes to “spiritual warfare”? On one end of the continuum are those who think there is no such thing as spiritual forces, and they completely ignore and dismiss the subject. On the other end of the continuum, there are those who are all about it and have a continual focus and fixation on it.
- How are we to think about this subject in modern-day America, and how would the Bible guide us in this subject? If you are a reader of the Bible, you cannot escape the fact of the existence of supernatural powers. In a quick search of the Bible for angel(s), there are 295 references in the Old Testament and the New. Demons and the devil and his various names are mentioned 179 times, with Jesus Himself talking about these beings repeatedly. Even in the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, we are told to ask our Father to “deliver us from the evil one” (Mt. 6:13).
- Many in this room have had encounters with both angelic and demonic beings. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us we should offer hospitality to strangers. By doing so, some of us have “entertained angels unaware” (Heb. 13:2). There are many books written about supernatural beings and spiritual warfare that delve deep into this subject, and if you want to know more than what we will cover this morning, there are plenty of resources for you to consider.
- This morning we are going to look to one passage from the teachings of Paul on the subject of spiritual warfare to give us foundational guidance as to how we are to live and how we are to pray in the battle.

Be strong in the Lord

Eph 6:10 NIV

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

- After all his teaching in the letter of Ephesians, Paul ends with these words. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” There are two things we are to do here. The first is to “be strong in the Lord.” What is this, and how are we to do this? Notice the one thing that we are to be strong in is in the Lord. This means that our relationship with and our theology of Jesus is the foundational and fundamental thing for us. If you are going to get anything right, get this right. Other things in theology are less clear, but in this one thing, be strong. This means you need to know who Jesus is and have a relationship with Him. This is the first priority in spiritual warfare.
- The second is this—be strong in His mighty power. The good news is that we are not to be strong in our mighty power; we are to be strong in the Lord’s mighty power. It is in the name of Jesus that every knee will bow, not in your name. Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth, and with this being the case, He has all power. When we stand against the schemes of the devil, we do so in the power of the Lord. Demons do not flee by any other name but only at His name.
- In spiritual warfare, James, the half brother of Jesus, tells us that we are to first submit ourselves to God, and then we are to resist the devil and he will flee from us (James 4:7). If you are not under submission to the name that is above all names, you will not be able to resist the devil, and he will not flee from you. Just ask the seven sons of Sceva (See Acts 19).

Know you have supernatural enemies

Eph 6:11-12 NIV

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- Notice that we are not taking our stand against the devil himself, but against his schemes, his plans, his traps, his methods. Our primary struggle is not against flesh and blood people; people are both the pawns and the prize in this cosmic struggle. Our struggle is against the strategies of the demonic commander and his forces, which include supernatural rulers, authorities, and powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil. Remember people are not your enemy and treat them as such, which is hard for us to remember at times.

Know you have supernatural power

Eph 6:13a NIV

Therefore put on the full armor of God.

- We do indeed have supernatural enemies, and it also is true that we have been given supernatural weapons against these enemies. We have been outfitted with equipment that will both defensively protect us and offensively equip us.
- These weapons will do you no good on their own. You and I have to “put on” and utilize these things. What has been given by our Father will indeed be helpful if we use them. The armor is what you walk around in. These are the things that will protect you from supernatural forces. You are to live within them and animate what you have on to benefit from them by walking around in them and having them ready at all times.
- Your spiritual energy and stamina come from the power of the Holy Spirit Himself. So we have to live in these things and utilize them, and we have the joy of partnering with our Father in what He is doing. This gives Him great joy and glory.
- If our Father wanted, He could obliterate the enemy with a blink of His eye or the snap of His finger or with one word of His mouth. But He doesn't. Why would this be? The answer is found in the logic that He is more glorified, and we are more satisfied when we work with Him in this battle. He receives more glory by having us battle than He would get by removing the enemy completely Himself. We know that someday this will happen, but for now, God has a purpose in allowing the enemy to remain, and He and we will win this battle.

Stand your ground

Eph 6:13b-17 NIV

So that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- These things are given so that when the day of evil comes, and it will come, you will be able to stand your ground. Stand strong on God's truth and the place He has called you to occupy. Notice that He calls us to stand. Stand your ground, and after you have done everything—living within all these things and arming yourself with these things—stand firm then in what you believe and the truth of the gospel. Let no one move you, knowing that **“the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ”** (2 Cor 10:4-5 ESV).
- The truth of God will protect you; righteousness will protect you. You will move and stand in the gospel of peace, the peace of God and peace with each other. This will keep your footing and allow you to stand your ground. Faith will extinguish the arrows lit by the fires of hell. Knowing that you are saved will protect your mind as the word of God, the sword of the Spirit, will enable you to overcome the enemy and foil his plans.
- Think of Jesus in His conversation with the devil. The devil twisted scripture to tempt Jesus. Many people fall for this today. Jesus corrects the devil with scripture, and we must do this today as well. Next, the devil used his delegated authority to tempt Jesus to show who He really was, which would allow him to approach His whole ministry differently and skip the cross. He could command a people, but He would not have redeemed the people. Then there was the temptation of gaining everything the world had to offer. In all of these temptations, Jesus used the words of scripture to defend Himself, and the devil indeed fled.

Conclusion and Communion

- The power of God is greater than the power of the evil one. So stand your ground. Give yourself to living in what our Father has given us. Join with others in the fight, knowing that we together will stand against the enemy. Too many people crumble and fall because they do not know scripture and are not walking in truth, righteousness, salvation, and the gospel of peace. People are drawn away one by one by one by one. It can happen to you as well.
- Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. Know what He has done for you and walk in the protection He has provided.
- Transition to communion.