

Walking the Way

The Invisible War-Stand Firm

Big picture of Ephesians, the 5 Spheres: 1. Abiding in Christ (Eph. 1:2-2:10), 2. The Church Sphere (Eph. 3:1-4:32), 3. The Home Sphere (Eph. 5:21-6:4), 4. The World Sphere (Eph. 6:5-9), 5. The Spiritual Realm (Eph. 6:10-24).

- The 5 spheres work together in this way: As we learn to abide in Christ (sphere 1), he puts us in the church to learn from others how to follow him (sphere 2). Then, as we grow in Christ through community, we understand what family life at home looks like (sphere 3). We then take this into the world with us (sphere 4), and hidden from our physical eyes, the spiritual realm affects our entire journey (sphere 5).

Key Words in Ephesians:

1. **Our position in Christ – “Sit” (Eph. 2:6)**
2. **Our life in the world – “Walk” (Eph. 4:1)**
3. **Our attitude to the enemy – “Stand” (Eph. 6:11)**

Focus point today: The Spiritual Realm-the sphere in which we live every day; the war between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil.

Ephesians 6:10-20 (NIV) ¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ 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. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, 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. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

The War and Who the enemy is

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel and excessive and unhealthy interest in them.” -C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

There is an eternal world that is just as real as the visible world; Old Testament (**2 Kings 6:15-19, Daniel 10**), New Testament (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Mark 1:21-24**)

- We are involved in an invisible war, a cosmic conflict that has eternal implications.
- The Apostle Paul is reminding the church not to be naïve that this war of the ages is underway and has been since Genesis 3.

God has an archenemy, Satan, and under his power are demons, and even controlled human beings, that seek to overrun the world with evil and to exclude God from his own kingdom.

- Our foe is Satan, and his goal is to destroy us and discredit the cause of Christ. (**1 Peter 5:8, John 8:44**)
- Who is Satan? A created spirit (**Colossians 1:16**), an angel (**Matthew 25:41, Revelation 12:7**), a cherub (**Ezekiel 28:14**), highest of all created beings (**Ezekiel 28:14, Jude 1:6**), Hebrew noun *śāṭān*, meaning *adversary, opponent*.

- Satan's 5 "I Will" Statements (**Isaiah 14:13-14**): 1) I will ascend to heaven. 2) I will raise my throne above the stars of God. 3) I will sit on the mount of the assembly. 4) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. 5) I will make myself like the Most High.
- We must respect our foe, but not fear him – become acutely aware of his "schemes", but not be preoccupied with them. His goal is to lure us from the pack and devour us.
- Pride: When we give in to pride, Satan gets a foothold and skillfully moves into every area of life. Pride also tells us we can battle against Satan and his forces on our own (**Acts 19:13-16**).
- Isolation: It is the breeding ground for spiritual defeat.
 - First, the enemy starts to stifle our relationship with Christ. We begin thinking and seeing things from our fleshly perspective or from the world's ungodly point of view.
 - Satan gains ground and we become self-sufficient, believing the lie we don't need Christ to fight our battles, and we surely don't need the Church, the body of Christ.
 - Then Satan tries to go after our families, he isolates us from them, we develop habitual sin and at our work he lures us into ungodly habits. Before we know it, the devil has taken ground in every sphere of our lives.
- Compartmentalization: Satan tries to get us to believe that we can keep our lives compartmentalized. In the process, we believe the lie that we can allow sin into just one area of our lives without affecting the other areas. But the devil uses any space we give him to launch a full-scale attack in our lives-his aim is to destroy us.

Sit, Walk, Stand: Each Christian must be prepared for the battle. We must know how to sit with Christ in the heavenly places (**Eph. 2:6**), we must know how to walk worthy of Christ on Earth (**Eph. 4:1**), but we also must know how to stand before our foe (**Eph. 6:11**).

As believers in Christ, we do not fight for victory; we fight from victory. We hold what Christ has already won!

- The Greek word for "stand" (*anthistēmi*) with its following presupposition "against" really means "hold your ground". We stand on the soil of victory Christ has already gained over the devil.
- In Christ, we are more than conquerors (**Romans 8:37**). Because victory is His, therefore it is ours. We praise God because He has conquered, He is the victor, and for us it is a matter of faith in Him. In Christ, we stand! (**Colossians 2:14-15**).

The Armor of God: If we stay together in spiritual battle, we live; but if we fight alone, we die. The language used by Paul is hand-to-hand combat (Greek word "*pale*") through the entire formation (church) fighting together.

1. Put on the full armor of God: We all share one set of armor and we put in on together – as one body. Greek word *testudo* (tortoise formation), a group of warriors functioning as a single unit. Understanding our position in Christ.
2. Discerning when demonic influence is the cause of your struggle.
3. Embrace the importance of fighting with words: The sword of the Spirit-the Word ("*rhema*") of God. Opening our mouths to speak God's Word to help each other in battle. Claiming God's promises out loud. Take the example of Christ when he was tempted by the devil (**Matthew 4:1-11**).
4. Speak truth to one another: by the power of the Spirit, we can effectively speak the Word of God to the people of God by the Spirit of God. The power of intercessory prayer.
5. Take off the spiritual mask and put on the helmet: choosing the path of humility. Maintain a healthy spiritual walk (**Prov. 16:18, James 4:7-10, Romans 13:12**).