

November 17, 2019

WALK TO BATTLE

Ephesians 6:10-20

INTRODUCTION

Ephesians is about the unity of the church in, through and for the glory of God in Christ. Unity was achieved by warfare on Golgotha and unity will be sustained in the continued battle of the saints against the realms of darkness. Unity within the church is a battle (Chapter 2-3), unity of life with God and holiness is a battle (Chapter 4-5), unity in marriage is a battle (Chapter 5) and unity within the family is a battle (Chapter 6). The whole of the Christian life is warfare! It is, therefore, fitting that Paul ends this letter with a battle cry along with an explanation of the weapons we have at our disposal to war successfully and to war biblically. This is the final lesson of Paul to the Ephesians and a necessary reminder to all Christians about what it will take to endure to the end for the glory of God.

AWARE (Ephesians 6:10-13)

As we seek to live for Christ faithfully, we must be aware of specific realities in order to endure to the end. We must be empowered by *His strength and might* (Ephesians 6:10). The greatest saint, in his or her own strength, is no challenge to the assaults of the enemy. We need the power of God in the Holy Spirit in order to stand against and withstand the tactics of the devil (Ephesians 6:12, 13). The way to this power is in the action we take *of putting on the whole armor of God* - dressing ourselves from head to foot with divine enablement and strength - since the weapons of our warfare are spiritual (2nd Corinthians 10:5). Again, to resist the devil we need God's power (Holy Spirit) and God's provision (the full armor). We must also be aware of the fact that the real nature of warfare is not between people, but the principalities and powers that wages war against all things pertaining to God and His glory (Ephesians 6:12). It is important that we are aware of this lest, in conflicts, we begin to target people while the real culprit, the devil, continues his assaults without resistance. Paul uses a phrase *in the evil day* (Ephesians 6:13) indicating that there is coming a day – a season – in which evil will be ramped up and intensified such that believers will need to stay continually aware. We will need to not only stand against such evil but to be able to withstand and to remain standing in the end.

PREPARED (Ephesians 6:14-17)

Believers are to remain suited and booted! The idea of putting on the full armor does not mean that believers are to walk around this way all of the time. No Roman guard stayed in his uniform all day, every day! Paul's language conveys the idea that, being aware of the evil day and the enemy, Christians are to keep their armor close such that when defense is demanded you are ready and prepared to put it on! The *belt of truth* girds you, making battle easy; *the breastplate of righteousness* guards your heart reminding you that you are the Lord's; *feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace* reminds you that you are to run into the darkness of battle with the purpose of gospel peace; *the shield of faith* protects you from the worries and anxieties thrown at you by the world, the flesh and the devil (Ephesians 2:3) *extinguishing all the flaming arrows of the evil one*; the *helmet of salvation* refers to the hope that we have, in Christ, that one day war will be no more and we shall rest with him for all of eternity in endless praise and peace. The final piece of armor is, like the others is defensive, but is also the only offensive weapon, *the sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of God* (Ephesians 6:17). As Jesus used the Word to attack the assaults of the enemy so too must Christians be so girded and armed with the Word. What is interesting is that the word *sword* actually refers to something of a smaller knife. The idea is that Christians must know specific words to deal with specific assaults. We must be able to take

specific scriptures, as Christ did in His temptation and, in close proximity to the enemy, strike a fatal blow.

FIELD SUPPORT (Ephesians 6:18-20)

Battling against the enemy may seem personal, but it must be waged in community. Paul, after telling the Ephesians to put on the armor, calls them to *Pray at all times ... and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints* (Ephesians 6:18). We cannot win without the Spirit and the Spirit will not aid us unless sought in prayer while we war. Waring and praying are to be done synonymously. Not only should we pray for ourselves, but Paul tells us to persevere in our intercession – our intense and agonizing praying - for others in the battle (Ephesians 6:18). Having called them to be alert and suited in the armor of God Paul then asks for them to pray with him, that he might be able, with boldness, confidence and spiritual success, declare the mystery of God to the known world (Ephesians 6:19-20). Let me end with a practical word for worship. When you go to church on this coming Sunday pray for your pastor. Pray for him in the way Paul asked for prayer in verses 19-20. Pray for the mystery of the gospel to be made known; pray for a boldness and confidence for you pastor to declare the honor and glories of the gospel of grace. Pray, in the spirit of warfare, knowing that what worship is in its essence, is an assault on the enemy by lifting up the glory of Christ so as to break the chains of the on the souls of men. I believe that if we begin praying like this each week, we will notice the seeming victories of the enemy over so many, crushed under the weight of God's glory and gospel.