

Ephesians 6:10-24 – Putting on our spiritual armour

This is the Bible's longest passage on “spiritual warfare”. This should be of deep interest to all of us. We are all in this battle. We need to know our enemy, know the battlefield, know our defences and know our weapons. God has equipped believers to fight and win, if only we will learn and obey.

1. The fight we are in (v10-12)

We do not fight against flesh and blood (v12). The spiritual battles are fought in peoples' lives; but people are not the enemy. Our weapons are not earthly; we are not fighting for money, political power, land or votes. Those things do not touch the devil. We are fighting against mighty spiritual powers, described in verse 12. This is the real meaning of life in the world – not man's political parties or tribes, but the battle between Christ and his spiritual enemies. We cannot fight with our own resources, but must fight with God's (v10). It is not human wisdom, but God's resources, that wins the victory. Our captain gives us all we need to win. Are you fighting in this battle?

2. The armour we defend ourselves with (v13-17a)

The people in Ephesus would all have seen many Roman soldiers. They would have known their armour. Every time they saw it, they would remember the spiritual battle. Paul told them to put all the armour on; to miss one part is to be in great danger. We must hold on to every part of the gospel teaching and our struggle for holiness. Paul told them to put on the belt of truth; truth holds all things together and must be our first priority. The breastplate covers the heart; so, righteousness is a basic protection for us. The gospel must make us have ready feet – we must be quick to every good work. Through faith in God's word and truth we will put out every doubt and fear from the devil.

3. The weapons we attack with (v17b-20)

We are not only to defend – but also to attack! The battlefield is the whole world, and Jesus claims it all (Matthew 28:18-20). We need powerful weapons. All is done by the Holy Spirit. He is poured out by Christ. Our sword is the Word of God, which the Spirit uses to bring life and change. We must declare it and obey it always, trusting in his power. We must also pray at all times, for all believers. It is prayer that makes our words effective. Especially we must pray for gospel preachers, like Paul. He had done great works in the past – but we cannot rely on the past. We must pray for even greater works in the future. Pray especially for preachers to be bold in declaring the truth.

4. Paul's final encouragements (v21-24)

Paul was sending a friend and trusted brother to the Ephesians, to encourage them. They might be discouraged because Paul was in prison. Paul wanted them to hear that he was still strong and going forward in Christ. This would help them to do the same. We all need encouragement, and we should all try to bring encouragement to our brethren. Paul sent greater encouragements yet – peace and love in the name of God and Christ themselves. He wished God's favour to all those who truly love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who would seek to obey his letter. Will you?