

BE SEATED SO THAT YOU CAN STAND

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday this week, my quiet time reading took me into Ephesians 6. This is the chapter where we learn about the armour of God. The first thing that caught my attention was verse 10 "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might".

The one thing that this virus crisis has made abundantly clear is that everything we have taken for granted, can be removed or lost very quickly. Health, income, church services, family time, freedom and many other things that we took for granted are no longer such a sure thing. Man has also become very self-reliant and we have no real answers for this virus. I believe God has reminded us of the truth that He is the one constant, unchangeable truth and our very existence is dependent on Him and not on man's ability or on man-made things. When I read the Bible now, I see evidence of this in many scriptures.

If we look at Ephesians 6:10 in that context:

- Be strong in **The Lord**.
- And in the power of **His might**.

Paul didn't just say be strong, he pointed how we are to be strong and whose might our strength is dependent on – It's all about God and His might and power, and it's not about anything we can do!

Paul wrote in **Philippians 3:10**, that I may know Him (Jesus) in the power of **His resurrection**, and the fellowship of **His sufferings**, being conformed to **His death**.

We need to get away from me, myself and I and move our focus to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit! It's all about Him.

We are in a physical war against this virus at the moment, but there is a very real spiritual war happening too. When we speak about spiritual warfare, the same applies... It must all be in Him, from Him, and for His glory. This morning I want to address our spiritual warfare from that perspective.

MESSAGE

Ephesians 6:11-18 (NKJV) Put on the whole armour **of God**, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 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. 13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Whose armour is it? It's God's armour! And we must put all of it on if we want to stand against the wiles of the enemy.

In John 4:23 we read that God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth. Our battle is also a spiritual battle. It takes place in the spiritual realm and the results manifest in the natural. The natural man cannot engage in this battle, we need to be in the spirit! And God gives us mighty spiritual weapons!

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Here we see it again – we use God's weapons (Ephesians 5) – which are "Mighty in God". There is no way that we can tear down strongholds in our own strength or with our own ability, we have to use that which is mighty in God!

So, now we know that for this spiritual battle, we wear God's armour and His mighty weapons. Lets take a closer look:

Ephesians 6:14-17(NKJV) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

- The belt of truth – the belt girds – we must gird our minds – from what? Deception – think of all the fake news we are hearing now – the devil is also called "the deceiver". Who is the truth? Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life". Our belt is Jesus Himself!
- The breastplate of righteousness – the opposite of righteousness is wickedness. Righteousness guards our heart, **2 Corinthians 5:21** tells us that we are the "righteousness of God" in Jesus! Whose righteousness – God's!
- The sandals of the readiness of the Gospel of peace – Jesus is the Gospel, He is the Prince of Peace – the Bible is Jesus in print! And what does Jesus give us? He gives us peace instead of anxiety!
- The helmet of salvation – right now Christians can't go to church. There is a risk that they can forget, they can think wrong. We need a right mindset. When we are saved what do we get? The mind of Christ! So, whose mind is it? The child of God has is Christ's mind!
- The shield of faith – faith comes from God, the disciples said to Jesus, "increase our faith!" The opposite is fear. The devil rules through fear. Right now fear is gripping the hearts of mankind, but in **Zechariah 2:5** (NKJV) For I,' says the Lord, 'will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will

be the glory in her midst.' " – He is speaking about the New Jerusalem, but when we have faith, I believe our God becomes a wall of fire around us to protect us. But it takes faith – faith in who? In God.

- The sword of the Spirit – this refers to God's word, enabled by who? The Holy Spirit. It's the only weapon in our armour, but it is a Holy Spirit sword. The Holy Spirit is the very POWER of God. When we wield the Sword of the Spirit, we wield the very power of God!

Our armour doesn't just come from God – it is God!

Ephesians 6:18 (NKJV) praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

The only part that is dependent on us is to use the armour and we do it through prayer. What kind of prayer? Prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Even our praying is enabled by God! What we need to do is be watchful and persevere!

So there we have it. Our armour IS God, Our weapons are Mighty IN God. Our entire spiritual warfare is all God! We are unable to defend ourselves because, of ourselves, we have no ability in the spiritual realm whatsoever!

Have we possibly been ineffective by relying on our own abilities to do spiritual warfare? We need to change that today!

WE NEED TO SIT SO THAT WE CAN STAND

Paul instructs the Ephesian church to stand against the wiles of the enemy. I want to suggest something that may seem to be a contradiction but it's not!

If we are to war in the spiritual realm, using God and His power as a weapon, then we cannot do it from this natural realm. Our war must be in the spiritual realm. And this war needs to take place where God is! We have learned that the blood of Jesus gives us access to the Holy of Holies in the presence of the Most High God. Surely our warfare will be most successful when we are seated right in the place from which all authority comes? Surely the safest place from where to war is from our hiding place in God?

David was a mighty physical warrior, but he knew where the real battle was won!

Psalm 17:8 (NKJV) Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

Psalm 32:7 (NKJV) You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah

Psalm 119:114 (NKJV) You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word.

Psalm 27:5 (NKJV) For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.

HOW DO WE GET INTO THAT HIDING PLACE?

We need to realise that as God's children, we are already there... in the spiritual realm!

In Ephesians 1 we read that Jesus, having been raised in the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, is seated at God's right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, might and dominion and every name that is named, and ALL things are under His feet. Then we read this in Ephesians 2:

Ephesians 2:4-6 (NKJV) But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

In Colossians 3 Paul refers to this position of ours and adds something else:

Colossians 3:1-3 (NKJV) If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Where is Christ? In heavenly places, where are we? We are hidden with Christ in God, in heavenly places, seated at his right hand, far above all principality and power, might and dominion and every name that is named, and ALL things are under His feet.

This is the place from which we must wage our warfare. We need to be seated in Christ so that we can stand against the wiles of the devil! This is the place that David speaks about in Psalm 91. Let me read it to you:

Psalm 91 (NKJV) He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His **truth** shall be your **shield** and **buckler**. 5 You shall not be **afraid** of the terror by night, Nor of the **arrow** that flies by day, 6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. 7 A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you. 8 Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked. 9 Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge,

Even the Most High, your dwelling place, 10 No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; 11 For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. 13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample **underfoot**. 14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. 15 He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him. 16 With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My **salvation**."

CONCLUSION

Church, our warfare and our victory has got very little to do with us. We cannot fight in the flesh! We gave to fight in the spiritual, safe in God's presence.

- We are His Children
- Using His armour and His mighty weapons.
- In the spiritual realm.
- To fight a battle that is not flesh and blood, it's against spiritual beings.
- And we can't fight it on our feet!
- We need to be seated in God's throne room, in His presence.
- Protected by His angels.
- Hidden in His Son, Jesus Christ under the shadow of His wings.
- Empowered by His Holy Spirit.
- To claim the victory that He has already won!

Have we possibly been limiting our Christian experience to only what we see hear or do in the natural realm? We can to live a victorious life in the flesh by abiding in the Spirit right in the presence of the Most High God.

We don't need to flail with the rest of unbelieving humanity as it struggles with the fear, anxiety and danger of the corona virus. God invites us to come and dwell in His secret place. When we are here, 1000 will fall at our side and 10000 at our right hand but it will not come near us?

I invite you up today, come be seated in Christ in Heavenly places. Here we will experience a new level of abundant life as we begin to realise that everything is in Him and for His glory.