

The Forces That Are Against Us

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Ephesians 6:11-12

At the end of the book of Ephesians, Paul admonished them to “put on the full armor of God.” Why? We are involved in a spiritual conflict. There is a battle going on around us. We prepare by putting on the armor AND by knowing who our enemy is. Paul explained who our “struggle” is “against.” We are going to discuss this in our lesson.

Who Is Against Us?

- The devil (v. 11) – Paul warned about the “schemes of the devil”; he tries to defeat us by deceiving us (2 Corinthians 11:3); he is the father of lies (John 8:44); we need to be on the alert (1 Peter 5:8); yet we can overcome him (1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7)
- The rulers (v. 12) – this word refers to those in power; yet the Greek word is also translated in many verses as “the beginning” (cf. John 8:44); this is a reminder that this battle has been going on since the beginning (Genesis 3:1); it includes angels who rebelled against God (Jude 6)
- The powers (v. 12) – those with authority; same word used for the authority of Jesus (Matthew 28:18); these are ones who would challenge the authority of Christ; they want to be seen as the ultimate authority (cf. Genesis 10:8-10); they want to take the place of God (cf. Acts 12:20-22)
- The world forces (v. 12) – this Greek word is only used in this verse in the NT, yet it is derived from a word that is used elsewhere to refer to Satan (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4); Satan has deceived the world and “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19); so this refers to the forces that are under Satan’s power
- The spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (v. 12) – not physical forces; Clarke: “disguised falsehood in the garb of truth; antinomianism in the guise of religion”; Jesus warned His apostles that their opponents would be religiously motivated (John 16:2-3)

Who Is For Us?

- God is for us (Romans 8:31-39) – nothing can defeat us as long as we remain with Him
- Jesus, the Lamb, will be victorious (Revelation 17:14) – He overcame death (Hebrews 2:14-15); we have hope through Him (Romans 6:5); we simply need to be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10)
- We have our brethren to fight with us (2 Timothy 2:3) – there is strength in numbers; we need to encourage one another (Hebrews 3:12-13)

How We Defend Ourselves

- “Be strong in the Lord” (v. 10) – we must put our full faith and trust in Him; when we are weak, we are strong (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
- “Put on the full armor of God” (v. 11) – each piece describes or is derived from the word of God; we need to know the word (2 Timothy 2:15)
- “Contend earnestly” (Jude 3) – this is not stated in this passage, but it is implied; “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12)
- “Be on the alert” (1 Peter 5:8) – the devil is looking for an opportunity when we are not ready for him; do not be “ignorant of his devices” (2 Corinthians 2:11, KJV)

Conclusion

- There are powerful forces that are opposed to God and His people – they want us to abandon Him
- Instead, let us put on the full armor of God and fight the good fight – we will be victorious through Him