

SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PT. 2; EPH. 6:14-15 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY WE CONTINUE OUR LOOK AT PAUL'S DISCUSSION OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

▶▶ In Eph. 6:10-20, ~ Paul shows us that God has provided resources that we need to hold our position and be victorious in this spiritual war in which we are engaged. ~~ Last wk., 10-13.

IN VERSES 14-17, ~ WHICH WE ARE BEGINNING TODAY, ~ PAUL CALLS BELIEVERS TO stand ~ and then explains the means by which we do that.

▶▶ Briefly put, ~ we hold our position by putting on every piece of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us.

▶▶ Now, ~ my focus in these verses will not to be on the physical armor and physical body parts, ~ but on each piece of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us.

▷▷ Briefly put, ~ this is because when we look at the big picture, ~ Paul is showing us that just as a soldier's armor gave him maximum protection, ~ so too does the armor from God give believers maximum protection.

↪↪ So my emphasis is going to be on each piece of the spiritual armor and how it gives us maximum protection as a whole.

▶▶ Also, ~ let's keep in back of minds, ~ that even though . . . ~ need to put every

▶▶ This a.m., ~ we'll concentrate on verses 14-15, ~ and the first three pieces of the strong spiritual armor that God has given us.

IN VERSE 14a, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "STAND THEREFORE."

I.E., ~ "BECAUSE OF OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE SPIRITUAL FORCES OF EVIL, ~ STAND."

▶▶ "Stand" is the same word as in verse 11.

▷▷ Recall, ~ in terms of warfare, ~ it does not mean an offensive, ~ but rather a defensive stance. ~~ I.e., ~ to hold one's ground, ~ to hold one's position.

IN VERSE 14b, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "BELIEVERS, ~ HOLD YOUR POSITION BY PUTTING on the belt of truth."

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS SOMETHING GOD HAS GIVEN US. ⇓⇓ 1/8

▶▶ So "truth" here is something God has given believers. ~ It cannot refer here to truth telling on our part.

NO DOUBT, ~ "TRUTH" HERE REFERS TO GOD'S WORD, ~ WHICH IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

▶▶ In using the word "truth" for God's word, ~ Paul's primary focus here seems to be on God's word being a protection against the enemy's lies.

▶▶ Speaking about Satan in Jn. 8:44b, ~ Jesus said, ~ NIV ~ "He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth ~ [i.e., ~ he has never been on the side of truth. ~ He has always hated the truth], ~ ¶¶

▷▷ for there is no truth in him. ~ When he lies, he speaks his native language ~ [i.e., ~ When he tells a lie he is only doing what is natural to him], ~ ¶¶

↳↳ for he is a liar and the father of lies ~ [I.e., ~ all the falsehood in the world owes its existence to him]."

▶▶ Contrast that with the following.

▷▷ Num. 23:19a, ~ "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"

▷▷ Within Titus 1:2, ~ Paul says, ~ "God, who never lies."

▷▷ And within Heb. 6:18, ~ the author says "it is impossible for God to lie."

▷▷ In contrast to Satan and all the rest of "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places," ~ God speaks the absolute truth 100% of the time.

GOD HAS GIVEN US THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH, ~ FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION.

▶▶ And in verse 14b, ~ Paul tells us to hold our position against our spiritual enemies' lies by putting on God's word.

▶▶ But what does "Put on God's word" mean?

▷▷ Most likely it means, ~ "Be well-grounded in God's word."

▶▶ I.e., ~ to hold our position against "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" and their lies, ~ we need to be well-grounded in the absolute truth of God's word. ¶¶ 2/8

▷▷ When we're well-grounded in God's word, ~ we will quickly recognize the lies of the enemy.

↳↳ TPID, ~ if we're not well-grounded in God's word, ~ how will we know when

▷▷ Speaking of the righteous person, ~ David says in [Ps. 37:31](#), ~ "The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip.

↳↳ David says the righteous person has learned God's word, ~ remembers its teachings, ~ and it controls their thinking. ~ And as a result, ~ they do not slip into sin.

→→ When we have learned God's word, ~ remember its teachings, ~ and it controls our thinking, ~ we will not fall for the lies of the enemy.

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ when we are well-grounded in God's word, ~ we will not fall prey to the enemy when, ~ through his servants the false teachers, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ he tempts us to drift into error, ~ false teaching, ~ and erroneous theology.

↳↳ Paul, ~ in [2 Cor. 11:15](#), ~ states that, ~ just like their evil leader, ~ Satan's servants "disguise themselves as servants of righteousness."

→→ Peter ~ Jude

▶▶ So there is a great need for believers to be well-grounded in God's word.

IN VERSE 14c, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ BELIEVERS, ~ "HOLD YOUR POSITION BY PUTTING on the breastplate of righteousness."

"THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS" MEANS "THE BREASTPLATE WHICH IS righteousness."

▶▶ Now, ~ again, ~ given to us

▶▶ It no doubt refers to the righteousness believers have received through Jesus. ~ I.e., ~ Christ's righteousness.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMS THAT NOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM God has been made known.

▶▶ As Paul says in [Rom. 3:21-22a](#), ~ [NIV](#), ~ "But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe." ¶¶ 3/8

▷▷ This righteousness is given to a person when they hear the gospel, ~ put their faith in Christ, ~ and receive the Holy Spirit.

BELIEVERS DO NOT STAND BEFORE GOD CLOTHED IN OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

▶▶ We have no righteousness in ourselves to enable us to stand before God.

▷▷ Is. 64:6a says, ~ NIV, ~ "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."

▷▷ And in Rom. 3:10-, ~ Paul writes, ~ "as it is written: "None is righteous, ~ no, ~ not one."

▶▶ But the good news is that believers stand before God clothed ~ by Him ~ in the righteousness of His Beloved Son.

▷▷ In 2 Cor. 5:21, ~ Paul writes, ~ "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

↳↳ I.e., ~ God made Jesus, ~ who never sinned, ~ to be the offering for our sin, ~ so that we could be made right with God through Jesus.

MY FELLOW BELIEVERS, ~ GOD HAS GIVEN US JESUS' RIGHTEOUSNESS.

▶▶ And in verse 14c, ~ Paul tells us to hold our position against our spiritual enemies by putting on Christ's righteousness.

▶▶ But wait a minute, ~ God has already clothed us in Jesus' righteousness.

▷▷ So what does "hold your position against the spiritual forces of evil by putting on Christ's righteousness" mean?

▶▶ Well, ~ something very similar to putting on God's word.

▷▷ It most likely means, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "hold our position against the enemy by gaining a full knowledge, ~ a good understanding, ~ and a great appreciation for this awesome position we, ~ believers, ~ have before God."

▶▶ When we gain these things, ~ we will be fortified on at least two fronts.

▷▷ 1st, ~ when "the spiritual forces of evil" try to get us to question our status before God as righteous, ~ their tactic won't work. ¶¶ 4/8

↳↳ E.g., ~ when we sin, ~ the enemy comes in and asks, ~ "Whoa, ~ what makes you think a sinner like you is righteous before God?"

↳↳ We won't fall for this because we will fully know and understand very well that, ~ as 1 Jn. 1:9 says, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

↳↳ We won't fall for this because we will fully know and understand very well that, ~ as 1 Jn. 2:1 says, ~ "But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

↳↳ And most importantly, ~ we won't fall for this because we will fully know and understand very well that our standing before God ~ is not one iota ~ dependent on our own righteousness, ¶¶

↳↳ but is 100% dependent on the righteousness of Christ.

↳↳ Arming ourselves with a full knowledge, ~ a good understanding, ~ and a great appreciation for this awesome position we have before God ~ ¶¶

→→ will give us a 100% unshakeable confidence that we stand 100% righteous before God.

↳↳ And we will successfully hold our position against the attack of the enemy.

▷▷ As for the second front on which we will be fortified, ~ the enemy may use the opposite tactic and try to puff us up by saying something like, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "My, ~ what a wonderful person you must be for earning such a wonderful position with God."

↳↳ Arming ourselves with a full knowledge, ~ a good understanding, ~ and a great appreciation for this awesome position we have before God ~ ¶¶

→→ will prevent us from even being tempted to agree with such utter nonsense.

↳↳ Because we will fully know and understand very well that, ~ as Paul says in Eph. 2:8-9, ~ "For by grace you have been saved through faith. ~ And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

↳↳ And we will successfully hold our position against the attack of the enemy. ¶¶ 5/8

IN VERSE 15, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "AND, AS SHOES FOR YOUR FEET, HAVING PUT ON the readiness given by the gospel of peace."

WHAT PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT HERE IS A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND, ~ AND is interpreted and translated in different ways.

▶▶ Since the context is talking about holding our position against attacks, ~ it cannot be referring to sharing the gospel.

▶▶ Also, ~ the word translated "readiness" here in the ESV can mean firmness, ~ stability, ~ sure footing.

▷▷ And, ~ again given the context of being enabled to hold our position, ~ I think this is the better way to look at it.

▶▶ Briefly put, ~ the idea here seems to be "put on the peace that comes from the gospel in order to hold your position against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

THE PEACE THAT COMES FROM THE GOSPEL IS PEACE WITH GOD.

▶▶ Again, ~ as we've already alluded to, ~ this is given to us. ~~ It was achieved for and given to us.

▶▶ As Paul declares in Rom. 5:1, ~ "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

▶▶ In Col. 1:20, ~ Paul says that Jesus made "peace by the blood of his cross."

▶▶ The enmity that existed between God and a sinful universe has ceased because Christ's death made peace.

▷▷ In Col. 1:21-22, ~ Paul writes to believers, ~ "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him."

▶▶ Through Jesus, ~ we have been given peace with God.

AND THIS MEANS THAT THE SOVEREIGN, ~ OMNIPOTENT CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE and all it contains is on our side in this spiritual war.

▶▶ Rom. 8:31-39, ~ ³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ↓↓ 6/8

▷▷³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

↳↳³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

→→³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

↳↳³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

▶▶ Through Jesus, ~ we have been given peace with God. ~~ And as a result, ~ God is for us. ~~ He is our ally. ~~ He is on our side.

▶▶ And we have these promises from Him:

▷▷ Is. 41:10, ~ "fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

▷▷ Is. 43:2, ~ "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."

BACK TO EPH. 6:15,

▶▶ Paul is saying to believers, ~ "Believers, ~ hold your position against our spiritual enemies by putting on the peace we have with God that comes from accepting the gospel."

▶▶ But what does "put on the peace that we have with God" mean?" ~~ Once more, ~ something very similar to the first two pieces of armor.

▷▷ It most likely means gaining a full knowledge, ~ a good understanding, ~ and a great appreciation for this awesome truth that ~ 77

↳↳ first, ~ because of what Jesus has done for us, ~ believers have everlasting peace and friendship with God;

↳↳ and second, ~ that God is with us and for us. 77 7/8

▶▶ Being armed with this will give us great confidence in this fight.

▷▷ And along with all of the other pieces of the strong spiritual armor God has given us, ~ it will enable us to withstand the onslaught of "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

CONCLUSION.

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ~ 77

▶▶ we are soldiers, ~ engaged in spiritual warfare, ~ against powerful and evil supernatural enemies, ~ whose objective is to destroy us.

▷▷ But there is no need for us to be afraid ~ or to throw our hands up in surrender.

↪↪ Because our great God has provided resources that will enable us to hold our position and be victorious in battle.

▶▶ And always remember this my fellow soldiers, ~ the sovereign creator of the universe is on our side!

LET'S PRAY 8/8