

SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PT. 3; EPH. 6:16-17 (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

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

▶▶ It is in truth a stark reality ~ that those who have confessed with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that God raised Him from the dead ~ are engaged in a war.

▶▶ But the war we find ourselves in ~ is not a physical war ~ but a spiritual war, ~ against spiritual 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 the good news is that our great God has provided resources that we need to stand strong in battle and to be victorious.

↪↪ And that's what Paul spells out for us in [Eph. 6:10-20](#).

IN VERSES 14-17, ~ AS WE KNOW, ~ PAUL CALLS BELIEVERS TO HOLD OUR POSITION, ~ 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.

▶▶ Last time we looked at the first three pieces of the armor.

▶▶ Now, ~ it's important to keep in the forefronts of our minds that, ~ even though we are examining each piece individually, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ it takes being clothed in the full strong spiritual armor that God has given to us, ~ in order for us to withstand the onslaught of our spiritual enemies.

THIS A.M., ~ WE'LL EXAMINE THE LAST THREE PIECES OF ARMOR.

LET'S LOOK AT VERSE 16 ~ AND THE FOURTH PIECE OF ARMOR.

IN VERSE 16a, ~ PAUL SAYS, ~ "IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF faith."

▶▶ Since each piece of the strong spiritual armor comes from God, ~ this cannot mean personal faith. ¶¶ 1/8

▶▶ "faith" here most likely refers to, ~ as Jude 3 says, ~ "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

▷▷ I.e., ~ the special revelation of God that Scripture contains. ~ TPID, ~ what God has said and revealed from Genesis to Revelation.

▷▷ Notice, ~ God's word is once again in view.

↳↳ In verse 14b, ~ Paul was talking about being well-grounded in God's word in order to not be fooled by the enemy's lies.

↳↳ Here in verse 16, ~ he has a slightly different focus.

PAUL IS SAYING, ~ "BELIEVERS, ~ HOLD YOUR POSITION AGAINST OUR SPIRITUAL enemies by taking up the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

▶▶ But what does it mean to take up "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints"?

▶▶ Briefly put, ~ it most likely refers to having an absolute trust in what God has revealed and said in His word.

▶▶ So Paul is saying to believers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Believers, ~ hold your position against our spiritual enemies by having an absolute trust in God's word."

IN VERSE 16b, ~ PAUL SAYS HAVING AN ABSOLUTE TRUST IN GOD'S WORD WILL enable us to "extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one."

▶▶ Now, ~ in the broadest sense, ~ this would include every type of tactic used by the enemy.

▶▶ But in the immediate context, ~ since Paul is talking about having an absolute trust in what God has revealed and said in His word, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ it seems to specifically refer to the enemy's tactics to get us to doubt God's word.

▶▶ E.g., ~ this is what he did to Eve.

▷▷ First, ~ let's look at what God said. ~ Gen. 2:16-17.

↳↳ "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" ¶¶ 2/8

▷▷ Now let's drop in on a little bit of the conversation Satan had with Eve. ~ Gen. 3:4, ~
But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die."

▶▶ Just think of all the negative consequences that could have been avoided if Adam and Eve had only trusted God's word completely.

▷▷ Instead, ~ they chose to trust the word of "the father of lies."

▶▶ Just think of all the negative consequence that we could avoid if we have an absolute trust in "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

▷▷ Just think of all the victories over the enemy we can have if we place complete trust in what God has said and revealed in His word.

GOD'S WORD IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE AND TRUSTWORTHY.

▶▶ Prov. 30:5, ~ "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

▶▶ And Ps. 18:30, ~ "This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him."

▶▶ Each and every word in each and every sentence of Scripture is 100% true and dependable.

▷▷ So we can safely put our absolute trust in God's word and be assured that in doing so, ~ every tactic of the enemy will be foiled.

▶▶ But not only is God's word absolutely true and trustworthy. ~ Did you notice the wording in these verses? ~ Very similar to Paul.

▷▷ Not only is God's word absolutely true and trustworthy. ~ God Himself is a shield for His people.

↪↪ Along with his absolutely true and trustworthy word, ~ we have the promise of His protection in this fight.

→→ And, ~ again, ~ as Paul says in Rom. 8:31b, ~ "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

IN VERSE 17a, ~ WE FIND THE FIFTH PIECE OF THE STRONG SPIRITUAL ARMOR that God has given believers. ↴↴ 3/8

PAUL SAYS, ~ "HOLD YOUR POSITION BY PUTTING ON THE HELMET OF SALVATION."

▶▶Now, ~ it's important to understand that Paul is not talking about conversion here. ~~ He's not saying, ~ "Hold your position by becoming saved."

▷▷Paul is writing to those who have already become believers.

SO WHAT DOES PAUL MEAN THEN WHEN HE SAYS, ~ "HOLD YOUR POSITION AGAINST "the spiritual forces of evil" by putting on salvation?"

▶▶Most likely, ~ Paul is speaking of being well-grounded in the truths of our salvation, ~ some of which he spelled out in the first three chapters of this letter.

▶▶Perhaps we could summarize it as being well-grounded in the truth that believers are saved, ~ that we have been given "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," ~

▷▷and that absolutely nothing can change that.

▶▶In all likelihood, ~ the idea then expressed in [verse 17a](#) is this.

▷▷"Believers, ~ you know and are assured that God has saved you and given you every spiritual blessing there is, ~ and absolutely nothing can change that. ~~ ¶¶

↪↪So hold your position against the spiritual forces of evil by being well-grounded in this truth."

▶▶My fellow believers, ~ we do have the knowledge and are indeed assured ~ that we are saved, ~ have been given "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," ~ and that absolutely nothing can change that.

▷▷In [Col. 1:13](#), ~ Paul writes, ~ "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."

▷▷In [Phil. 1:6](#), ~ Paul says, ~ "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

▷▷In [Jn. 6:37-40](#), ~ Jesus said, ~ "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out ~ [DN]. ~~ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me ~ [i.e., ~ God the Father]. ~~ ¶¶

↪↪And this is the will of him who sent me, ~ that I should lose nothing of all ~ [or, ~ none of all those] ~ that he has given me, but raise it ~ [or raise them] up on the last day. ~~ ¶¶ ¶¶ 4/8

→→For this is the will of my Father, ~ that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him ~ should have eternal life, ~ and I will raise him up on the last day."

▷▷And speaking of believers in Jn. 10:28a, ~ Jesus said, ~ "I give them eternal life, ~ and they will never perish." ~ Again, ~ double negative

▶▶My brothers and sisters in Christ, ~ no matter what we go through, ~ no matter what happens to us in this life, ~ the outcome will be the same.

▷▷We will still have eternal life, ~ we will still have every spiritual blessing there is, ~ we will still live forever with Jesus.

▷▷Paul points to this in 2 Cor. 4:16-18. ~ "So we do not lose heart. ~ Though our outer self is wasting away, ~ our inner self is being renewed day by day. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ~ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. ~ ~ ¶¶

→→For the things that are seen are transient, ~ but the things that are unseen are eternal."

▶▶Armed with the knowledge and assurance ~ that we are saved, ~ have been given "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places," ~ and that absolutely nothing can change that, ~ ¶¶

▷▷along with the other pieces of strong spiritual armor that God has given us, ~ ¶¶

↳↳we will be able to hold our position and be victorious against "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

IN VERSE 17b, ~ WE FIND THE SIXTH AND FINAL PIECE OF THE STRONG spiritual armor that God has given believers.

PAUL TELLS US TO TAKE "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT."

▶▶Paul defines "the sword of the Spirit" for us as "the word of God."

▷▷So Paul is saying, ~ "hold your position against our spiritual enemies by taking "the word of God."

▶▶Notice, ~ once again, ~ for the third time to be exact, ~ God's word is in view. ~ And with a different focus, ~ as we'll see. ¶¶ 5/8

BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TAKE "THE WORD OF GOD"?

▶▶ Well, ~ the Greek word for "word" here means "that which is said."

▶▶ Simply put, ~ taking "the word of God" can be understood here as using a specific Scripture verse or verses in specific situations ~ ¶¶

▷▷ to fend off attacks of the enemy and put him to flight.

▶▶ IOW, ~ taking "the word of God" refers to the appropriate Scripture that we use to counteract a particular temptation we face.

▷▷ E.g., ~ when tempted to lie, ~ speaking Eph. 4:25 can help us.

↳↳ Paul says, ~ "Therefore, ~ having put away falsehood, ~ let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor."

NOW, ~ WE MUST NOT MISS AN IMPORTANT IMPLICATION HERE.

▶▶ To have a precise Scripture ready to defend ourselves at any given moment, ~ believers must have a thorough knowledge of Scripture.

▶▶ Psalm 119:11, ~ says, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "I have stored up your word in my heart, ~ that I might not sin against you."

▶▶ Having a thorough knowledge of God's word is the necessary preparation for using a specific verse or verses to counteract a particular temptation we face.

▷▷ Because it will give us a vast reservoir of ammunition that we can use to defend ourselves against the attacks of the enemy.

SO BASICALLY, ~ IN VERSE 17b, ~ PAUL IS SAYING, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ "Hold your position against the spiritual forces of evil by having a full reservoir of Scripture ready to use to counteract their attack."

▶▶ Satan is no match for Scripture. ~ He only laughs at our words.

▷▷ That's why he tries all he can to keep us away from God's word and to get us to use our own words. ¶¶ 6/8

OF COURSE, ~ THE GREATEST EXAMPLE OF GOD'S WORD BEING USED TO DEFEAT Satan was Jesus Himself in the temptations described in the gospels.

▶▶Matt. 4:1-11.

▷▷Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

↪↪But he answered, "It is written," 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

▷▷Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you,' and "On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"

↪↪Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

▷▷Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

↪↪Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"

▷▷Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

▶▶"It is written." ~~ "it is written." ~~ "it is written." ~~ And the devil was defeated.

▶▶Note that Satan can also quote the Word. ~ Did you catch that in [verse 6](#)?

▷▷But he does not quote it correctly, ~ completely, ~ or in context

▷▷Satan distorts God's word to confuse us

▷▷So it is important that we have a thorough knowledge of God's word.

↪↪The better we know the Word of God, ~ the easier it will be for us to detect Satan's lies and reject his offers. **⇓⇓ 7/8**

CONCLUSION.

AND WITH THAT, ~ WE ARE DONE LOOKING AT THE PIECES OF THE STRONG spiritual armor that God has given us.

▶▶Paul, ~ of course, ~ is not finished with his discussion of spiritual warfare. ~~ He next calls us to prayer

▷▷And we'll take that up next time.

LET'S PRAY 8/8