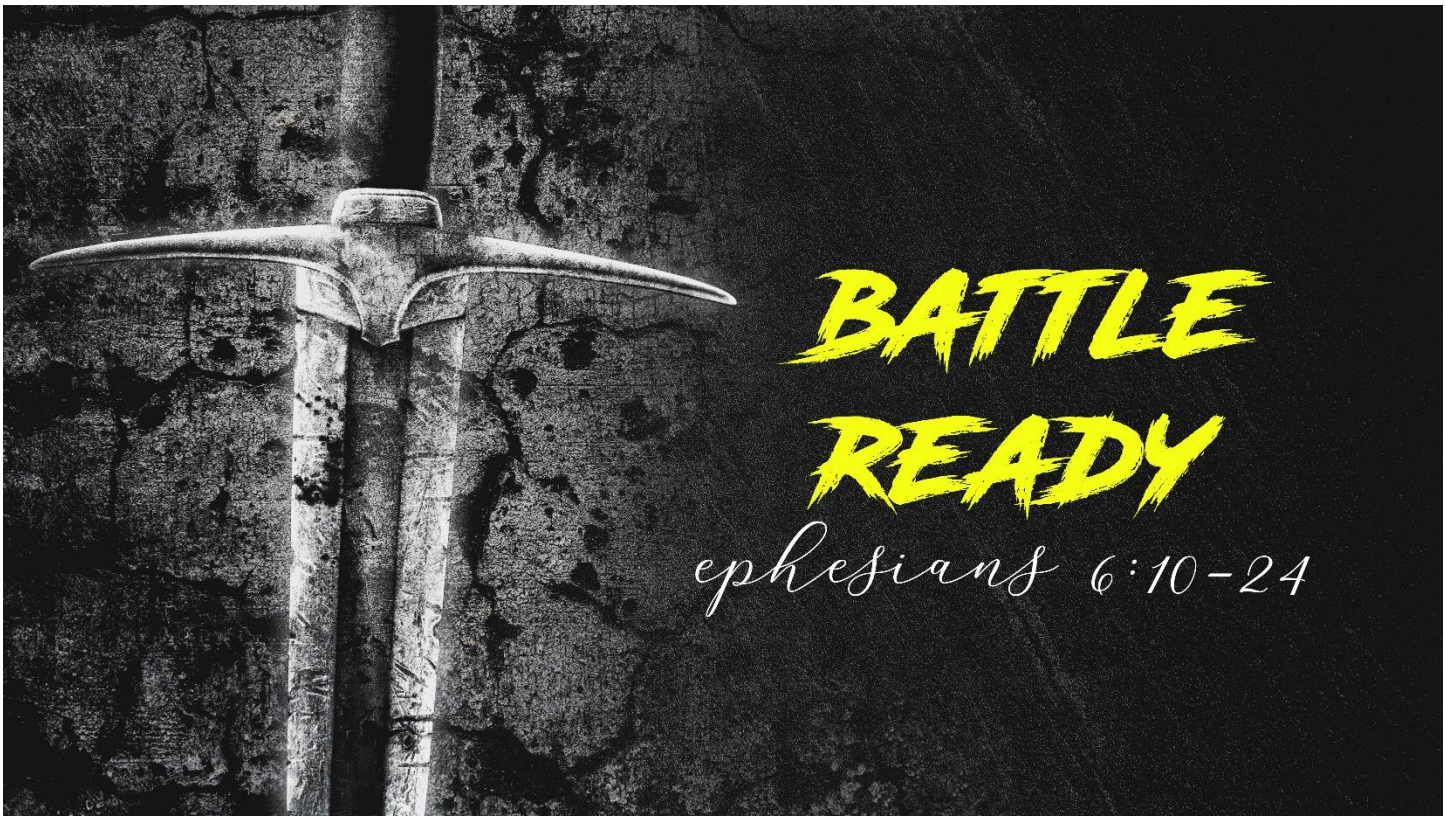

Battle Ready: Gear Up (Part 1)

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-17
Subject: Stand
Central Theme: Standing against Satan
Objective Statement: We can be ready to make a stand by putting on the armor of God. Here are three pieces of armor that we must put on.
Keyword: Pieces of Armor.

1. The Belt of Truth. (v.14)
2. The Breastplate of Righteousness. (v.14)
3. The Shield of Faith. (v.16)

Introduction:

Connection

Two 6 year olds struggled with the problem of the existence of the devil. One boy said, "Oh, there isn't any devil." The other, rather upset, said, "What do you mean, there isn't any devil? It talks about him all the way through the Bible!" the first replied, "Oh that's not true, you know. It's just like Santa Clause, the devil turns out to be your dad." - G. Lewis, Demon Possession, ed. J. Montgomery.

Tension:

- There are many who would think it weird that we would take any time to talk about anything like the devil.
- They think of him as something like mythology or legend.
- But to deny his existence doesn't make him go away.
- No. He is not your dad.
- He is real.
- We learned this last week as we began this series as we come to the end of the book of Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:12

(12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- There is a hierarchy of satanic forces that are against us.
- If we are in Christ, we do have a new identity. We do have an inheritance, a calling, and access to God's power.
- Being in Christ means we have all of His resources, but it also means we have all of His enemies.
- Satan is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.
- Because he is real, we must respond accordingly.

Ephesians 6:11

(11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

- This word "wiles" is the Greek word "methodeias". The strategies, the schemes, the deceits. To employ a craft.

What are some of the schemes of Satan? What are some of his methods?

One pastor put this list together. I'm sure that this isn't complete.

Strategy #1- Undermine God's Character.

- Satan does not want us to not trust God.

- He wants us to doubt God.
- This was what happened in the garden.

Genesis 3:1-5

(1) Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

(2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

(3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

(4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

(5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Strategy #2- Peer Pressure.

- He wants us to conform to what everyone else is doing.
- He wants to keep us from doing what no one else is doing if it is the right thing.

Strategy #3- Comfort.

- It can be addicting.
- "Do what makes you feel good."
- "If it feels good, do it."
- This appeals to our flesh.

Philippians 3:17-19

(17) Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

(18) (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

(19) Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Strategy #4- False Doctrine

1 Timothy 4:1-2

(1) Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

(2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

- According to scripture, satanic forces are often the authors of false religion.
- Bad doctrine often finds its authorship in the enemy.
- When we think of the word doctrine, we often think religious teaching.
- I would make the case that the fastest growing religion in our culture is secualarism.
- Apologist and Author Natalie Crane posits these 4 tenants of secularism.
    i. Feeling is the ultimate guide.
    ii. Happiness is the ultimate goal.
    iii. Judging is the ultimate sin.
    iv. God is the ultimate guess.
- The point is that false doctrine is everywhere.

Strategy #5- Hinder our Service.

- Satan is working against the effectiveness of what we are trying to do.
- He is working to cause our work for the Lord to be less effective.
- For instance, when we witness, he wants people to reject us, ignore us, persecute us, and discourage us. Why? It may make us a little bit less likely to do it the next time we have an opportunity.

Strategy #6- Cause Division

- One of the worst things that Satan can do is to cause division.
- There are times when division is necessary- when it is over doctrinal things it is necessary.
- But often division distracts, destroys, and is part of hindering the work of God.
- If you are setting up sides over something that is not explicit in scripture you are causing division. This is one of Satan's tactics.

James 4:1

(1) From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

- We are told to mark those who cause division among us.

Romans 16:17

(17) Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

- We must pursue unity in the church, because disunity and fighting will get us off course.
- We are in a battle- but not with each other- against Satan.
- The point of church discipline when there is division and disunity is always restoration.

Strategy #7- Trust our own resources.

- Instead of trusting God, Satan tempts us to trust in ourselves- our resources, our knowledge, our strategy, our money, our position, our political party, our methods…anything other than Jesus.
- When Satan gets us depending on ourselves rather than God, we lose.

Strategy #8- Play the hypocrite.

- Integrity is defined as oneness or wholeness. There is no part of your life that is compartmentalized from any other part. People with integrity do right no matter who is watching. The way you act at school and work and home and church are the same.
- I'd go to church, except those people are a bunch of _____. (hypocrites).

Strategy#9- Worldliness.

- 1 John tells us what the world is and what worldliness looks like.

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1 John 2:15-17

(15) Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

(16) For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

(17) And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

- Satan's strategy is to get us to be like everyone and everything else.

- He doesn't want us to look like Jesus. He doesn't want us to be distinct or attractive to those who don't know Christ. He wants us to blend in.

Strategy #10- Disobedience to God's Word.

- This is a summary kind of statement of what Satan wants us to do.
- Satan wants us to be disobedient to God.
- He wants as many people as possible to reject God.
- He's on a mission.
- So we must be on a mission as well.

What do we do to face all these deceitful and crafty strategies of Satan?

Ephesians 6:13

(13) Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- We must make a stand.
- We must fight.
- We must be battle ready by putting on the whole armor.

We can be ready to make a stand by putting on the armor of God. Here are three pieces of armor that we must put on.

1. The Belt of Truth. (v.10)

Ephesians 6:14

(14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

- Paul is a Roman citizen.
- This is something that has come to him at great cost.
- He had spent time in a Roman prison. In fact, at this time he was a prisoner of Rome.
- He had seen his share of Roman soldiers.
- So, like so many authors, he uses something familiar to him to illustrate more abstract concepts.

- He commands us to stand “having your loins girt about with truth”.
- The belt was around the core of the soldier. The sword hung from the belt.
- There were some kinds of armor where the belt worked with the breastplate and other armor to set it in place.
- A soldier would where a large, loose tunic.
- When you see a Roman during that time, they had long flowing robes.
- Such a long flowing robe would have been a problem in combat.
- The Roman soldier fought mostly hand to hand.
- The last thing a soldier needs is a loose piece of clothing for the enemy to get a hold on. It could mean death.
- We see this today in our gladiatorial combat- football. Football uniforms are worn tight to hold in the padding, but also so that there isn’t some shirt to grab to tackle your opponent.
- A belt was necessary to cinch up the loosely hanging material. Cf. Exo 12:11; Luk 12:35; 1Pe 1:13.
- To gird your loins was to take in and shore up all of the loose ends of the material as part of the preparation for battle.

“Having your loins girt about with truth” speaks to two realities.- Truth as Doctrine, and Truth as an Ethical Attitude

- We can take it to mean “the truth”.
    - Truth is that which corresponds to reality.
    - There is not “your truth” and “my truth”.
    - “Speak your truth”.
    - Nope. That’s a lie from Satan.
    - There is not your truth and my truth. There is the truth.
    - Certainly, without truth we cannot be ready to stand against the wiles of the devil.
    - We are prepared for battle with truth.
- We can also take it to mean “truthfulness”.

- It's the kind of commitment to Christ that understands that we are in a battle. It's time to "roll up our sleeves", to "gird up our loins", to bring in all of the loose ends of our thinking, and prepare for the fight.
- It's thinking rightly about our lives and the lies of the devil that would bring us down.
- It's a commitment to what is true, and to fight for it.
- You must believe that you are doing the right thing to fight well in the battle.
- You must be committed to fight.
- So, When we gird our loins with truth we are saying:
    - I will believe the truth.
    - I am committed to the truth.
    - I will live truthfully and fight for what is right.
- It's not just what to know, but an attitude to exhibit.
- It's not just truth as doctrine, but truth as an attitude. Truthfulness.

Application:

- Let me ask you a question:
    - What is your dedication to "the truth"?
    - Do you walk in truth?
    - Are you more like our culture where everyone has "their truth"?
        - Are feelings your guide?
        - Is happiness your goal?
        - Do you feel as though it is wrong to say that anyone or anything is wrong?
    - It's time to pull in all of these loose ends.
    - Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.
    - You cannot live your life by lies.

We can be ready to make a stand by putting on the armor of God. Here are three pieces of armor that we must put on.

- The Belt of Truth.

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness. (v.11)

Ephesians 6:14

(14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

- The breastplate was a sleeveless, hardened piece of armor worn over the shoulders and down the torso.
- Some breastplates were made of leather, others of the hooves and horns of animals. The most notable were made of metal.
- They protected the vital organs.
- If you think of taking a shot to the arm or leg that could be bad. A shot to the heart or the gut could be lethal.
- In what way is righteousness like a breastplate?

There are two kinds of righteousness spoken of in the scripture.

1. There is positional or imputed righteousness.

- On our own we are not righteous.
- The Bible makes it clear that no one is righteous.

Romans 3:10

(10) As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

- It's not that we never do anything morally good.
- It's that our good works are not acceptable to God as a means of making us right with him. We can't be made right with God by our good deeds.

Isaiah 64:6

(6) But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

- We have no righteousness to offer to God on our own.
- To be made righteous, we need an alien righteousness.
- This is the first kind of righteousness, or right standing with God.
- Positional. Imputed.

Romans 4:8-11

(8) Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

(9) Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

(10) How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

(11) And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

- Paul is making the point here that Abraham was not "reckoned" as righteous once he did the outward sign of obedience and convenant called circumcision. God did not respond to his circumcision. He responded to his faith.
- Abraham believed God and it was "counted" unto him as righteousness. His sin was not imputed to him. No. God's righteousness was imputed to him.
- He became the first of many others that were not jewish, not circumcised, but received an imputed, alien righteousness.
- 2 Corinthians 5:21

(21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

- When we believe God and turn from our sin to Him by faith, God takes our sin, and imputes unto us God's righteousness.

Romans 10:9-10

(9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

(10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- Righteousness is like a breastplate during battle, because there is protection from the ultimate mortal wound.

- But there is another kind of righteousness that grows once we have an imputed righteousness, or a positional righteousness.

2. There is a practical righteousness. There is an imparted righteousness.

- We grow in holiness, by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- During Paul's day the heart represented the mind or inner thoughts of a person. The bowels represented the seat of the emotions.
- As we become obedient to Christ, and our practical righteousness grows.
- The Bible calls that sanctification.
- Our hearts and minds are protected.

Philippians 4:6-7

(6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

(7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- God's Spirit helps us fellowship with God and watches guards over our hearts and minds.
- Look at what Peter said in 1 Peter 1:13-16.

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1 Peter 1:13-16

(13) Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

(14) As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

(15) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

(16) Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

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3. The Shield of Faith. (v.12)

- Though this is in your bulletin notes, we have run out of time. We will talk about this next week.

Conclusion:

Application:

- There is a battle raging. Can you feel it?
- What is at stake is the souls of men and women, boys and girls.
- What is at stake is your effectiveness as a believer.
- What may be at stake is your own soul.
- Are you winning or losing in this spiritual battle? How is your obedience? Are you causing division? Is there hypocrisy in your life? Are you making a stand?
- What about the belt of truth?
    - Do you know the truth?
    - Are you living in truth?
    - Are you committed to truthfulness at all costs?
    - I've had people tell me, "I know the Bible says… But…."
    - "I know the right thing is normally_____, but…."
- What about the breastplate of righteousness?
    - Are you in Christ? Have you received Christ's righteousness? The good news is that it doesn't happen by works. It happens by faith.
    - Is your position in Christ and your practice in Christ the same?
    - Are you living your life in Christ, or are you walking around at battle with little more than a tunic on?
- We must make a stand in this battle because so much depends on it.
- Are you battle ready? It's time to gear up.

Inspiration:

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