

## MADE NEW: A New Battle<sup>i</sup> Ephesians 6:10-24

### INTRODUCTION:

We do want to say a special welcome to those of you that are guests with us this morning. We are so glad that you are here. My name is Chris Wigley, I'm one of the pastors here at Trinity. If you are a guest, we'd love to get to connect with. You can provide information to us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a form that is less 30 seconds to fill out. When you click "submit," it notifies me, and I always look forward to following up with our guests each week.

If text messaging isn't your thing, please swing by our information center located in the fellowship area, right out these doors in the lobby. We have a gift there for you just as a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. Again, we are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Today we are wrapping up our teaching series called "Made New." We will be working our way through Ephesians 6, verses 10 through 24 this morning in a message titled, "A New Battle." So, I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me there. Have you enjoyed our study through Ephesians? I know I have.

Last week I mentioned that we are skipping the remainder of chapter 5 and the first part of chapter 6 because we are going to come back to those passages in a sermon series I will be launching on Sunday, the 20<sup>th</sup>. That teaching series will be called, "A Biblical Family in a Modern World." We are going to look at biblical principles about marriage, raising godly kids, family finances, and topics like that. So, I hope that you are looking forward to that like I am.

Now, next Sunday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, will be a big day for us as a church. It is promotion Sunday for our age graded ministries and our staff has awesome things planned for that. But that day will be what we are calling "Vision Sunday." I will be sharing with you more details about where we are headed this fall and what all is in the works. So, I say that to say that I hope you'll make it back next week for that awesome day. But today, we are looking at a new battle that the Apostle Paul lays out for us.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Paul Revere<sup>ii</sup>**

It was on April 18, 1775, over 700 British soldiers landed in Boston. The mission was a surprise attack on the colonies to rid them of organizing militia groups and to put a damper on the ideals of our country's founding patriots. Their strategy was to cross the Charles River in the dark of night and attack the towns of Concord and Lexington when they least expected it. As they made their way, in the middle of the night, everyone asleep, a man by the name of Paul Revere climbed on this horse, rode through the colonies, and alerted them. His ride has become legendary as he rode through those towns shouting, "The British are coming! The British are coming!"

This announcement was one of alerting people to a coming reality. The enemy is coming. The enemy is on the way. Prepare, get ready for battle. And it was this announcement that paved the way for victory for what would soon be a new nation.

Here in Ephesians 6, the Apostle Paul is doing much the same thing. He is warning us of an attack. An invasion by our enemy. He is wanting believers in Ephesus and all over the world to be ready. Because the reality is that our enemy is already at work among us.

So, this morning, we are going to look at a powerful text. We will be urged to know the attack, know the armor, and know our army. That will serve as our outline here this morning.

### MESSAGE

So, let's begin by looking at the urging to...

#### 1) **Know the Attack.**

The first thing Paul is going to say to us today is that we need to know that there is a spiritual war going on. Look at verses 10 through 13 of Ephesians 6. You follow along in your copy of God's Word. ***10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.***

Paul is saying that we must be aware of the spiritual attack we face. If we are going to have victory, we must know that we are in a battle. The Bible often calls believers to an awareness of spiritual battle. In 1 Peter 5:8, Peter says, *“**Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.**”* The bottom line is that we have an adversary, the devil. And this adversary is seeking to devour us.

Paul obviously believed in an unseen realm, an invisible, spiritual war. In his writings, he talks about fighting the good fight, about tearing down spiritual strongholds, that peace with God is not something we enjoy apart from a relationship with Christ. And here in Ephesians 6, Paul addresses spiritual warfare head on.

Now, not only did Paul believe in an unseen realm, Jesus, Himself, engaged in the spiritual realm. In Matthew chapter 4, Jesus is tempted by Satan. He casts out demons, and Jesus often taught about the realities of heaven and hell.

The Old Testament talks about spiritual battle. One of my favorite stories is when Elisha prayed for his servant to have his eyes opened to see the spiritual realm. In 2 Kings 6, verses 15 through 17. That passage says, *“**When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?”** He said, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”*

This is today. Right now, we are engaged in a great spiritual battle. I think we would be blown away at the presence of spiritual beings surrounding us in this moment. The point is that spiritual battle is real, and Paul wants us to know it.

Another thing this passage points out is that we learn that we need to know what we are up against. We need to know who the enemy is. Paul, in verse 11, calls him the devil. This is the Greek word, “diabolos.” Literally translated it means, “the slanderer, a false accuser.”<sup>iii</sup> This is an accurate name for Satan as his desire is to sever a relationship between us and God. He does that by unjustly criticizing and accusing us.<sup>iv</sup>

Paul not only alerts us to the attack, and not only tells us about our enemy, he also teaches us that there is a strategy involved. Also in verse 11, we are told to stand against the devil’s “schemes.” The word translated as schemes is the word, “methodia.”<sup>v</sup> It is where we get the word method. Our spiritual enemy is organized and strategic in his spiritual attack.

So, after alerting us, and pointing out the enemy, he reminds us of where this battle is actually fought. Verse 12 says, *“**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**”*

Our enemy isn’t other people. We often misplace or misidentify where the attack is coming from. Paul is saying in verse 12, Your enemy is not your spouse. Your enemy is not your supervisor. Your enemy is not the person on the other side of the political aisle from you. Your enemy is a spiritual force in the spiritual realm.

In Mark 8, Jesus was talking about how He was going to go to the cross. Peter protested and emphatically asked Jesus not to do it. Do you remember Jesus’ reply to Peter’s objection? He said, “Get behind me, Satan!” Jesus wasn’t calling Peter Satan, He was calling out Satan.<sup>vi</sup> The battle wasn’t against Peter and what he said, but Jesus knew the conflict was between Satan and Himself.

All this is pointing to the fact that we are to know the attack. It is spiritual in nature. While we are to know the battle, but we are not to fear the battle. Author C.S. Lewis once said, *“**Humanity falls into two equal and opposite errors concerning the Devil. Either they take him altogether too seriously or they do not take him seriously enough.**”* Not everything is spiritual warfare, but we do need to be aware that it exists.

And Paul calls us to attention of this fight. In verse 13 he says, *“**Therefore [in light of spiritual warfare’s reality] take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.**”* We are called to stand firm in this battle. This, by the way, is a reference back to verse 10. That we stand firm, we are strong, only in The Lord and the power of His might. So, we are to know the attack. Secondly, we are to...

## 2) Know the Armor.

The fact that Paul wants us to know about the spiritual attack and that he tells us to stand firm, means that none of us are exempt in fighting this new battle. In other words, we can't shield ourselves or our families from Satan's attacks. And while spiritual battle is inevitable, God does not leave us defenseless. Paul says to put on the full armor of God. God gives us armor to stand firm.

Paul is most likely chained to a Roman soldier as he writes this. And he relates victory in the spiritual battle to being equipped like a Roman soldier is when he goes into battle. And in verses 14 to 18, Paul outlines the armor of God. 7 pieces of armor. I'm going to work through them quickly. Let's read it first.

***14Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints."***

First piece of armor is the **Belt of Truth**. What does a belt do? Well, it goes around your core, and in the case of a soldier, holds your weapons. It is a central piece to the armor and holds everything together.

Paul equates this central piece to truth. I have a couple of thoughts on this.<sup>vii</sup> First, truth is central to everyone. If you are not supported with truth, you will lose the battle every time. And we all have to determine what is truth for us. Truth is where we gain perspective on what we believe and how we live life. For some people, their truth is an internal, moral compass. What feels right, or they follow their heart. For others, their truth follows popular opinion, whatever their friends, or professors, or favorite celebrity thinks. Some just go along with whatever political party they align to. And yet for others, truth is found in the Bible, the Word of God. Whatever God says is their authority.

For Paul, there is no ambiguity as to the source of truth. The word he uses in the original language is a word that means, a "divine truth revealed to man."<sup>viii</sup> To win in the spiritual battle, we must have and rely on divine truth. Well, the Bible is just that, God's revelation of Himself to humanity. Therefore, for the believer, our source of truth is God's Word.

But I think there is something else at play here. When it comes to truth in the Scriptures, it is not always a what but rather a who.<sup>ix</sup> In John 14:6, Jesus says, ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*** Jesus is truth. The way that you and I are victorious in spiritual battle is by knowing the truth, knowing Jesus, because then and only then can we be strong in The Lord.

The second piece of armor is the **Breastplate of Righteousness**. A soldier's breastplate covered vital organs. This is an essential piece.

Paul equates the breastplate to righteousness. What is righteousness? It means that we think and live rightly. It's purity. And living rightly is what gives us victory in spiritual battle. We are to bring our lives under the righteousness of Christ. We are to conform, apply righteousness, by living like Jesus.

We recognize the truth behind this truth, don't we?! The parts that are not protected by Christ's righteousness are the parts susceptible to attack. Our enemy knows our weaknesses, he is fully aware of the areas of our lives that are exposed. And those are the areas he attacks. Bad habits, lack of self-control, areas of pride, and bad influences in our lives.<sup>x</sup> Every time I have fallen prey to the devil, and his schemes, it comes in an area that I have not brought under the reign and rule of Jesus in my life.

The third piece of armor is **Gospel Shoes**. A Roman soldier had to take care of his feet. There would be no standing firm without healthy feet. No marching onward without feet taken care of.

The battle shoes that Roman soldiers would wear often had spikes on the bottom of them.<sup>xi</sup> This kind of shoe would carry the soldier forward into battle giving him an advantage, a stability to stand firm and stand strong.

The shoes of spiritual battle is the gospel. I like how my translation translates this piece of armor. ***"As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace."*** One commentator I read this week said, "Readiness means you understand God's purposes in the world and are ready to extend them."<sup>xii</sup> A readiness to share the gospel is armor in spiritual battle. Paul says elsewhere, ***"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*** Nothing pushes back the darkness, nothing is more beautiful, like sharing the gospel. And it is the gospel that brings peace with God and peace with others.

The fourth piece of armor is the **Shield of Faith**. A shield is something that protects an incoming attack. In this case, Paul says that the shield of faith protect us from the flaming darts of the devil. The incoming missiles of Hell.

The main way Satan hurls flaming darts is in the lies he speaks. Our faith, the strengthening of our faith allows us to not believe the lies of the enemy but rather hold onto the truths of who we are in Christ.

The devil will speak lies like, “You’re no good. After what you did, you think God will really still love you? You won’t be able to make a difference. You’ll never be a good parent. Your marriage has no hope.” But God says that He is faithful and when we confess our sins He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God says that He knows the plans He has for us, plans to prosper us, to give us a hope and a future. God says that where we are weak, He is strong. The question is do you believe that. Because when your faith is fortified in those truths, you can extinguish the lies of the enemy with the shield of faith.

The fifth piece of armor is the **Helmet of Salvation**. Obviously, a helmet protects the head. This is where thought occurs.

Here is a truth that we must constantly remind ourselves. We don’t fight for victory; we fight from victory. So many of us lose the spiritual battle because in our minds we are already defeated and helpless. But the helmet of salvation reminds us of our new identity in Christ. That we do not fight in our own strength but in the power of The Lord’s might. Our new identity in Christ means that we are more than conquerors. Our salvation is what gains us this position.

I’ve got to move quickly. The sixth piece of armor is the **Sword of the Spirit**. A sword was a Roman soldier’s offensive weapon. It was designed for combat. And we are told by the Apostle Paul that our sword is the Word of God.

There are three ways that such a weapon can be used. First is to make a preemptive strike. The Christian life is not a call to a defensive position. Jesus said of Peter’s confession that the gates of Hell will not prevail against the advancement of The Church. We are make disciples by proclaiming with boldness the Gospel message, the truth of God’s Word.

The second use of a weapon is in defense. In the Garden of Eden, Satan deceived Eve with a lie. Her greatest defense in that situation would have been

to correctly apply God’s Word. That is exactly what Jesus did when the Devil hurled lies at Him. The Sword of the Spirit combats the onslaught of the enemy.

A third use of the Sword of the Spirit is for healing. A sword cuts. A scalpel heals. Hebrews 4:12 says, *“<sup>12</sup>For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”* God’s Word often brings conviction and therefore ushers in healing.

But, with a great weapon comes a great responsibility. Members of our military are issued weapons. And with those weapons they attack and defend against our enemies. However, the use of those weapons can cause damage in friendly fire. When offensive measures are used incorrectly, or because of a mistake, damage can be done.

The final piece of armor Paul mentions is **Praying in the Spirit**. Many times people won’t include this in the list of the armor of God. But prayer is perhaps the greatest of our weapons. James 5:16 says, *“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”*

So, we’ve talked about knowing the attack and knowing the armor. Paul also tells us to ...

### 3) Know our Army.

Look at verses 18-24 with me. Let’s begin with the second part of verse 18. *<sup>18</sup>To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, **making supplication for all the saints,** <sup>19</sup>**and also for me,** that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. <sup>21</sup>So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus [Tic-ka-kus] the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. <sup>22</sup>I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and **that he may encourage your hearts.** <sup>23</sup>**Peace be to the brothers,** and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>**Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.***

The thing that really stands out to me in these verses is the community of believers. Paul asks us to pray for each other. Tychicus [Tic-ka-kus] was sent

for the purpose of encouraging fellow believers. And then Paul speaks peace and grace over us. Do you see the community here?

The truth is that we were never designed to fight spiritual battles alone. I want you to think about the armor of God mentioned in this passage. Breastplate, shield, sword. When you think about it, all that this armor really covers is the front of the soldier. Sure, a breastplate could be a complete vest, but then it wouldn't be just a breastplate would it?

My point is that it seems like God's design in the armor is that we would depend on one another to cover each other's backs. To look out for one another. To fight for one another. To find ways to shield one another. And speaking of shields, Roman shields were designed to interlock. That soldiers could in effect become a wall of protection when they were united together. You gotta know your army!

Yes, we face an enemy. Yes, he is a formidable foe. But we don't fight alone. We stand firm in the strength of the Lord, and we stand firm surrounded by fellow warriors in Christ.

I want to talk practically for just a moment. The greatest way for us to have each other's backs is to be involved and consistent in a small group. You will not find victory isolated. In fact, the enemy would love to isolate you from the group. If you are not plugged into a group, you need to get in a group today. If there isn't one suited for you, let Pastor Jeff know. We'll start a group!

Paul says we are to know the attack, know the armor, and to know our army.

### **CONCLUSION:**

As the team comes to lead us in response, let me just ask you, have you given your life to Jesus? The Bible says that all of us, myself included, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But that God so loved us, even in our sin, that He sent Jesus to die on the cross in our place. That by faith in the person and work of Jesus, we can be forgiven, redeemed, saved. Have you come to faith in Jesus as Lord? If not, you can today. Our elders will be here at the front and are ready to receive you and visit with you about that.

Perhaps you are here today and this morning's message resonated with you. You feel the battle, maybe you've even been wounded in battle. We believe

one of the greatest purposes of The Church is to surround you and lift you up in moments like that. We all need each other. Our elders would love to pray over you this morning. Would you allow us to do that?

I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but let's respond to the prompting of Jesus on our hearts this morning. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES:

<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1986; Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1996; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians*, Word Books: Dallas, 1990; Hope Church Las Vegas, various messages in a series titled "Battle Lines," sermons preached at Hope Church Las Vegas, accessed online: [https://hopechurchlv.com/message\\_passages/ephesians/](https://hopechurchlv.com/message_passages/ephesians/); Jack Graham, "Much More: Battle Cry," sermon preached at Prestonwood Baptist Church on August 23, 2020, accessed online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3peErBxiVw>; Jack Graham, "Invisible: There's More to Life Than What You See: What to Wear in the War," sermon preached at Prestonwood Baptist Church, published by Sermons.Love, accessed online: <https://sermons.love/jack-graham/10877-jack-graham-what-to-wear-in-the-war.html>; Michael Youssef, "Discover Your Treasure House: Discover Its Life of Victory," published by Leading The Way, July 7, 2013, accessed online: <https://www.ltw.org/watch/teaching/series/discover-your-treasure-house/part-13>; Michael Gossett, "Ephesians Living in Christ: Battle in Christ," sermon preached at Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, TX, April 10, 2022, accessed online: <https://www.gabc.org/episode/battle-in-christ/>; Joel McMullan, January Bible Study: Ephesians 6:10-24; Jonathan Pokluda, "Spiritual Warfare," message preached at The Porch at Watermark, July 3, 2012, accessed online: <https://www.watermark.org/message/2085-spiritual-warfare>; J.D. Greear, "Love Incorruptible: This is War," preached at Summit Church, March 26, 2017, accessed online: <https://summitchurch.com/message/this-is-war>; Skip Heitzig, "The Whole Armor," message taught at Calvary Church Albuquerque, September 29, 2004, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/series/237/sermon/3103>.

<sup>ii</sup> This illustration was inspired by the sermon opener from Michael Gossett.

<sup>iii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 1228, diabolos.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Strong's Concordance, 3180, methodeia.

<sup>vi</sup> Quip taken from Jack Graham.

<sup>vii</sup> Thoughts taken from J.D. Greear's sermon, "This is War."

<sup>viii</sup> Strong's Concordance, 225, alétheia.

<sup>ix</sup> Quip taken from J.D. Greear.

<sup>x</sup> Examples taken from J.D. Greear.

<sup>xi</sup> Dave Johnson, <https://lifehopeandtruth.com/change/christian-conversion/armor-of-god/gospel-of-peace/>.

<sup>xii</sup> J.D. Greear