

The Christian's Call to Battle ■ An Introduction

by Tim Conway

This sermon focuses on Ephesians 6:10-18, emphasizing the spiritual warfare Christians face against the devil and his forces. The importance of being strong in the Lord, putting on the whole armor of God, and standing firm against the schemes of the enemy is highlighted. The message calls for readiness, vigilance, and using spiritual weapons to resist and overcome the spiritual battles we encounter in the world.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10, Ephesians 6:12, Ephesians 6:13, Ephesians 6:14, 2 Timothy 4:7, James 4:7

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "The Armor of God"

Description

This sermon focuses on Ephesians 6:10-18, emphasizing the spiritual warfare Christians face against the devil and his forces. The importance of being strong in the Lord, putting on the whole armor of God, and standing firm against the schemes of the enemy is highlighted. The message calls for readiness, vigilance, and using spiritual weapons to resist and overcome the spiritual battles we encounter in the world.

Transcript

Ephesians 6 and v. 10. Many of your Bibles I know, like mine, probably gives you v. 10-20 as a section. I want to deal with v. 10-18.

You'll notice v. 19-20 is in the same flow of thought. Undoubtedly, they're right to divide it up that way. But v. 19-20, actually, Paul's not so much diverging, but he does take the thing into the flow of his own personal ministry and his desire for prayer.

He's kind of done at the end of v. 18. He's done in v. 18 with the armor. And so it's these nine verses, v. 10-18, that I want to focus our attention on in the coming weeks.

And so we'll keep reading this over and over. You can read this throughout the week if you'd like to become more familiar with it. Finally be strong in the Lord.

Finally. It's like He's wrapping things up, but the last is not least. This is the most extensive treatment, single treatment of our spiritual warfare that you will find in Scripture.

There's other places where the different aspects of the armor of God are mentioned. There's other places where the Christian life is likened to war or a battle. But this is the primary place in all of Scripture where we get teaching concerning this.

This is His last major thrust before He ends this letter. This is His final word to these Ephesians. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 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. Therefore, 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.

Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth. One of the things I often want to do is look for repetition. And if you've seen any repetition here, you undoubtedly have seen the armor of God is a repeated theme and standing is a repeated reality.

Also, you see this repetition of principalities and powers or these rulers and authorities and forces and the devil himself. These are obviously the emphasis that the Apostle would have us to take notice of. V. 13, therefore, 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.

Stand, therefore. You see the stand. Having fastened on the belt of truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Now, before we finish this, I just want to call this to your attention. There's two major sections here. In these nine verses, we can divide this thing up into two major sections.

The first is the exhortation itself. The major exhortation here. The major theme on the table.

Which you see in verses 10-13. It is, be strong in the Lord. It's put on the armor of God.

There is a devil. We don't fight against flesh and blood. There's these rulers and authorities.

There's these powers and these forces. Stand, therefore, having fastened... Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day having done all, to stand firm. That's the general thrust of the instruction.

And then what you get going forward is in v. 14, now we get the detailed analysis of the armor. That's what's happening here. So you see the two sections.

V. 14, we're going to get the belt of truth. Standing, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the Gospel of Peace. In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish the flaming darts of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit. Or as King James says, all prayer. With all prayer, supplication.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. So you see it. General exhortation.

And then the detailed analysis in those last verses. You have the armor of God referred to and then you have it dissected. So that's basically what we're contending with here.

Today, it's just primarily an introduction. I'm not necessarily going to key in or target on anything overly specific. But I want you to recognize, there is an against.

You want to look for repetition? You can look for that word. Against. You know, he doesn't just use it once.

It's almost like Paul. You know, you don't have to use against four times. It's enough to say against the rulers and then put a comma and simply put authorities and then put a comma and put the cosmic powers and then the spiritual forces.

You don't have to put against four times. But see, he wants to. That's on purpose.

There's something against you. And he keeps saying it. They're against you.

Rulers are against you. Authorities are against you. And these powers are against you.

And these forces are against you. They're against you. You've got somebody against you.

Now, look, two things that I think we really want to do with this series, two things that I would really have you come out the other end recognizing and realizing is this. I despise hyper-Calvinism. And you know, one of the things that you need to recognize is we dive into Ephesians.

This is part of Ephesians. And even though there's been a long lull between when we went through the first chapter and second chapter and third chapter, but you remember something. The first three chapters, and it's not exclusive to that.

It goes on into chapters 4 and 5 and 6. But remember how the letter opens up. It is every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places that he wants to put on the table. He's blessing God who has given us all these spiritual blessings in the heavenly places.

And then he goes on to articulate them all. And you know, there's a real sense that we view this life, you know, we've got this doctrine. We call it the perseverance of the saints.

And that's valid and that's real. But you know, you get a lot of people, I hear this, I hear this right with people in this very church. It's almost this mindset, like you can't talk about falling away because it can't even go there because it's like, well, I'm saved.

Saved people can't fall away. You see, they're making the assumption, I'm saved, and so I can't fall away. Whereas Jesus said, look, you're going to be saved if you persevere to the end.

You've got to endure all the way to the end. Perseverance of the saints means you actually do persevere all the way to the end. Persevere what? Persevere fighting.

You see, we can dive into the early chapter and we can say, oh, well, look there. What are these spiritual blessings in the heavenly places that have been lavished upon us? That we bless God for? Well, He chose us. He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

Oh, see? I'm chosen before the foundation of the world. I'm in? I'm in. I mean, basically, if I've been predestined, then He's going to call me and He's going to justify me and there's going to be glorification at the end.

Don't you know Romans 8? Don't you know the sequence there? Don't you know how that works? Brethren, what we need to recognize is this, you cannot look at being chosen before the foundation of the world or being predestinated to be adopted as children or look at the fact that it talks about this redemption we have in Him or the forgiveness of sins that we have in Him or the fact that we have an inheritance or the fact that the guarantee of our inheritance is the Spirit of God. We have the Spirit of God. He dives into chapter 2. And what are the realities that we're faced with? We've been made alive.

We've been raised up. We've been seated with Him in the heavenly places. We have this promise that immeasurable riches of grace and kindness through all these coming ages.

Don't you know that? We're His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. He Himself is our peace. We've been brought near.

The middle wall of partition's been brought down. We're no longer strangers. We're no longer severed from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel.

Don't you know? We've been brought in. Yes, all that. See, these are the promises that we need our faith to lock into which arms us for this battle, but make no mistake about it.

If you don't fight all the way to the end, you don't make it to the end. I mean, what we're basically going to be dealing with here is the reality that there is not just an enemy within us. There is an enemy outside of us.

And He means to knock us over. He's trying to make us not stand. The real issue in this world is standing all the way to the end.

Now there is an enemy within. And Paul talks about that. Paul talks about the fact that we have to put off bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander.

And you know, he says we need to put that off. Why? Because we've been taught in Christ to put off, put away the old man and to put on the new. And you know, he goes through and he talks about we don't lie to each other.

We put away the dishonesty. We speak the truth with one another. We're supposed to not steal anymore.

You put off those old manish qualities. You rather work. You labor with your hands so that you have something to share.

We put off. We put off. It's not even to be named among us.

We've got sexual immorality. We've got uncleanness. We've got covetousness.

We've got jesting and just dirty language. And it's supposed to be replaced with thanksgiving. You see, there's all this stuff we put off.

Why do we put it off? Why is there this battle? That's what it says in Colossians. We're to kill. We're to put to death what's earthly within us.

What's earthly within us? Well, all these things. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body. Remember what it says in Romans.

It says, let not sin reign in your mortal bodies. You see, we've got a problem. We've got the flesh.

And there's a seat in here inside of us that sin, not sins plural, sin as a force. Sin is seeking to reign and we're not to let it. By the Spirit you put to death.

That's gouging out eyes and cutting off hands. That is a reality. But let me tell you something.

It is very common in the reformed circles to put an emphasis on this. You know what? Mortification of sin, John Owen, Romans 8.13. Sanctification gets a lot of mileage. And it should, but it gets a lot of mileage in the reformed circles.

And what I have found in my years of being a Christian is that the reformed movement doesn't put near as much emphasis on regeneration. And they tend to have issues with angels, including fallen ones. In fact, I remember listening to Sam Storms.

You remember when John Piper had a conference that had to do with Jonathan Edwards. Sam Storms was talking about, he said, you want to deal with something that Jonathan Edwards dealt a lot with that doesn't get much mileage today in the reformed circles? He said angels. Just talk about angels.

And that includes the devil. It's like there's so much focus on the inward battle and oh, woe is me and wretched man that I am and oh, you know, just this miserable. There's a lot of that.

But I tell you, you start talking about the enemy outside of us. Yes, there's a battle within. We recognize that there's a battle within.

But what Paul does here, finally, brethren, finally, that he's been dealing with the old man, the new man, the putting these things to death, the putting this off. But even in there, he says, you don't want to give any occasion to the devil because he's looking for an opportunity and even what's going on inside, even though he's outside, he can work on the inside. But the reality is that finally, Paul turns our attention to this enemy that's outside of us.

What enemy? The devil, his forces. They're real. We must never forget this.

He doesn't want us to forget this. He wraps this thing up by saying, this is real. This is absolutely real.

Putting to death the deeds of the body, that's part of this warfare. But you've got an enemy on the outside. There's violence, dying to self.

There's violence, putting things to death on the inside. But you remember, there's a violent battle against these cosmic powers. The battle's very real.

It's very pronounced. And I'm afraid in reformed circles, it can be very much ignored. But Paul says, wait a second.

Wait just a second. You do not want to think that your only problem is from within. Don't think that.

Above and beyond this thing in here, this flesh, this part of this, we're still in this same body, unredeemed body. Yes, but Paul says above and beyond that, there is another power arrayed against you. What is it? And it's probably the mightiest power of all aside from God Himself.

Now, there's good reason to believe that. I don't know that there's any indication in Scripture that God created elect angels that were more powerful than the devil himself. He may have.

But I'll tell you what we're up against. What are we up against? Well, you see it. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, against rulers, against authorities, against these cosmic powers, against these spiritual forces.

That's what we're against. That's what we're up against. And I'll tell you this, if we're going to fight, so is to win.

You know one of the interesting things? I like documentaries on war, whatever wars, the Civil War, World War I, World War II. I'm interested in that. I like to know how.

You know one of the things that you find out? If you find out that, like you take World War II for example, they actually had one of those Vengeance, those V2 rockets that went up and fell in a marsh. They were testing it. Fell in a marsh over in Poland.

The underground Poland army got that thing. They found it ahead of the SS. They let the folks back in London know that they had it.

The British flew somebody up from South Italy. In the heavily occupied area, they landed secretly at night so that they could get this V2 components. They were basically one of the most deadly weapons that the Nazis had created.

They were basically into rocket technology in that day. They were on their way to creating an intercontinental ballistic. They wanted to hit New York.

But the reality is, they were so willing to fly this covert operation and smuggle this V2 back out and get it to London to analyze it. Why? They had reconnaissance. They had aircraft.

They were taking pictures. They had people that were spies. Why? Constantly trying to get a feel for where the enemy's at.

I'll tell you this. If you go into a battle, but you don't know about the enemy and you're not even aware he's there. In fact, you're blind to the fact he's there.

You don't even take it seriously. You are way on your way. You're just inviting defeat and disaster if you disregard that.

I mean, you just blindly walk into a boxing ring and you got a guy in there that wants to take your head off, but you're blind. You don't even know you're in there. You don't even know that you're in the fight, let alone that there's a guy over here.

That's not a good place to be. You're going to take a shot blindside and it's going to put you down. It's going to knock you down.

What you need to recognize is this. This isn't fiction. You have an enemy that wants to knock you over.

He wants to take your feet out from under you. Now, I have a book at home by a man whose name is Aidan Wilson. A.W. Tozer.

It is a book that I heard before, so I got me a copy. It's called, *The World, Playground or Battleground?* Now just listen. This is Tozer.

In the early days when Christianity exercised a dominant influence, men conceived the world to be a battleground. Our fathers believed in sin, the devil, and hell as constituting one force. And they believed in God and righteousness and heaven as the other.

By their very nature, these forces were opposed to each other forever in deep, grave, irreconcilable hostility. Man cannot be neutral. And if man chooses to come out on God's side, he should expect open war with God's enemies.

Now you see, hyper-Calvinists don't even like that. Choose! Oh, we're chosen! What do you mean choose? Listen, choose this day whom you will serve. Whether the gods your fathers worshipped on the other side of the river is for me and my house.

Brethren, you better believe coming to Christ is about choosing. You know what happened? Jesus says to one man, follow Me. And the man had great riches and he turned and he walked away.

He says to Levi, follow Me. He got up. You've got to make a choice.

We preach the Gospel to people's choice maker. And listen to what he says, if a man chooses to come out on God's side, he should expect open war with God's enemies. And I just ask you this, have you chosen to come out on God's side? Are you determined? Are you resolute? Yes! I'm on God's side.

Determine this day whom you will serve. Well, Tozer says, people that have made that choice, they expect open war with God's enemies. The fight would be real, deadly, and would last as long as life continued here below.

Men look forward to heaven as a return from the wars. He never forgot what kind of world he lived in. It was a battleground.

Many were wounded. Many were slain. How different today.

The fact remains the same. In other words, the battle's just the same. But the problem is that people in the church, we're not worried about people out there.

This is how the church looks at this whole thing. He says the fact remains the same, but men think of the world not as a battleground, but as a playground. We're not here in this world for the fight.

We're here to frolic. Not in a foreign land. We're at home.

We're already living. And he says our conduct gives us away. And you know, John Piper has said basically American Christianity is Disney World by and large.

I hope that hasn't been the case here. I think in many ways it has not been, but we never want it to be. You know what Paul's doing here? He's saying, Christian, you better wake up.

There's a war. And this is real. Paul's calling us to arms.

Put on the armor. Take up the armor. He's calling us to be prepared.

This is a wake-up call. Now, you've heard me preach this before, but hear it again. I don't want you to turn there.

I want you to stay right where you are parked in Ephesians 6. But listen, we're going to reference this verse undoubtedly again and again in this series. I find this very instructive. Revelation 12 The dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring.

Make no mistake about it, the woman is the people of God. It's the people of God down through history. He, the dragon, this is the devil, he's furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring.

Who are the offspring? These are the offspring of the church. The church is God's people. And if there's any debate or discussion to be had, you can put it to silence.

Because he says, to make war with the rest of her offspring on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Now you need to recognize something. Of all the people in this world, he is furious at one given people.

It is those who have been saved. Remember, if you say you know Him and you don't keep His commandments, Jesus said, you're My friend if you do whatsoever I command you. That's the reality.

That's us. And they hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ. You see, He's furious.

And that's who He makes war against. He's not at war against all the people out there. The Scripture says He's a strong man.

Those goods, have you ever read there at the end of 2 Timothy 2? It says, held captive to do His will. Or how it says it in Ephesians 2, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air. That's what lost people do.

They just follow. Now, remember, the whole world, it's in the power of the evil one. Guess who's not in His power? You know what? We have gotten His attention.

Why? Because somebody stronger than Him came and stripped us out of His hands. And He didn't like it. And you get this reality by Bunyan in Pilgrim's Progress.

Remember, he's left the Interpreter's house. Whoever's house he just left, there's another house he stays at too. But you know the account.

He goes down into the Valley of Humiliation. And what happens? He spies one coming across the field and it's Apollyon. Apollyon says, where are you from? I'm from the city of destruction.

But I've gone on pilgrimage. He says, oh, I see you're one of mine. You belong to me.

He says, no, I've thrown in with another. And he begins to tell him. And Apollyon's trying to trip him up.

Eventually, he just lets on to who he is. He says, I hate this person and I hate his people and I hate his word. And they go to battle.

In fact, we'll visit that account because Bunyan basically is drawing from these verses right here. But you need to recognize this. He is furious with Christianity.

And I suspect, I've gotten this sense, I've asked myself this question, does the devil know? Does he have a way of perceiving? The Lord knows His own. But does the devil know? And you know, I don't think he does. I think he knows the signs.

I think he knows what faith looks like. I think he knows where our weaknesses are. I think he is trying to cause every single person that testifies to the name of Jesus Christ, he is trying to cause them to make shipwreck.

And he will if he can. Brethren, battleground. Bunyan saw this reality.

You just start reading Pilgrim's Progress. You've got the devil right there at the door as he's coming up to the straight gate. From his castle, he shoots arrows.

You go to part 2. Christiana, she gets to the gate. There's a barking dog. Just the noise.

Where did that dog come? I mean, you've got this all the way through. Vanity Fair was put there by Beelzebub and by Apollyon and by Legion. And this is how Bunyan wrote this out.

I know this is only allegory, but the reality is he looked at the life and you just start reading. You recognize that Pilgrim's Progress is a book that shows this guy, his seasons of rest are short-lived. There is battle.

There are constant enemies. That's the issue. The teaching of the Bible throughout is that this world in which we live is a battleground.

It's a place in which we literally... You need to get this. This is a place you have to fight for your soul. This is a place where you fight for your eternal welfare.

Oh, what's saved? I always saved. See, that's what the good Hyper-Calvinist says. You say, well, that's what Arminians say.

Yeah, but he thinks the same way. I'm in. Eternal security.

I mean, come on, don't you believe in that? I believe in the kind of perseverance where God saves somebody and He causes them to fight this kind of warfare all the way to the end and it's in His fighting that God preserves them. Don't think that professing Christians who don't fight make it. You say, do you have any biblical warrant for saying that? Well, right here in this text.

Does it not say put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil? What is being suggested there? That if you don't put on the whole armor? You don't want to take this in a casual fashion. What happens if you don't put on the whole armor? You fall. You say, well, that's just a Christian falling into sin.

People fall much further than they often think. You say, why? Can a Christian fall? Yeah, the devil has been known to knock true Christians off their feet. There's no question.

We'll see that in that battle with Apollyon and Christian from Pilgrim's Progress when we look more at it. But brethren, the reality is that a lot of people fall and they don't get up. They fall away.

You know the Bible is talking about falling so far you fall away. Falling away is a biblical concept. Now listen to this.

You get this kind of stuff where almost you least expect it. You know, Paul was talking about widows in 1 Timothy 5. And he says to the younger widows, I tell you this, you need to remarry. You need to get married.

And you need to have a household and tend that household. Why? Because he says, some have already strayed after Satan. What a thing to say.

Or he says this, he says to the Thessalonians, you know Thessalonians in his first epistle? I sent Timothy to you. You know why I sent Timothy to you? Because I was just there and I preached the Gospel that I've been concerned since I've been away. What was he concerned about? Lest the tempter have tempted you and we labored there in vain.

You see what he's saying? He says I recognize this, the labor we did in preaching the Gospel there at Thessalonica, it could be undone by the devil if he came in and tempted you and you fell. You basically followed in whatever his deception was. You recognize this? He is the God of this world.

And he blinds the eyes of the unbeliever. You know what that means? He deceives them. You say, oh, it says he blinds them.

But that's the deception. What does he blind them from? The glory of the Gospel. This is the glory of the Gospel of Christ who is the image of God.

You see, what happens is the unbeliever can't see any glory in Christ. Why can't he see glory in Christ? Because he's been blinded. But the reality is there is glory in Christ.

You see, he's been deceived. When you go to the book of Revelation, what you find is he deceives the nations. When you start thinking about Armageddon and you start thinking about this doing war against the Lamb, don't think it's picking up swords.

Don't imagine that it's picking up tanks. These guys, they're making their left-behind movies and they like to see Armageddon. They like to see all this stuff.

They envision tanks and they get bombs and they're blowing up the Antichrist and he can't die. That's garbage. This reality is spiritual.

He leads forces who are already captive to do His will. How does he keep them captive? Through deception. He deceives the whole world.

And we've broken out of those ranks. We are the people who know the truth. And he is furious with us because we're the people who are supposed to bear witness to Christ.

We're the people through whom this Gospel, that is the power of God unto salvation, we're the witnesses. You know what we do? We show the world the power of God by the transformation of our life. There's nothing that delights Him more than to have you fall and be knocked off your feet and to somehow bring reproach upon the name of Christ.

Paul also said to the Corinthians, he said, you know what? He said to these Corinthians, I fear for you. What I fear, I'm afraid that as the serpent beguiled Eve, He's going to beguile you. You see, Paul doesn't walk around saying, well, eternal security, you know, you guys all believe the Gospel.

You're all good. I never have to worry about you. I never have to worry about what the devil might do.

You know what? To the Thessalonians, he's saying, I'm concerned the devil didn't tempt you and our work be in vain. To the Corinthians, he's saying, I'm concerned that the devil doesn't come in and do to you guys exactly what he did to Eve. And if you don't believe there wasn't a fall then, there was a big fall.

The biggest of falls. And he says, I'm putting this in the same category of what the devil is capable of doing today. Or you get this, be sober minded.

Be watchful. Why should we be watchful? Can't we just go to sleep? Aren't we foreordained? Haven't we been predestinated? Weren't we chosen before the foundation of the world? Why should we not be able to go to sleep? You see, Peter doesn't let you do that. He says, you better watch because there is one who is roaming about like a roaring lion and he is seeking to devour.

And it says, you need to be watchful and you need to resist him. That's what Peter tells us. Why? Because if you don't resist, you get devoured.

You say, what does devour mean? To be devoured by the devil. Listen, to be tempted and to have our work be in vain or to be beguiled like Eve was. That doesn't lead to just a temporary kind of fall.

People fall. That's what Tozer was talking about. This is a battlefield.

And you know what? Our forefathers, they recognized people get slain. People die. People get injured in this battle.

That's what happens in war. We fight or we fail. The sovereignty of God and election and all that mean nothing if you don't fight because God chooses us and elects us to Christian warfare.

That's the reality. And you see, God gets glory in all of this because if you think about it, can you imagine this? This mighty being called this dragon, Satan, the devil. Can you imagine this? He and all of His angels.

They're furious with us. They've declared war on us. They seek to wipe us out, knock us off our feet.

And you know what? God takes these weak, weak, weak vessels and He keeps us going. But it's by the power of His might. And that's where Paul's taking us.

It's by the power of the Lord. The strength of the Lord. The strength of His might.

That's how we keep going. The armor is His. He's provided it for us.

This is the kind of thing that we've got to put on. But you can imagine the absolute frustration that we are. Look, here's the thing.

It's not flesh and blood. It's not the physical. We need to hear that.

Here's the thing. We come along as Christians and we feel like I've seen this. It's almost like if we have the prim and proper reformed subculture where our wives give birth the right way and we homeschool the right way and we deal with vaccinations the right way.

We've got all the right ways. But there's safety there. Or you know, we've got the little house on the prairie mindset.

Have any of you ever wanted just to move away and be in a mountain and be at rest or live in the little house? You know, be pa and be ma. You see, we can get this attitude. We need to buy and land in some remote place.

And you know, supposedly professing Christians, they get this compound mentality. We've got to move to this certain place. We've got to get to this little place.

We've got to create our monasteries. But don't you see it in the text? It's not a flesh and blood battle. This is what Martin Luther recognized.

You can't go to the monastery and get away. He felt that the devil plagued him in that place. You don't get away.

Why? They're there wherever you go because these are spiritual forces. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, against rulers and authorities and these powers and these forces, the spiritual forces of evil. You know what? They live in Little House on the Prairieville.

They're there. You move away to the mountains in Colorado, they're there. You see, this is spiritual.

You can't run far enough and fast enough and get away from them. Stone walls don't keep them out. Your gated communities don't keep them out.

Your homeschooling doesn't keep them out. Alarm systems lock doors. None of that works.

Now look, I know we have to make decisions about where we live and where we work and how we school. I recognize that. But we need to wake up to these realities.

These forces are spiritual. They're not flesh and blood. And we need to recognize the ramifications of what that means.

They're unseen. They penetrate right to where you live. They've infiltrated here.

Don't you read in one of the most basic parables in Scripture that is the seed is spread? What happens? The birds are there. I mean, they're here. They're right in the midst.

There's an enemy that sows tares among the wheat. That's here. That happens.

You can't get away from that. They've penetrated your schools and your workplaces and they're everywhere. There's no hiding.

Listen, I'll tell you this, what we're being called to do is follow right in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And I find this very interesting. You know when the Lord came into His ministry, you remember the Spirit of God came down upon Him after He was baptized.

That was ushering in the formal ministry of Christ those three years. Did He run from it? Did He try to get away? Does anybody know what the first thing was that happened? The Spirit of God led Him or drove Him even out into the wilderness. Oh, you know, there's nothing out in the wilderness.

That's where Little House is. No, no, no, that's exactly where the devil was. He can't get away.

He wasn't trying to get away. He was trying to go square off against Him. And one of the things we'll recognize because we'll be revisiting this account over and over, is He was armed and He had the spiritual armor on.

And you need to remember this, if you begin to think that Jesus performed His ministry based on His own deity, you are wrong. What you will find repeatedly in Scripture is that He did what He did by faith, resting in His Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. You see, He came to be a man and to live the same way we live.

I'm not taking away from the fact He's God. Yes, He's altogether God. But you have to recognize how He lived the human life here.

And when He went out on those plains of the wilderness out there, He fought the same way we will. And He used the same kind of weaponry that Paul is calling us to use. The reality is, brethren, the Apostle doesn't say to us, get into your cloisters, get into your monasteries, get into your protected places.

Not at all. And we need to thank God for that. We would have no Christian witness in this world if that was the case.

That's not what we're called to do. No, brethren, we're told, well, you think about this. The first place that the church has spoken about in Scripture, Jesus says this, the gates of hell will not prevail.

Now look, think about the imagery there. That isn't us getting in our gated community, getting in our safe place, shutting the doors. The gates of hell won't prevail.

It's hell that's on the inside of the gates in their supposedly protected area. And we go up and kick the doors in and it won't hold us back. That's the imagery of Scripture.

And by the way, the armor is not all defensive. The way you stand is not simply, okay, you can imagine trying to stand and you've got people let your children run up and try to knock you over or something or make you move your feet. It's not all that.

The way you stand is actually by taking an aggressive posture. We actually stand when we're not only resisting defensively, but we stand when we're kicking the doors in and we're taking ground for them. He may be in a fury, but that doesn't mean we recoil and go into our hiding places or just try to stand where we are and stand our ground.

That's not it. We follow Jesus. He's calling us forward.

He's calling us to do damage. You remember what the Apostle said to the Romans? You're going to crush His head under your feet shortly. Brethren, we are to be doing Him damage.

He may be in a fury, but He that's with us is greater than he that's in the world. And He equips us in the strength of His might to do damage. Remember that.

Our message is not that people need to get away. This is not the monk, hermit, none kind of stuff. The message of this Apostle is this, the place you're at makes no difference.

I mean, I recognize it makes a difference in a certain sense, but you recognize what I'm saying. The cosmic powers are all around us. Where you are isn't the issue.

It's where you are, you need to be strong in the strength of the Lord. You need to be strong in the power of His might. Why? That's how you stand.

And having done all, we stand. So here we are. I mean, this is a situation.

Here we are. This book of the Ephesians was written to real people. I mean, they had names.

You know, if you were in the church at that time, there would have been people just like us. People with names, people with jobs, people with lives, people with families. It's the same thing.

They lived in the first century, we live in the 21st century. But you know, think about what's going on. Think about our lives.

I mean, is 2020 just an average year? I mean, look, the battle's been there always, but think about what we're up against today. You know, you've got people that are arguing all over masks and social distancing, and we've got all the stuff that goes with the COVID-19. And then you've got the riots on top of that, and you've got race things, and you've got police things, and social media censorship, and there's strife, and there's death, and there's all sorts of issues being brought up about Black Lives Matters, and the social justice kinds of things, and white cops, and we need to defund, and we need to dissolve, and Donald Trump's the problem, and Biden's the problem, and somebody's the problem.

Democrats are the problem. I mean, we basically have our rights in this country that are basically crumbling away. And this is life in this world at this time.

And the fact is that we know how the conditions are. We know what the situations are. And it's like, really? In the midst of all that, you're going to talk about the devil? I mean, that's how the world is.

It's like, what? Seriously, we're going to look at what the Bible has to say about the devil and about these spiritual forces? Look, just listen. Some in the church have thought well, you know what the elders in the church need to do? They need to address these things. Okay.

Well, I want to address them in the way that the Apostle Paul would have us address them. You see, the problem is that we know this. We know that we've got a world out there who's all you got to do is keep your ear to the media.

You know what all those on the right say will fix this? Well, for one, Donald Trump's got to be reelected. You know what all those on the left are saying? Oh, we've got to reform or dissolve the police departments. We've got Chaz and CHOP and BLM and there's all sorts of stuff in our day that's just giving us a whole new lingo.

The real issue behind all of it is China or it's Russia. You know what really is going to fix this problem? We've got to change our verbiage. You better not say China virus.

I mean, it's like, you know what? If you listen to the media, it's flesh and blood dealing with the problem. That's always the issue. I'll tell you this, no matter what the matter is, the world doesn't realize what the matter is because the matter is spiritual.

Remember the world out there? They're in the power of the evil one. And you know what? He delights in nothing more than keeping people blind to it. Oh, make it a joke.

Yeah, red guy, pointed tail, pitchfork and horns. Ha ha, the guy that comes out at Halloween. Yeah, it's not so funny.

He's got the nations deceived and they're all going to be thrown in the lake of fire with him. He gets men and women to fight against the God who is their only hope. I'll tell you, he does no favors for his slaves.

And he's got them blind. And the world, they don't recognize it. They've never understood what the real issue is.

What the devil? Are you serious? I mean, you imagine going out to CNN. Hey, this is what you need to put on tonight. Tell them the devil's behind it.

You talk about being ridiculed and laughed out of the place. Come on, we're modern. We're scientific men.

Man's coming to his own. I mean, man's evolving, right? Aren't we getting better? We're getting smarter. We've got all the answers.

Everybody has an answer. But you listen to their answers. It's all flesh and blood answers.

All of them. That's all you're going to get. What? The devil? I mean, that's just some superstitious hangover from our primitive days.

When our forefathers looked at the sun and they thought there was a god there and they looked at that rock and they looked at different things and they said, oh, you know, there's gods in everything. That's all that is. We've outgrown that.

We've outgrown such fantasies as that. Brethren, this is the position that a large amount of this world and our fellow men take. So what's the problem? The world says, man is the problem.

And listen to what they say. Well, we're really going to fix these problems. What has to happen? You know the answers.

We've got to get the right politician in office. Or money. Money fixes everything.

Give them money. We all got \$2,000 from a government. Do you think they can afford that? Do you think it really fixed any problems? I just heard yesterday driving to my house.

They said all sorts of people went out and bought new cars. They said car lots are now filled with repossessed cars just in this little amount of time. People that had the money to make the first down payment or whatever, and they've already... He said the average car lot has 40 to 50 cars right now that have been repossessed.

Yeah, money fixes everything. Well, you know what? We've got to educate. That's it.

And you know what? Everybody thinks they are the teacher and they have the answer and they want to educate you. But you know the problem is nobody's listening to anybody else. People over here are saying this and people over here are saying... We are so polarized.

Hatred and strife. But you know what everybody says the solution? Yeah, it's the police. Reform the police or defund them.

That's going to fix the problem. Yeah, that's going to fix the problem. Anarchy will really fix the problem.

But brethren, you can think whatever you want. You can think Donald Trump's the problem. You can think Donald Trump's the solution.

Listen, men have always looked to the politicians. You remember when Obama came in, they were calling him the Messiah. Why don't they still call him that? Because he didn't fix anything.

It's still as messed up as it's ever been. Why? This isn't a flesh and blood battle, folks. That's not where it's to be taught or fought.

How do we remedy all this? Oh, we need a vaccine. Brethren, it's not it. We need to make progress as men.

I mean, we need to be advanced. But brethren, the fact is we can't fix this. Do you know some people are... We've got cities that are emptying their jails and emptying their prisons.

Is that going to fix it? Do you hear what happens in New York? They let these people out. They've arrested some of these people. I heard they were arresting some people like 40 times because they've got a no-hold policy.

They arrest them and let them go. They go out and commit another crime. Does this really fix anything? Oh, and you know what? Because men are so short-sighted and so blind, I'll tell you this, a lot of people think socialism, that's what fixes it.

Communism, that's what fixes it. Oh, if you don't think we're not headed in that direction, you just wait and watch. And see, the thing is, every place man is, he recognizes it's not fixed.

It's broken. And so he's always looking for some new thing. Some say, it's our guns.

Got to get rid of guns. Some people say, we've got to keep our guns. Some people say, we've got to build a wall.

Some people say, we don't have to build a wall. But you see, it's all physical. It's flesh and blood.

And you know what? The world, at the same time, the spiritual realm is entirely banished from their mindset. You don't see anything on social media about it. You don't see anything in the news about it.

And you can go to the conservative. You can go to your Fox News. They're not talking about the Lord.

They're not talking about this battle. Doesn't matter where you go. The problem is that you've got dupes all the way around.

They're held captive by them. And they're liberal, and they're conservative, and they're black, and they're white, and every other color. And they're deceived.

And he's got the nations deceived. And you know what the big problem is? It's not when the world believes this. It's when you believe it.

You get people in the church, if you listen to them, they sound just like the world. They sound just like the garbage on the media, the social media. That's where the tragedy is.

That's where the problem is. When people in the church begin to think that the same kind of flesh and blood type of reactions to these things is what fixes it. Brethren, there is a dragon.

And Scripture says he's the deceiver of the whole world. This is what you've got to get, brethren. This is what I want to drive home in this introduction.

This is a spiritual battle. It is a spiritual foe. It's got to be fought in a spiritual fashion, with spiritual understanding.

And we've got to equip ourselves with spiritual weapons. And if you try to use the world's mechanics and its arguments, and you are sounding like, why do Christians do that? Well, they want to feel relevant. Well, come on, I can't get involved in the discussions on Facebook.

If I sound too spiritual, I mean, I've got to sound like the world. Why? Half the people there, they're arguing that way. And you get sucked in.

And so what you do is you start playing that game. Oh, the devil loves that. Because what you do is you're beginning to take upon yourselves these weapons that will never avail against him.

That's what he wants. Brethren, I'll tell you this, he wants to disarm us and he wants to put us to sleep. Don't go down that path.

This is a spiritual battle in the midst of all this confusion. Everyone failing. Everyone falling.

What the Apostle assures us of is this, that we Christians can stand when everyone else is falling. When everyone else is failing. The tragedy is that when Christian church or portions of it or people within it, instead of identifying the true problem, because here's the thing, if you identify the true problem, you can identify the remedy.

But if you start misdiagnosing the problem and then you start coming up with worldly remedies, you are ill-equipped to fight this battle because you'll not win. You better remember this, there's only one people in all this world that have been given the ability to stand and be victorious. More than conquerors in this battle for the souls of men.

And it's us. And if you get your eyes off what that armor of God is, you're doomed for failure. There's a way to fight.

And there's a way to defeat. Last thing we want is to get people in the church demanding that the pulpit sound like the media. That's not where we need to go.

Using the arguments. It's pathetic. The business of the Christian church is to get down to the root of the problem.

Oh, there's problems. We all know that. The problems run deep.

But how deep? Deeper than the media would argue for. The church alone that can do it, that can get to the root of it, that can diagnose it, and that can do something about it. But to do so, you know what? It's going

to make you the laughing stock.

The world will ridicule you. They'll count you an idiot. You know one of the best indications? You that spend a lot of time bantering all these opinions around on social media.

Look at the worldly people on there. Do they call you an idiot? Do they look at what you have to say and laugh at you and mock you and scorn you? That's a good indication you're on the right path. If you're basically sucking into their same arguments and sucking up to those arguments and rehashing those arguments that are very worldly, oh no, you'll get applauded.

They'll love you. What's the problem in the world? What's the ultimate cause of the problems? And what Paul is saying is it's not flesh and blood. That is not the primary problem.

It's the devil and it's the unseen forces and powers that belong to him. That's the proposition that Paul is putting on the table here. Listen to it again.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness. It's dark out there. Presently.

But there's forces behind it. Guiding it. Manipulating it.

Working upon those he has captive. And there's only one people free from it. And it's against them, his fury, his schemes, his raging.

He's made war. And we need to recognize it. And there is a way to resist him.

Not only resist him, but take ground from him. Listen, if you resist him, he will flee from you. We are the only people on the face of the earth that can set the devil running.

He ran away from Christ until there was a more convenient season. And I'll tell you this, we can cause him to run, but he's going to harass us right up to our deathbed. And you need to face that reality.

The world's going to look at this and they're going to say the whole thing is a joke. The devil, come on. In the 21st century, you're going to talk that way? And you're in the realm of folklore and myth.

Brethren, I know the Apostle's teaching is utterly ridiculed. And you will be too if you sound like him. But who cares? They belong to the devil.

I mean, look, they're on the enemy's side. Brethren, it's okay being ridiculed by the non-Christian world. But what's a sad thing is when all that worldly, wise man kind of solutions to the problem gets echoed and gets the attention of Christian people.

Brethren, the thing is, you may say in words, yeah, I believe what you're saying, but look at how you're dealing with all the problems. I'll tell you this, how are you... Brethren, do you believe in this? Do you believe in this unseen world? I'll tell you, as we begin... You know, when we had people protesting, I heard some of our people were down there preaching the Gospel. Yeah, that's the kind of weaponry you want to use.

People falling on their face, special seasons of prayer and fasting. We ought to be praying for our leaders. That's what Scripture says.

No matter who they are and what party they're of. Brethren, this is the way we attack these problems. Just a final appeal here, the Apostle is saying you need to do everything to stand.

You can't be relaxed. You cannot be off your guard. Peter says you need to watch.

There is an enemy. You need to stand always. You need to be ready always.

You need to be at arms always. This is a battle and it's real and it's for everything. You know what Jesus says? You know what He said to one of those churches in Asia Minor? Philadelphia, I believe it was.

He said you better be careful that nobody steals your crown. There's crown stealers. There's somebody looking to knock you over.

And then He talks about, but those who overcome. How do you overcome? You keep standing. Keep your crown on your head.

The enemy isn't just coming. What He says is they're against us now. They're here.

They're here. They're all around us. They're in the church.

They're in your home. And they're here. And He says be ready.

This is a trumpet call to arms. To be equipped. To be ready.

To be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. This is what we're called to. This is a call to battle.

The whole tone of these verses before us is militant. You recognize that. And I would just say this, have you heard the trumpet call? Brethren, that's what's important at this hour.

While you and I are alive in the world. The devil's going to be there. And you know what he does? His fury is against the church.

His fury is against those who hold to the commandments of God and bear the testimony of Christ. His fury is aimed there. And he schemes.

He's working these strategies. He's trying to figure out how to undo this church. He's trying to figure out how to make each of us individually fall.

He's trying to destroy your family and damn your kids. And he's trying to scheme. But you know what? The authors of Scripture, God Himself who inspired them, does not believe that we need to be outwitted by Him.

In fact, Scripture says we know His schemes. We're going to look at those schemes in the weeks ahead. But Scripture says we know them.

And you need not be outwitted. And you need not be knocked off your feet. You can stand, but you've got to do all to stand.

Don't take a passive approach. This is not the time to get comfortable. This is not the time to view this world as a playground.

Ah, you know, just bigger houses and vacations and all that stuff and the fun. Life becomes all of that. That's not what this is about.

Brethren, He is going to fight us to the end. He's going to fight us up till our deathbed. Now look, I'm not saying all this to try to in any way blanket you with some kind of hopeless message.

Brethren, this isn't hopeless. It's the exact reverse. Exactly.

This is glorious. What this is telling us is God has actually given us what we need to have this privilege to follow in the Lord's steps and to defeat Satan and to crush His head under our feet and to be victorious and to be more than conquerors. That's the truth of Scripture.

He who is greater than he that's in the world. We have one that's with us, brethren. This is what the Scriptures teach.

He that is with us is greater than he that's in the world. You see, it's in the strength of His might. But the battle is yours.

You say, I thought the battle belonged to the Lord. Yes, it's His strength. It's the strength of His might, but it's worked through you as you fight.

Never forget that. This isn't something that you lay down. You just sit down.

No, you do everything to stand. That's it. It's my battle.

I have to wage it. That's it. You, brethren, you must stand.

And if you fall, it's you who falls. And Satan has managed to trip up any multitude of people. It's you.

You recognize? It says you are to put on the armor of God. You are to take up the armor of God. Brethren, I just say this.

Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Father, I pray that the church would be emboldened in this. I pray, Lord, that we would not fail to take the appropriate armor.

Lord, we don't want Saul's armor. We want the weapons that are going to take Goliath out. Lord, I fear for the church that lest we be swept away by worldly wise man arguments, media arguments, a worldly perspective on what has to be done that falls into the category so often of flesh and blood.

Lord, there's an unseen kingdom. You tell us about it. You have the Apostle come and tell us and remind us and blow the trumpet that calls us to readiness and calls us to battle.

Lord, I pray that the brethren here, we walk by faith and not by sight. And I pray that the faith would be strengthened to believe in these realities, to not be so crippled by sight that we lose spiritual sight of these things. Lord, embolden us in this battle.

Equip us to fight. Use this series, Lord, in a way that will truly be helpful to the church. Lord, I pray for this church, not just that we stand, but that we kick those gates of hell in and find like You promised they would not prevail against us.

Lord, help us to go out into this world and to be the human vessels to just create massive frustration to the devil as souls are rescued. You told those early disciples that You would make them fishers of men. Lord, I pray, make us fishers of men to the demise of Satan.

Cause this church to crush Satan's head under their feet. Lord, we pray for this. I pray that this church would have a reputation in hell, a reputation among these forces of darkness, that they would recognize that their fury and their hatred might all the more be stirred because of the spiritual weaponry that was being exercised, put into the fight by the brethren here.

I just think of prayer and I think of the gospel there and faith and the helmet of salvation. Lord, that sword, the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. I pray, Lord, that You'd help the brethren to use our weaponry well, to equip us.

Lord, help us to fight to the death, to be like the Apostle. Second Timothy, he gets all the way to the end. He's fought the good fight.

He made it. Lord, we want to make it. We want to make it standing.

We want to make it standing without being knocked off our feet. Lord, unleash Your strength. Lord, bring about whatever scenarios, whatever realities, whatever providence in our life as individuals and as a church corporately that will help us to be all the more in tune with this battle and to be all the more equipped to fight it.

Lord, make us a relentless enemy to Satan. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. You are dismissed.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/DYprJVt15Qg.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/the-christians-call-to-battle-an-introduction/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net