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The Christian's Warfare

Ephesians 6:10

3. "We Fight – God Fights"

"Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few".

These famous words were spoken by Winston Churchill in a speech to the house of commons on August 20, 1940. He was referring to the courage and sacrifice of British pilots fighting against the German Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain. The Germans were constantly bombing Great Britain in preparation for an invasion. It was through the bravery of the British pilots that superiority was finally gained in the air, the tide of the war began to turn, and England was saved from almost certain defeat.

In the courage and bravery of the British pilots we see an example that helps us understand what Paul means when he calls on believers in Ephesians 6 to "Be strong in the Lord...". Paul helps us understand the struggles of the Christian life by describing them in terms of warfare. In studying this passage, we find how to have joy, assurance, and victory even in the challenging days of the legislative session.

Commitment to Join the Battle

In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, he teaches us many glorious truths about our salvation and who we are as believers in Christ. These are the truths that are enumerated in chapters 1-3 (please take the time to read these chapters as they are the foundation for what we study in chapter 6). Believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing (1:3). We are adopted as God's children (1:5). We are given the Holy Spirit as a pledge or promise of our final victory (1:13-14). We were dead in sin, but God raised us up with Christ, seating us with Him in heavenly places (2:5-6). These are just a few of the truths Paul shares regarding our position – who we are – as followers of Christ. Because of these things are true, Paul urges believers in Ephesians 6:10, **"...Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."**

In Ephesians 6 Paul is informing and warning believers that even though all the wonderful things he relates earlier in his letter are true, followers of Christ are in a spiritual battle in this life. In our first study we saw Paul was challenging them to fight the right battle, with the right enemy, using the right weapons.

In 6:10 Paul gives us the key to fighting and winning this battle. We are to **"Be strong"**, but we are to do so **"In the strength of His (God's) might"**.

In the Old Testament we find two great examples of believers fighting this battle. As David confronted Goliath he exclaimed to the giant, **"...That all may**

know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands".

In 2 Chronicles 20:16, as the people of Israel faced a great enemy, a prophet said to the king and to all the people, **"Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's"**.

Though David knew the battle was the Lord's and the prophet proclaimed the battle was God's, both David and the army of Israel were still called to go out to fight. This is the important truth we must understand. The battle is the Lord's, but we must fight. We are called to strive and fight and struggle in the Christian life, but we do so in dependence upon the power of God.

This important truth is clearly taught throughout the Bible. The best example is Paul's exhortation to the believers in Philippi:

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Philippians 2:12-13

Note Paul urges them to "work out their salvation". But even as they do so, God is working in them. The believer works – seeking and striving to grow in faith

and Christlikeness. Be we must do so knowing and depending upon the power of God working in us. When it comes to the believer's warfare, we fight, but we do so knowing and depending upon God's power in our lives.

We seek for the perfect balance of God's power and our activity. Though is it our activity – we work, we fight – the Lord provides the power for our activity. We are challenged to work and fight for all we are worth, but the power to do so comes from God. Finding victory in our Christian lives depends on learning increasingly how to depend upon God's power.

Our Commitment to Fight

Take note of what we are exhorted to do in Ephesians 6:

Be strong...	Resist...
Put on...	Gird...
Stand firm...	Take...
Take up...	<u>PRAY...</u>

These are all vivid, powerful, action words. The call is to ***“Be strong”***. We can be strong by being committed, well trained, well equipped soldiers of the Lord. We will be strong by putting on the armor and weapons God has provided. We must make a commitment to join in this battle.

In WWII the people of Great Britain endured great danger and deprivation as they underwent the German attacks and made sacrifices for the war effort. It is said you would often hear as someone might complain about the difficulties, “Don’t you know there’s a war on?”. Paul is saying to the followers of Christ, “Don’t you know there’s a war on?” and calls for us to make a commitment to the battle.

Our Dependence on the Lord

Yes, we are called to ***“Be strong”***, but we are to do so ***“In the Lord and in the strength of His might”***. “Might” is the innate power, strength, and majesty of God – the One who created the universe with His word. “Strength” is the exhibition, demonstration, or expression of His might – providing and winning battles for His people or greatest of all, raising Jesus from the dead. The vital question for us is how do we go about being strong in Him and in His strength and power? Paul gives us the answer in Ephesians 1. In the opening chapter, Paul prays for the Ephesian believers (and us):

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance

with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...

Paul prays that ***“the eyes of our heart may be enlightened”***. This simply means that we might know, understand, grasp, and apply the wonderful truths of the gospel he is sharing in chapters 1-3 (as well as the rest of the Bible). The hope we have in His calling. The glory of our inheritance. The greatness of His power toward us. The working of the strength of His might in us (notice how this ties to 6:10). Being strong in the strength of God's might depends on our knowing and understanding what God has done for us and what our position is in Christ. This is why our hearing God's word preached in a good local church and our own study of God's word is so important. It is how we grow in our understanding of what God has done for us and who we are in Christ.

This once again points us to the important truths of justification and sanctification in our spiritual battle. In our justification – our once for all salvation and our position in Christ as believers – we are already ***“seated with Christ in the heavenlies”*** (2:6). Yet in our sanctification – our daily growth in faith, grace, and Christlikeness – we are in a fight and a battle against the world, our own sinful nature, and the Devil.

The One Who Fought for Us

Churchill is said to have first uttered his stirring words after a particularly brutal day of battle. He was so moved by the courage and sacrifice of the British pilots that he exclaimed, ***“Never in the history of mankind has so much been owed by so many to so few”***. He was to later immortalize those stirring words in his famous speech. As he prepared and practiced the speech, an advisor asked him, “What about Jesus?” And so, he changed the words to ***“Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few”***.

This should challenge us to remember the great battle which Jesus fought on our behalf. He endured conflicts against Satan and temptation for us. He fought our battle against sin and death. Now, as we are called to fight, He comes alongside us to strengthen and encourage us in battle. This is the truth that will bring us assurance and victory, not matter how great the battles we face!

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays,

8:00 AM Government Organization Conference Room

12:00 PM Senate President's Conference Room