

Know Your Enemy

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Date: 28 August 2024

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read.
- Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians 6, and if we read again at verse 10. Where Paul writes, finally, if you're using the authorised version, it's finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength or power of his might.
- Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes or the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- Therefore, take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand on the evil day, having done all to stand firm.
- You know, whenever I come to this passage in the Bible, I don't know about you, but I'm immediately reminded of the pilgrim's progress. As you know, the pilgrim's progress, it gives to us an allegory of the Christian life.
- [1 : 2 5] In fact, John Bunyan, who wrote the pilgrim's progress, he had such a grasp and such a great knowledge of Scripture that Spurgeon even described him as a living Bible.
- Prick Bunyan anywhere on his body, said Spurgeon, and his blood will flow, Bibline, because the very essence of the Bible flows from his veins. Bunyan, as you know, and even as we studied a number of years ago in the pilgrim's progress, he was saturated in Scripture, and that comes across in his writings.
- Because you remember that in the pilgrim's progress, when Christian had fled the city of destruction and been delivered from the slough of Despond, he'd passed through the wicket gate, he'd explored the interpreter's house, he'd come to stand at the foot of the cross where his burden rolled off his back.
- Christian then, he persevered up the hill called Difficulty, and he came to lodge for a time at the Palace Beautiful. And at Palace Beautiful, it was there that Christian had this mountaintop experience.
- It was five days of fellowship, where Christian, he found relief, he found rest, and he found refreshment in his Christian pilgrimage. But on the final day of his fellowship, before leaving Palace Beautiful, Bunyan writes in the pilgrim's progress, he says that Christian was taken into the armory where he was shown all manner of weapons which the Lord has provided for pilgrims.
- [2 : 5 9] And what's remarkable is that when you read the section about Palace Beautiful, it's there that we're told that there was enough armour in the armory to provide armour for all the saints of the Lord.
- And you remember that Christian, he was given the whole armour of God at Palace Beautiful just before he would then descend into the valley of humiliation to face and fight against Apollyon.

And as you know, of course, Bunyan, he based those words in his book, he based the whole narrative upon Paul's words here in Ephesians chapter 6. Because here in Paul's concluding and closing words, Paul exhorts every Christian to go into the armory and to prayerfully put on the whole armour of God.

That's how Paul closes and concludes his letter to the Ephesians. He exhorts every Christian to go into the armory and prayerfully put on the whole armour of God.

And God willing, over the coming weeks, we're going to consider the equipment, the equipment that's provided for every pilgrim. And we'll look at the different pieces of equipment over the next few weeks.

[4 : 24] But this evening I want us to think about Paul's verses or the words in verses 10 to 13. When Paul speaks there in verses 10 to 13, he speaks about the exhortation and then he speaks about the enemy.

He gives an exhortation and then he speaks about the enemy. There are two headings. This evening. The exhortation and the enemy. So first of all, the exhortation.

Paul's exhortation, verses 10 and 11. Paul writes, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Now, as you know from our study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the church in Ephesus, the church in Ephesus, it was a light in darkness. It was a unique church.

And it was a church unlike many of the other churches that Paul wrote to. Because in many of Paul's other letters, I'm sure you've read them all before, in all these other letters, Paul is dealing with different issues.

[5 : 28] He's dealing with heresy. He's dealing with division. He's dealing with false teachers. He's dealing with counterfeit Christianity. But Paul doesn't mention any of these problems in the church in Ephesus.

Because as a church, you could say that the Ephesians, they seemed to be faithfully ploughing away in their furrow. As a church, they were faithfully ploughing away in their furrow.

And yet, for Paul, as a seasoned pastor and a seasoned preacher of the gospel, Paul knew that when things are going well, there's always the temptation to lose focus and let your guard down.

When things are going well, there's always the temptation to lose focus and let your guard down. The clearest biblical example we have of that is what happened to King David.

You know, King David, when things were going well in Israel, the kingdom was growing, the nation was at peace. But when David was meant to be on the battlefield, he was watching Bathsheba in the bathtub.

[6 : 39] David had lost focus. He'd let his guard down. And as you know, the devil got in. And before he knew it, a look had progressed to lust. And the lust progressed to laying with Bathsheba.

And laying with Bathsheba led to lying about their affair. And then lying about their affair, it led to the loss of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, the Hittite. And it was all because he lost focus and he let his guard down.

He lost focus and he let his guard down. And this is why Paul exhorts the Ephesians at the end of his letter to learn the lesson.

Learn the lesson. Don't be like David. Don't lose focus. Don't let your guard down. No, he says there, verse 10, be strong in the Lord and stand firm.

Be strong in the Lord and stand firm by wearing the whole armour of God. Now, as you know, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we've mentioned it many, many times before, the whole letter is split into two sections and it's purposely written in that way where chapters 1 to 3 is teaching, chapters 4 to 6 is Paul is telling, 1 to 3 is information, 4 to 6 is application, 1 to 3 is indicatives, 4 to 6 is imperatives.

[8 : 03] Chapters 1 to 3 are full of encouragements, chapters 4 to 6 are full of exhortations. And Paul, he encourages all the believers at Ephesus, he encourages all of us as believers by reminding us in chapter 1 about all the blessings and all the benefits we have of salvation.

He then says in chapter 2, he talks about the fact that we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. And then chapter 3, it's we are loved. We need to know the height and depth and breadth and length of God's love towards us in the person of Jesus.

So chapters 1 to 3, they're full of encouragements for the Christian. But then chapters 4 to 6 are full of exhortations. Because as Christians, Paul tells us that we're to watch how we walk in chapter 4.

We're to live as God's children in chapter 5. And then Paul says right here at the end of chapter 6, we are to fight the good fight of faith. We're to fight the good fight of faith.

And as you know by now, Paul, he doesn't mince his words. And he doesn't miss a trick. Because as we saw last week, when we considered Paul's fascinating finalists, we were looking at that last Wednesday evening, he writes all these, finally my brethren, to these different churches.

[9 : 23] And Paul always had something positive and something powerful to say to the churches. And in this letter to the Ephesians, it's no different. Because having reminded us throughout his whole letter, he's reminded us that the Christian life is all of grace.

He's told us that in chapters 1 to 3. And then he's told us that the Christian life is all about living for God's glory. So he's told us in his whole letter that the Christian life is all of grace and it's all about living for God's glory.

And then Paul says, finally my brethren. And this is how he comes to a conclusion. He says, finally my brethren, remember that the Christian life is not a playground.

It's a battleground. The Christian life is not a playground. It's a battleground. Therefore he says, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes or the wiles of the devil. And as you know, as we've said many times before, the second half of Paul's letter, it's full of exhortations to the Christians.

[10 : 37] Full of imperatives. Full of commands for the Christian. And Paul's conclusion here is no different. Because right up until the end of his letter, until Paul puts down his pen, he is exhorting the Christian with imperatives.

imperatives. And Paul's first imperative in his conclusion here, Paul's first exhortation is, as it is there in verse 10, be strong.

Be strong in the Lord. Be strong in the Lord. Now of course, Paul would never exhort the Christian to be strong in yourself.

Paul would never say to us, be strong in yourself. Because, well that's what the world will tell us. Be strong in yourself. That's what the flesh will tell us. We need to be strong in ourselves.

That's what the devil will tell us. You need to be strong in yourself. Be strong in yourself. Be secure in yourself. Be confident in yourself. You've got this. You've got it all together. You can do it.

[11 : 38] Paul would never exhort the Christian to be strong in yourself. There was a day he would have. And there was a day he did. As you know, prior to his conversion, Paul was strong and he was secure.

He was self-confident. He was self-righteous in his own legalistic achievements and accolades. But as Paul writes to the Philippians, what things were gained to me, I counted as loss for the sake of knowing Christ.

And like, I was thinking this morning, like Robert Murray McShane, Paul came to confess that when free grace awoke me by light from on high, then legal fear shook me and trembled to die.

No refuge, no safety in self could I see. Jehovah said Kenu, my saviour must be. And it's for that reason and that reason alone that Paul exhorts us to be strong in the Lord.

Be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. not your own might, but in the strength of his might. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

[12 : 51] In other words, Paul is saying to us, be strong in who you are in Christ. Be strong in who you are in Christ.

Because Paul, he's taught us, he's told us throughout this entire letter, he's told us that as a Christian, you're saved by grace. You've received every spiritual blessing.

I say, you're a child of God and you're being sanctified for glory. He's told us that. He's saying, be strong in the Lord. Be strong in who you are in Christ.

Know that you are in Christ. Be strong in the Lord. Be strong in who you are in Christ and what you have in Christ. And from the outside of this letter, Paul has reminded us, he's reassured us of what we have in Christ.

we've received every blessing, every benefit. We've received it all from the gracious hand of King Jesus. Therefore, he says, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

[13 : 57] Verse 11, put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. And you know, Paul is clear. Paul is clear in what he's saying here because we're not to rely upon, we're not to only rely upon the Lord and his strength and his power and his might.

That's a huge thing. That's first and foremost. But Paul goes on to say that we also have a role and a responsibility. We are to rely upon the Lord, that's what he says, be strong in the Lord and in his might, his strength, his power, yes.

But we also have a role and responsibility as Christian soldiers to go into our armoury every day because every day is a day of battle. We have a role and a responsibility as Christian soldiers to go into our armoury at the beginning of every day because every day is a day of battle.

Which is why Paul reminds us not only to rely upon the Lord, that's first and foremost, but that we have a responsibility, we have this role as Christian soldiers to put on the whole armour of God so that we are standing firm against the attacks and the attempts and the approaches of the devil.

And you know, it's a good question, isn't it? Did you put on your armour this morning? Did you put it on? Did you put your armour on before you left the house this morning?

[15 : 36] But you know, how do we go into our armoury? We read of Christian going into the armoury at Palace Beautiful, but how do we go into our armoury and how do we put on the whole armour of God every day?

You know, it's not a difficult thing to do in many ways. We go into our armoury by going into our closet. We come to God's word and when we come to God's word we receive instructions from our king and commander-in-chief as soldiers on the battlefield.

And we speak to him in prayer and we talk about the battle of the day ahead. Whatever that battle is going to be, we prayerfully put on the whole armour of God.

Finally, he says, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. Against the schemes of the devil.

And you know, I love that phrase at the end of verse 11 there, schemes of the devil or the wiles of the devil. Now the Greek word Paul uses there for schemes or wiles is the word *methodia*.

[16 : 49] *Methodia*, which as you can probably guess is where we get the word *method* or *methods* from *methodia*. *Method*. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord.

That's what he's saying. This is the exhortation. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the methods, the *methodias* of the devil, against the schemes and the strategies of the devil, against the cunning and craftiness of the devil, the plots and the plans of the devil, against all those tactics and all those temptations of the devil.

Put on the armour of God that you will be able to stand against all the approaches, all the attacks, all the conflict, all the confrontation of the devil in that day.

My friend, you know, Paul, he uses this military language to remind us and reaffirm to us that the Christian life is not a playground. It's a battleground.

It's a battleground. And you know, it's amazing and I'm sure I'll probably mention them as the weeks go on. You find so many Christian hymns and their theme is often a military theme, onward Christian soldier marching on to war because the Christian life, it's not a playground.

[18 : 11] It's a battleground. Which is why he exhorts us, why Paul says to us right at the end of it, as he comes to the conclusion of his letter, he exhorts us to put on the whole armour of God and stand firm against the enemy of our soul.

Which is who Paul writes about next. He speaks about the enemy. So before Paul defines the equipment required to stand firm, we'll see that in the weeks to come, he declares this exhortation, be strong in the Lord.

Then he describes the enemy that we face. And that's what we see secondly, the enemy. So the exhortation, verses 10 and 11, and then the enemy, verses 12 and 13.

The enemy. He says there in verse 12, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm.

[19 : 24] I'm sure you've heard of the phrase, know your enemy. Know your enemy. What's interesting is that it's actually a Chinese proverb.

The Chinese proverb that was probably written about 250 BC by a man named Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu. Sun Tzu was a military general and a war strategist in the Chinese army.

In fact, it's said that Sun Tzu was said to have written the ancient book, you've probably heard of it, *The Art of War*. *The Art of War*. I haven't read it, but it's thought, many people say, it's thought to be a masterpiece on strategy for managing conflicts and winning battles.

And in his work, *The Art of War*, there's a quote in it. Sun Tzu, this is what he wrote. If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.

If you know yourself, but not the enemy, for every victory gained, you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

[20 : 42] I'll read it again. If you know the enemy and you know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. So you'll win. If you know yourself, but not the enemy, for every victory gained, you will also suffer defeat.

If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle you'll lose. And in many ways, that's what Paul is saying here. Paul is giving this exhortation in these verses.

He's already exhorted us by saying, know yourself. Know yourself. Know what you are. in Christ. And know whose you are. In Christ.

Know yourself. Know that you're in Christ and you're always in Christ. So be strong, he says. Be strong in the Lord. But now Paul says, know your enemy.

If you know what you are in Christ, you need to also know your enemy. Because if you know yourself and you know your enemy, you need not fear the battle. If you know yourself and you know your enemy, you need not fear the battle.

[21 : 47] So know yourself and know your enemy. Now as you know, we have many enemies as Christians. Not everyone is on our side. That's quite easy to see.

Therefore, we have many enemies. Our Bible teaches us that the world is our enemy because it's at enmity with God. It's opposite and opposed to God.

Jesus said, if the world hates you, don't be surprised. If the world hates you, know that it hated me before it hated you. James tells us that if you're a friend of the world, you are an enemy of God.

So the world is an enemy. The Bible also tells us that our flesh is an enemy because the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, it all wants to be pleased.

It all wants to be promoted. We want to please self and promote self. We want to push away anything that's good and of God.

[22 : 49] That's why the flesh fights and wages war against the spirit. But even though they are our enemies in this passage, Paul isn't referring to the world. He's not referring to the flesh as our enemy because Paul's greatest concern as he writes, his conclusion here is the work of the devil.

And you know, we have, as we said, we have many enemies. We've got the world, the flesh, and the devil are our enemies. And the devil is a frightening and ferocious enemy.

That's why Peter described the devil, is it not? He said that the devil goes around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour and destroy.

And that's why Paul is saying to us here in verses 12 and 13, he's saying, know your enemy. Know your enemy. For we wrestle not 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.

There are rulers, there are authorities, there are cosmic powers of darkness. Know your enemy. And you know, Paul is clear there.

[24 : 12] He's clear in his conclusion. He says, our battle is not with the world, it's not even with the flesh. Our battle is with the devil. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of darkness and the spiritual forces of evil.

And you know, it's interesting that Paul uses the word wrestle. Paul always uses specific words. He says, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but we are wrestling against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of darkness.

Paul emphasises that the battleground of the Christian is CQC, close quarter combat. That's what the Christian battle is.

Close quarter combat, CQC. It's not a war like we see on the news with those long-range missiles and heat-seeking rockets and drones being flown and fired into another, from one country to another.

No, the Christian life, CQC, close quarter combat, where we grapple with the God of this world, we struggle with Satan and we face the fallen star of heaven.

[25 : 35] He's not at a distance from us. Often, he's too close to us. And the thing is, that's who he is.

Our enemy is the fallen star of heaven. That's what Jesus said about him. I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. That's what John saw in his revelation.

We studied it a number of months ago, maybe even a year ago. I saw a star fallen from heaven to earth and he was given the key to the bottomless pit.

And of course, both Jesus and John, they stress the word fallen. that Satan is the fallen star and he's fallen like lightning. Both Jesus and John stress the word fallen, not just in the physical sense, but also in the spiritual sense, as in fallen into sin.

Just like Adam and Eve fell into sin. Just like we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Satan was a fallen star that fell like lightning from heaven.

[26 : 39] And of course, when John said that he saw a fallen star, he wasn't talking about astronomy. He was talking about this angel. The Bible, John describes Satan as a fallen angel, which raises a lot of questions.

It was even raised at Christianity Explore last Wednesday, which we didn't get into in detail, thankfully. But you know, that's who Satan is. He's a fallen angel.

And as John saw in Revelation 9, he's the angel of the bottomless pit. A key passage in the Bible which speaks about Satan as a fallen angel is Isaiah 14, where the Lord speaks powerfully, speaks prophetically about Satan.

And this is what's written in Isaiah 14, just to quote a few verses. It says, Hell is excited to meet you at your coming. So the Lord is speaking to Satan. Hell is excited to meet you at your coming.

How you are fallen from heaven, O day star, or O Lucifer, depends which version you use. Son of the morning, how you are cut down to the ground. You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven.

[27 : 52] I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, on the farther sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.

I will be like the most high. You shall be brought down to hell, Satan, to the lowest depths of the pit. And you know, it's so, so solemn when you read it.

Because the Lord described the devil as Lucifer, which means light bearer. That's why Paul in the New Testament, he described the devil as an angel of light. He was the light bearer.

He was the morning star, the day star, the sun of the dawn. He's got all these different names. to emphasize that he was once the brightest and best angel. He was second in command to the son of God.

And yet it wasn't enough. He wanted more. He wanted more power, more of a position. He wanted more honor, more glory. He wanted to be number one.

[28 : 52] As we read there in Isaiah 14, he wanted to be God himself. But in doing so, he broke the first commandment. And he was cast out. He was condemned to hell.

And as the little letter of Jude shows us right at the end of our Bible, Lucifer is the leader of all the fallen angels whom the Lord cast out of heaven and condemned to hell.

And you know, it's so solemn. Paul is saying, this is your enemy. So know your enemy. Know your enemy.

But you know, the fascinating feature of the devil is how many names he has. We're going to come to a conclusion soon. The devil has so many names. Similarly, Jesus has many names in the Bible and each name, you could say, depicts and describes the gracious and godly character of Jesus.

But Satan also has many names in the Bible. But each of his names depict and describe how hellish his character really is. As you know, Satan means adversary.

[30 : 04] He's our adversary, the devil, the diabolos, the divider. He wants to divide and to destroy the church of Jesus Christ.

He's also described as the accuser of the brethren. He's the father of lies. He's been a liar and murderer right from the very beginning since Genesis 3.

As we read in Isaiah 14, he's Lucifer, he's Beelzebub, he's the Antichrist, he's described as the angel of the bottomless pit. He's Abaddon, or as John Bunyan used, he's Apollyon, which means destroyer.

He's the prince of the power of the air, he's the prince of darkness, the prince of demons. He's the god of this world, says Paul in 2 Corinthians 4, who has blinded the minds of unbelievers.

Why do they not believe when the gospel is preached? He's the god of this world, who has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

[31 : 10] And you're my Christian friend, you know, it's no wonder Paul is saying to us, as he comes to the conclusion of his letter, he's saying, know your enemy. Know your enemy, because he's a fierce and ferocious enemy.

But he's also saying there, stand firm, Christian soldier. Stand firm. Know your enemy, therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all to stand firm.

Paul again and again in verse 13, and even into verse 14, he says, stand firm, stand firm, stand firm. Stand firm, Christian soldier.

Stand firm. Stand firm, Christian soldier. Stand firm. And so now that we've heard the exhortation, I will not say that we know the enemy.

We don't know him, really. We know about him. But there are many things he does that we're not even aware of. But we need equipment for the battle, which God willing will begin exploring next week.

[32 : 28] Because like Christian and Palace Beautiful, we need to go into our armoury and we need to prayerfully put on the whole armour of God that we will be able to stand firm.

Stand firm, Christian soldier, he says. Stand firm. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we acknowledge this evening that the Lord of God who is so good to us, a God who reminds us that this is not a playground, but that we are in a battle and that we are fighting against one who is a defeated enemy.

And help us to see that everything that Paul writes that comes to us with the assurance that the victory has been won through the cross of Jesus Christ and that we are standing on the battlefield knowing that our great commander-in-chief, he is in control, he is working all things together for good and he is doing all things well.

But Lord, help us, we pray, to stand firm as we come into conflict with this enemy, as he tempts us, as he diverts our attention, as he distracts us day by day.

And Lord, help us as we study these different pieces of armour. Help us, Lord, to prayerfully put them on and to know that they are for our good and ultimately to enable us and to encourage us to keep fighting the good fight of faith, to keep walking with the Lord, to keep looking to him.

[34 : 10] Lord, remember us, we pray, uphold us, we ask, help us to keep standing firm and to keep going on as Christian soldiers, ever looking to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.

Cleanse us in, Lord, we pray, bless us in our being together, watch over us in our parting for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening.

We're going to sing the words of Psalm 41. Psalm 41. It's in the Scottish Psalter, page 262. Psalm 41.

We're singing from verse 11 down to the end of the psalm. Psalm 41 and verse 11. By this I know that certainly I favoured am by thee because my hateful enemy triumphs not over me.

But as for me, thou me upholdest in mine integrity and me before thy countenance thou saidst continually, the Lord, the God of Israel, be blessed forever then, from age to age eternally.

[35 : 25] Amen. Yea and amen. So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 41 to God's praise. by this I know that certainly I favour huh south la?'t watcheter another to thee Ó quatro AND aí■r Saya've amplified■■■ ■■■ C ■■■■ ve For me, Thou be a foe, in mine integrity.

And me before my countenance, Thou said continually, The Lord, the Lord of Israel, Be blessed forever then, From age to age, eternally. Amen.

Yea, and Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.