

Ephesians – Week 19 – Taking a Stand – Bible Study Helps

Title: Taking a Stand

Sermon Summary:

This sermon addresses the reality of spiritual warfare that every believer faces daily. Drawing from Ephesians 6, the message emphasizes that Christians are engaged in an invisible spiritual battle against demonic forces, not against flesh and blood. The sermon focuses on three critical pieces of armor believers must actively take up in battle: the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. The sermon stresses that faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and that believers have the power through Christ to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. The message challenges Christians to awaken from spiritual complacency, prioritize Bible study and memorization, and actively resist Satan's attacks through Scripture. The sermon emphasizes that victory is already secured in Christ, but believers must actively put on God's armor daily to stand firm against temptation, doubt, fear, accusation, and all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Key Points:

- Every believer is engaged in an invisible spiritual battle against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness
- The shield of faith must be taken up to block and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked
- Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, making Bible reading, study, and memorization essential for spiritual protection
- The Roman shield was large enough to cover nearly the entire body, symbolizing how faith protects all areas of life
- Fiery darts include doubt, fear, discouragement, temptation, pride, anxiety, false doctrine, bitterness, and accusation
- The helmet of salvation protects the mind and thoughts, providing assurance of eternal security
- Believers can know with certainty they are saved and can never lose their salvation
- The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, the only offensive weapon in spiritual warfare
- Jesus demonstrated using Scripture to combat Satan's temptations in the wilderness
- Christians must read, study, memorize, meditate on, and obey the Bible consistently
- The devil's primary strategy is to keep believers distracted and asleep to spiritual realities
- Taking a stand means trusting God when fear rises, obeying the Bible when culture disagrees, remaining pure when tempted, and staying faithful when trials overwhelm

Scripture Reference:

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- Ephesians 6:10-18 (primary focus on verses 16-17)
- Psalm 91:1-6
- Romans 10:17
- 1 Peter 5:8-9
- Acts 19:1-20
- Hebrews 4:12
- Matthew 4:1-10
- Psalm 119:11
- Joshua 1:8
- John 14:26
- Job 19:21-27

Stories:

- The formation of the Ephesian church in Acts 19, where new believers were delivered from demonic possession, witchcraft, and sorcery, publicly burning their magic books worth 50,000 pieces of silver
- The seven sons of Sceva who attempted to cast out demons but were overpowered because they didn't truly know Jesus
- Job's declaration of faith despite losing everything, proclaiming "I know that my Redeemer lives"
- Stephen being stoned while forgiving his persecutors and looking to heaven
- Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, responding to each of Satan's attacks with "It is written"
- A personal experience of father's passing, emphasizing that without Jesus Christ, you have nothing, but with Him, you have everything
- A flat tire incident during a family emergency as an example of spiritual attacks during difficult times and how children are often oblivious to the realities of danger
- Reference to C.S. Lewis's "The Screwtape Letters" illustrating daily demonic attacks
- Reference to "Pilgrim's Progress" and the Enchanted Ground where Christians nearly fell asleep before reaching the Celestial City, encountering Madam Bubble who represents worldly distractions
- Illustration of Roman soldiers practicing with their swords for hours daily, emphasizing the need for consistent Bible training

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Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces change the way you approach conflicts and challenges in your daily life?

In what specific areas of your life have you been allowing fiery darts of doubt, fear, or discouragement to hit you without raising the shield of faith?

The sermon emphasizes that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. How much time are you actually spending in Scripture daily, and what does that reveal about your preparedness for spiritual warfare?

When Job lost everything, he declared that his Redeemer lives and that he would see God. What would your response be if you faced similar devastating losses, and does your answer reveal the strength of your helmet of salvation?

The sermon mentions that some Christians are like little children, oblivious to the spiritual war raging around them. Are you spiritually awake to the reality of this battle, or are you living in a state of spiritual drowsiness?

Jesus used specific Scripture to combat each of Satan's temptations in the wilderness. Can you identify and quote specific Bible verses that counter the particular temptations you face most often?

The sermon warns against unforgiveness and bitterness as tools of the devil. Is there anyone in your life you have refused to forgive, and how might that unforgiveness be giving the devil an advantage in your spiritual warfare?

How does the certainty of eternal security and knowing where you are going after death affect your ability to stand firm when facing persecution, loss, or the pressures of this world?

The people of Ephesus burned their books of magic and witchcraft worth 50,000 pieces of silver when they came to Christ. What valuable things in your life might God be calling you to burn or remove because they represent spiritual compromise?

If the only offensive weapon in our spiritual armor is the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, what does it say about the state of the modern church that so many Christians are biblically illiterate and unprepared for battle?

Small Group Guide: Taking a Stand

Ephesians 6:16-17 - The Armor of God (Part 2)

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you felt spiritually attacked or overwhelmed this past week. How did you respond?

Sermon Summary

This message continues our study of the armor of God, focusing on three pieces we must "take up" in the midst of spiritual battle:

1. **The Shield of Faith** - to block and quench all fiery darts of the enemy
2. **The Helmet of Salvation** - to protect our minds and assurance
3. **The Sword of the Spirit** - God's Word as our only offensive weapon

The sermon emphasized that we are in a real, ongoing spiritual war and must actively take up these weapons daily to stand firm in Christ.

Key Scripture Passages

- **Ephesians 6:16-17** - The shield, helmet, and sword
 - **Romans 10:17** - Faith comes by hearing the Word of God
 - **1 Peter 5:8-9** - Resist the devil steadfast in the faith
 - **Matthew 4:1-11** - Jesus' example of using Scripture against temptation
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Battle

1. The sermon stated that "every believer is engaged in an invisible spiritual battle." Do you truly believe this? How does this reality (or lack of awareness) affect your daily life?

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2. Read Acts 19:11-20. The Ephesian church came out of serious spiritual darkness. How does understanding their background help us understand why Paul wrote about spiritual warfare to them?
3. What are some ways the devil has been effective at keeping Christians "asleep" to the reality of spiritual warfare?

The Shield of Faith (v. 16)

4. The sermon listed several "fiery darts" the enemy uses: doubt, fear, discouragement, temptation, pride, anxiety, false doctrine, bitterness, accusation, despair. Which of these do you struggle with most frequently?
5. According to Ephesians 6:16, the shield of faith can quench "ALL" the fiery darts. Why is this significant? What does this tell us about God's provision for us?
6. **Romans 10:17** says "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." How does this connect to our ability to use the shield of faith effectively? What does this mean practically for your daily routine?
7. The sermon mentioned that biblical faith is "complete dependence upon God and His promises," not positive thinking or self-confidence. How is this different from what our culture teaches about faith?

The Helmet of Salvation (v. 17a)

8. What are some ways the enemy attacks our assurance of salvation? Have you ever doubted whether you're truly saved?
9. Read Job 19:25-27. Job lost everything but maintained confidence in his Redeemer. How did the "helmet of salvation" help Job endure his trials?
10. The sermon stated: "Your failures do not cancel God's grace. Your circumstances do not change God's love. Your future does not depend on you." Which of these truths do you need to hear most right now?
11. How should the certainty of our salvation and eternal future affect the way we face trials, persecution, or even death?

The Sword of the Spirit (v. 17b)

12. Read Matthew 4:1-11. What pattern do you see in how Jesus responded to each temptation? What does this teach us about spiritual warfare?
 13. The sermon emphasized that the Word of God is our only offensive weapon. Why do you think God designed it this way? What does this reveal about the power of Scripture?
 14. The sermon said, "If you don't know the Bible and you don't want to take the time to learn the Bible, you are in a very dangerous position." Do you agree? Why or why not?
 15. How much time do you currently spend in God's Word? What specific obstacles prevent you from spending more time reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture?
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Personal Reflection

Take 2-3 minutes of silence for personal reflection:

- **Shield of Faith:** What specific "fiery dart" is the enemy using against you right now? What promise from God's Word can you use to quench it?
 - **Helmet of Salvation:** Do you have complete assurance of your salvation? If not, what doubts remain?
 - **Sword of the Spirit:** What is one specific verse you need to memorize this week to help you in your current battle?
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Practical Application

This Week's Challenge (Choose at least one):

Individual:

- ☐ Start or restart a daily Bible reading plan
- ☐ Memorize one verse related to your current spiritual battle
- ☐ Write out 3-5 Bible verses on index cards to carry with you and review throughout the day
- ☐ If you lack assurance of salvation, talk with a mature believer or pastor this week

As a Group:

- ☐ Partner with someone for Scripture memory accountability
- ☐ Sign up for discipleship training to learn the Bible more deeply
- ☐ Share specific prayer requests related to spiritual battles and pray for one another throughout the week

Family Application:

- **Parents:** Lead a family devotional this week using Matthew 4:1-11. Discuss how Jesus used Scripture and help your children memorize one verse.
 - **Everyone:** Identify one area where "Madam Bubble" (worldly distractions) is stealing your time and attention. Replace that time with Bible reading.
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Group Prayer Time

Prayer Focus:

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- Pray for awareness of the spiritual battle we're in
- Pray for increased faith through God's Word
- Pray for assurance of salvation for anyone struggling with doubt
- Pray for discipline and desire to know God's Word
- Pray for specific spiritual battles group members are facing

Closing Prayer: Pray Ephesians 6:10-18 over your group, asking God to help each person put on the full armor of God.

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll conclude our study of Ephesians 6 with prayer and spiritual vigilance. Come prepared to discuss:

- How did you do with this week's challenge?
 - What victories did you experience using the armor of God?
 - What battles are you still facing?
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Additional Resources

- **Books mentioned in sermon:**
 - *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis
 - *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan
 - *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*
 - **For Further Study:**
 - Psalm 91 - God as our refuge
 - Psalm 119 - The power and importance of God's Word
 - Hebrews 11 - Examples of faith
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"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." - Ephesians 6:10

5-Day Devotional:

Standing Firm in Spiritual Warfare

Day 1: Equipped for Battle

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-13

Devotional: We live in an invisible war. The Apostle Paul reminds us that our struggle isn't against people—not difficult family members, challenging coworkers, or frustrating circumstances—but against spiritual forces of darkness. This truth should radically change how we approach each day. Before your feet hit the floor tomorrow morning, recognize that you're entering a battlefield. The enemy sends fiery darts of doubt, fear, discouragement, and temptation. But take heart: God has provided complete armor for your protection. You don't fight in your own strength. The question isn't whether you're equipped—God has already provided everything you need. The question is: will you put on the armor? Will you recognize the battle and stand firm in Christ's power?

Reflection: What "fiery darts" have you faced this week? Did you recognize them as spiritual attacks?

Day 2: The Shield of Faith

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-6; Romans 10:17

Devotional: Faith isn't optimism or positive thinking—it's complete dependence upon God and His promises. The Roman shield was massive, covering nearly the entire body, and when wetted before battle, it could extinguish flaming arrows. Your faith works similarly. When doubt whispers, "God can't be trusted," faith responds with God's promises. When fear screams, "Something terrible will happen," faith declares, "Fear not, for I am with you." But here's the key: faith comes by hearing the Word of God. You cannot wield a shield you haven't picked up. You cannot quench darts with promises you don't know. The soldier who neglects his shield training perishes in battle. How much time are you spending in God's Word? Your spiritual survival depends on it.

Reflection: What specific promise from Scripture can you use as your shield today?

Day 3: The Helmet of Salvation

Reading: Job 19:21-27; 2 Timothy 1:12

Devotional: Job lost everything—his children, his wealth, his health. Yet in his darkest moment, he declared, "I know that my Redeemer lives!" This is the helmet of salvation—unshakable confidence in God's eternal promises. The devil's favorite attack targets your assurance: "Are you really saved? If God loved you, why is this happening? You've failed too many times." But listen: if you've trusted Jesus Christ, your salvation doesn't depend on your performance. It rests on His finished work. No circumstance can separate you from God's love. Cancer cannot. Financial ruin cannot. Death cannot. When you put on the helmet of salvation, you're reminding yourself that the story's end is already written—and you win. This confidence isn't arrogance; it's resting in the One who conquered death itself.

Reflection: Do you have absolute certainty about your salvation? If not, settle it today.

Day 4: The Sword of the Spirit

Reading: Matthew 4:1-11; Psalm 119:9-16

Devotional: When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, notice what weapon Jesus used: "It is written." Three times the enemy attacked; three times Jesus responded with Scripture. He didn't rely on feelings, logic, or personal strength—He wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. This is your only offensive weapon in spiritual warfare. When temptation comes, you must have specific verses ready. When discouragement attacks, you need God's promises memorized. The Holy Spirit wrote this Book, lives inside you, and wants to use His Word to give you victory—but He can only bring to your remembrance what you've put in your heart. A sword left in its sheath is useless. Begin today: memorize Scripture, meditate on it daily, and watch the Spirit transform your battles.

Reflection: What verse will you memorize this week to use against a specific temptation?

Day 5: Standing Firm

Reading: 1 Peter 5:8-10; Ephesians 6:13-14

Devotional: "Having done all, to stand." This is the Christian's call—not to retreat, not to surrender, but to stand firm. The devil prowls like a roaring lion, seeking to devour, but you resist him steadfast in the faith. Standing firm means remaining faithful when pressure urges compromise. It means trusting God when fear rises, obeying Scripture when culture disagrees, staying pure when temptation comes, continuing to serve when discouraged. This isn't passive—it's active dependence on God. You take up the shield, put on the helmet, wield the sword. You don't fight for victory; you fight from victory because Jesus already won. Your job is simply to stand in His strength. So when the world says sit down, when people say be quiet, when everything falls apart—you stand. You stand on God's promises, in God's power, for God's glory.

Reflection: Where is God calling you to take a stand today, regardless of the cost?