

## Stand against the Enemy

### Ephesians 6: 10-20

#### 1. Realise that there is battle to engage with:

**ILLUSTRATION:** Think about a story when you have been caught off guard e.g. in sport – you think you are about to just score a goal/score a try. All your eyes are focused on this so much so that you don't see the opposition coming up on your left to take you out!

**KEY POINT:** One of the mistakes that it is easy to make as Christians is to forget that by becoming Christians we enter into a spiritual battle. It can be confusing – we know that through Jesus' death and resurrection the victory has been won, so it seems strange then to say that there is still an ongoing spiritual battle happening around us. This is because we live in the in between times – the NOW AND NOT YET.

**EXPLANATION/ ILLUSTRATION:** This is a bit like the time between D-day and V-day in the Second World War. On D-day, 6th June 1944, the Allies invaded France through what were known as the Normandy landings with the hope of liberating mainland Europe from Nazi occupation. D-day marked the turning point in World War II when the Allied forces began to win their fight against the Axis powers. From that point on, it was clear that the Allies had won the victory. However, it was almost another year, until the Germans finally acknowledged their defeat and surrendered – on V day, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945. V-day marks the end of the War with Germany. We know that through Jesus' death and resurrection, the enemy has been defeated. Jesus has claimed the victory. But until Jesus comes back to claim this victory once and for all, the enemy still attempts to cling on – and thus we in the midst of a spiritual battle.

**APPLICATION:** **Keep a healthy perspective:** There is no need to become obsessed with this battle and analyse endlessly as to whether we are under attack. But it is important to know there is a battle so that we understand the importance of the armour that Paul talks about.

#### 2. Clothe yourself in the armour of God – defence:

**BUZZ GROUPS – What are the various pieces of armour that Paul mentions? Choose one and discuss what this armour is and how it protects us against the enemy.**

**KEY POINT:** In this passage, Paul uses very practical language – he does not say that by default of being a Christian we are automatically clothed in this armour. He says that we need to actively *put on* this armour. (Often we don't realise we've taken off the armour!)

**KEY VERSES:** Verse 11: '*Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*'

Verse 16: '*...Take up the shield of faith...*' etc.

**ILLUSTRATION/ USEFUL ACRONYM:** It can be helpful to recognise when we might be at our most susceptible to the enemy's schemes. When we are more aware we are both more able to avoid these times, and be on our guard when we are particularly vulnerable to the enemy. For example the word HALT can be used as an acronym for: **Hungry Angry Lonely Tired**. We need to learn to halt and think, 'Am I in a particular vulnerable position at the moment? How can I put things in place so that I avoid these vulnerable times? – i.e. get enough sleep!' Note that when Jesus was in the wilderness with no food, he was particularly vulnerable to the enemy.

**Perhaps give an example of when you are most susceptible...**

**APPLICATION:** When a soldier goes into battle, he will make sure that every single part of his armour is pristine condition, certain that it will do its job. Try to identify what part(s) of your armour are not in pristine condition (i.e. do you struggle to believe that you are saved – helmet of salvation; or do you struggle to know the full truth of God’s promises – the belt of truth? Etc. Having identified this/these area(s), ask God bring fresh revelation of this piece of armour and to clothe you afresh in it.

### 3. Claim God’s Power over the enemy:

**KEY VERSES: Ephesians 1: 18-22:**

‘I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know... his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

**KEY POINT:** We often totally underestimate the power that we have in Christ and when we call on his name. This in itself is a scheme of the enemy’s at work! **CALLING ON THE NAME OF JESUS: this is where our power lies.**

**APPLICATION:** Literally call on the name of Jesus. Many people ask Jackie Pullinger if she gets scared when working with the men in Hong Kong, many of them who have incredibly violent pasts. She cites the only time that she was exposed to this violence and how she dealt with it. One addict had run away, and she and another helper had gone to find him. Having found him, he became incredibly violent towards the male helper who’d come with Jackie. Not knowing what else to do, Jackie shouted, ‘In the name of Jesus stop.’ And in that instance, the addict stopped attacking the helper. **When faced with attack from the enemy, whether in spiritual form or physical form, calling out the name of Jesus in prayer is more powerful than we often realise.**

**ILLUSTRATION:** In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Susan is given a horn with which she is to blow in desperate need and help with then come. Susan first used it when she was attacked by Maugrim the wolf as the Battle of Aslan’s Camp was about to break out. Peter heard it and saved her life. When we call on the name of Jesus, we draw on the authority of Christ over the enemy and in doing so defeat the schemes of the enemy.

**USEFUL QUOTE:** ‘None can be saved without knowing the name of Jesus, and none can be effectively used of God without knowing the power in that name... The name of Jesus... represents the power and dominion given to him by God, power and a dominion before which every knee in heaven and earth and beneath earth must bow.’

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**MINISTRY IDEA:** Pray for the spirit to reveal afresh the power we have in Christ, and where in our lives we are needing to exercise this power more.