

**EPHESIANS – THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S CHURCH –
OUR IDENTITY, OUR WALK, OUR WARFARE
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**SERIES: Ephesians – The Mystery Of God’s Church –
Our Identity, Our Walk, Our Warfare**

TITLE: Program 64 – How To Stand Against The Enemy

THURSDAY

OPEN

Are you assailed with doubts, Beloved? Do you feel overwhelmed with despair? Are you loosing hope? As a matter of fact, lets be honest, are you dealing with suicidal thoughts? I just want you to know, you’re in a warfare. And you’re in a warfare because your life has value to God and the enemy doesn’t want you around. You need to resist. You need to stand firm, you need to put on the full armor of God. You need to take that two-edged sword and let it do its work. We’ll talk about it today.

PART ONE

Sometimes we can get in such a state, Beloved, of despair of hopelessness, of thinking that life is without value, that we have no purpose, that we have no earthly good here, that we just want to die. And I know because I’ve been

there, I’ve done that. So what is the answer? The answer is to understand that you are in warfare. And that if you’re going to make it and you’re going to be victorious then you have to stand firm, you have to hold that position that you have in Christ and have on the full armor of God. Well we looked at the helmet of salvation and now, today, I want us to look at the “sword of the spirit”. And as we do I want to read the scriptures and then I want to tell you a story. So let’s go to Ephesians chapter 6 and this is by way of review, in verse 14 he says, **“Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth...having put on the breastplate of righteousness...having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” (Ephesians 6:14-16)** Now listen, that shield of faith is able to take care of any flaming missile of the evil one. It doesn’t matter what kind it is, doesn’t matter how big it is, doesn’t matter how fiery it is, how hot it is, the shield of faith puts them all out. And then he says, **“And take the helmet of salvation....” (Ephesians 6:17a)** Remember now the armor bearer was there to hand them the helmet because they’ve all this heavy armor on and he would take the helmet of salvation and he would put it on his head **“...and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:17b)** Take the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. Now this word for sword is not the usual big sword that they would use in those days, I mean that huge, huge sword that they wield, rather, this was the little short two-edged sword. And it was called the gladius. But the Greek word was “m-a-c-h-a-r-i-a”. The big sword, the thrashion, was “r-o-m-p-h-a-i-a”. And some believe that because Paul was there under house arrest and because he could look at the Roman soldier that he was chained to he would look and see that on his belt was this scabbard and this scabbard held that short little Roman sword. It was very sharp, it was wonderful because it was easy to wield and also it was easy to conceal. Of all the armor that you have on that enables you to stand firm there is one

piece that can do the cutting. There is one peace that really is an instrument of being able to put to death the enemy. I call it the one and only offensive weapon. But that sword of the spirit is the word of God. Now the story that I want to tell you is about J. O. Fraser. His story is written in a book called “Mountain Rain” and he went into the Lisu people, into inland China and after he got in there he had been in there about 5 years. He had labored among these people that were really in essence a pretty kind people but they certainly weren’t interested in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And all of a sudden this man began to be assailed with all sorts of thoughts, all sorts of self doubt, self recrimination, he wondered was he really called to these people, that he wasn’t effective, that there was nothing in his life to commend him to these people and this is why they weren’t being saved. And eventually it turned to thoughts of suicide. And as he went through all of this day after day it says and night after night he wrestled with doubts and suicidal despair. And then in the timing of God there came this magazine and it was called “The Overcomer” and in that magazine he gained insight into the enemy. He gained insight into the full armor of God. And this what he wrote, he kept a diary. And by the way he was alone, he battled loneliness and that may be you. It may be a time of year when all of a sudden you feel so terribly, terribly lonely. Maybe you’re a single parent, maybe you’re an unclaimed blessing, maybe nobody’s asked you to marry them. Or maybe you’re a man in search of a woman and you can’t find one and maybe you just don’t have a lot of friends and you feel lonely and isolated and because you’re a Christian and you’re working in an ungodly environment people don’t want to be around you and they don’t invite you to their party’s. And you don’t see anybody coming to Jesus Christ and you’ve been praying for them and you’ve been trying to give the gospel and you just think that you’re an absolute failure. Listen to what J. O. Fraser said. He said, “I read it over and over again,” this article. “It showed me that deliverance from the power of the evil one comes through definite resistance on the ground of the

cross. I’m an engineer and I want to see things work. I had found that much of the spiritual teaching one hears does not seem to work. My apprehension of other aspects of truth had broken down. The passive side of leaving everything to the Lord Jesus as our life while blessedly true was not all that was needed just then.” It wasn’t, “Well, God it’s all in your hands, it’s all in your control and I’ll just wait. And I’ll wait for you to do something” and you’re sitting there waiting and you’re a couch potato or you’re just sitting there like a zombie in front of the TV set just saying. ” Well I have it all in Christ, etc.” He goes on to say, definite resistance on the ground of the cross was what brought me light. I found that it worked. I felt like a man perishing of thirst to whom some beautiful cold water had begun to flow.” He says, “People will tell you after helpful meeting perhaps that such and such a truth is a secret of victory. This is what I want you to see, “we need different truths at different times. Look to the Lord, some will say. Resist the devil, is also scripture and I found it worked.” That’s James 4, “**...Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**” (James 4:7b) “That cloud of despression dispersed. I found I could have victory in the spiritual realm whenever I wanted it. The Lord himself resisted the devil vocally. Get the behind me Satan. I, in humble dependence on him, did the same. I talked to Satan, at that time, using the promises of scripture as weapons and they worked. Right then the terrible oppression began to pass away. One had to learn gradually how to use this newfound weapon of resistance. I had so much to learn. It seemed as if God was saying, “You’re crying to me to do a big among the Lisu, I wanted to do a big work in you.” Well this is a quote from my book, “Lord, Is It Warfare, Teach Me To Stand.” It’s a small group Bible study or it’s a personal Bible study that covers every aspect of spiritual warfare. You can find out more about it by going to our website, “Preceptsforlife.com” and you can find out about it and many other books that I’ve written that are study guides to help you grow. But what I want you see, Beloved, as we look at the sword of the spirit, that this is the way Jesus fought the enemy. I

want you to go to Matthew chapter 4. Matthew, Mark and Luke all talk about the temptation of Jesus Christ. They all tell us about what happened because it's so important that you and I understand that the enemy even tempted Jesus. In Matthew chapter 4 it says, **“Then Jesus was led...by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” (Matthew 4:1)** You see this man, J. O. Fraser, had been led by God to the Lisu people and there he was tempted by the devil. You and I have been led to serve God. But there, we are tempted by the devil. So how do we fight him? Well, we go back to the scripture, we go to the belt of truth. And we see what does it say? We take the shield of faith and we take what it says and we believe it and we embrace it and we quench the fiery darts of the enemy. We pull out our two-edged sword and we wield it. Watch what Jesus does. **“After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter...,”** and I have a red pitchfork over “the tempter”, **“...came to him and said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones [be turned in to] bread.’” (Matthew 4:2-3)** In other words, [“prove who you are. Act independently of God. Exercise your power, God’s driven you into the wilderness, you’ve fasted 40 days, 40 nights, you’re hungry, command the stones to be made into bread.”] Now could Jesus have done that? Yes, because he was God. He spoke and brought the world into existence. He was there in the beginning with God when the earth was created. He’s able to do that. But he would have been acting independently of God. In warfare, if you’re going to win, you don’t act independently of God, because it’s in your dependence that you stand as a victor. So Jesus answered. Now listen to what he answered. **“It is written...,”** What did he do? Well he just took that sword and said it is written. He said, **“It is written, [that] man [does] not live [by] bread alone....” (Matthew 4:4a)** Well if man doesn’t live by bread alone, how does he live? We’ll talk about it in just a moment.

PART TWO

It's so interesting in Matthew chapter 4 because Satan doesn't give up. When he says, **"...Command that these stones [be made into] bread."** (Matthew 4:3b) Jesus said, **"...It is written, 'Man [does] not live [by] bread alone....'"** but listen carefully, by **"...every word that [comes] out of the mouth of God."** (Matthew 4:4b) Now does that tell you about the importance of the belt of truth? Does that tell you about the importance of the shield of faith? **"...Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of [God]."** (Romans 10:17) Does that tell you about the importance of the breastplate of righteousness? Because how do I know whether I'm righteous or I'm not righteous, only by knowing the word of God. O Beloved, I hope you're beginning to see it. I hope you're beginning to understand that all of the armor is related to the word of God. It is related to truth. The truth of who you are, whose you are, of the salvation that you have, of the peace that you have with God because you are a child of God. So Jesus draws the sword which is the word of God. Now, ["The devil comes again, takes him up to a high place on the corner of the temple."] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 4:5) I love to sit there, right there on the southern steps when we do our Israel teaching tour. And we sit there and I teach on Luke and other passages and it is one Bible feast. I'm with you all the time. I teach you all the time, no short devotionals, I mean we are opening and expounding the word of God. But we look up and right there is the pinnacle of the temple. And he took him there and he said to them, **"...‘If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down....'"** (Matthew 4:6a) And he said to him for it is written. So what does the devil do? The devil comes back with scripture too. So it's like they're sparring now one against the other. And it says, **"...For it is written, 'He will [give] his angels [command] concerning you...on their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not strike your foot against [the] stone. (Matthew 4:6b)** Well he did quote scripture. The

problem is he’s twisting it and he’s distorting it. And **“Jesus said to him, ‘On the other hand, it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.”’** [And] **Again, the devil took him [up] to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and [his] glory; and he said to [them], ‘All these things I will give You, if You [will] fall down and worship me.’”** (Matthew 4:7-9) What does he want ‘em do? He wants ‘em on the ground. You and I are in a warfare and where does the enemy want us? He wants us in defeat, he wants us in despair, he want us flat on the ground, he wants to pin us to the ground, but you and I are not to be pinned to the ground, rather, you an I are to stand, you and I are to stand firm. We are to hold our position. And **“...Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.”’”** (Matthew 4:10) Now what I want you to see in this last thing is he says, Go, go, depart from me! What’s he doing? He’s resisting him. It is an active thing. He’s not just sitting there saying, “Oh God, Oh God my Father, look at what the enemy is doing to me, look at, look at, look at.” No, he is taking action and he is resisting the devil and he says, Go, Satan. But he says go on the authority of the word of God for it is written. And it says, **“...The devil left Him...[and the] angels came and began to minister to Him.”** (Matthew 4:11) So you’ve got the armor, you’ve got it all. This is what he tells you, [“You have the belt of truth, you have the breastplate of righteousness, you have shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace, you have taken up the shield of faith, you have put on the helmet of your salvation, you have taken the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.”] (PARAPHRASE, Ephesians 6:14-17) And then he adds one thing that I think often we forget or we divorce from this subject of warfare. But I think that what he’s doing and I’m putting it in modern day terms, “take your walkie talkie.” You see one of the principles of warfare is communication. You have to have communication from headquarters to the troops that are on the field. If you ever watched the true movie “A Bridge

Too Far”, the story of Operation Market Garden, you know that that failed because they tried to push that through and they did not have adequate supplies and they did not have adequate communication and because they lacked communication they were dropping supplies and they were dropping chocolate bars when they needed guns. That just is so frustrating to me. And this is what happens so many times is we expect chocolate bars. When you don’t need chocolate bars, Beloved, you need the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God and you need to stay in communication with general headquarters as you walkie, you need to talkie. And this is what he is saying because the warfare is not over and Paul, as he brings this epistle to a close he wants them to understand. He has told them twice how he prays for them. But now he’s asking them to pray for him. Listen to what he says in verse 18. **“With all prayer....” (Ephesians 6:18a)** and that word for prayer there is “proseuche”. And it means general prayer, it means like coming to God and thanking him for who he is and rehearsing his goodness and saying, [“Worthy art you to receive praise and honor and glory.”] (PARAPHRASE, Revelation 4:11) that’s general prayer. **“With all prayer and petition....” (Ephesians 6:18a)** The word for petition here is “d-e-e-s-i-s”. And that word is a word for specific petitions, specific requests, so you name what you need. It says, **“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit....” (Ephesians 6:18a)** In other words, the spirit of God is in you. The spirit of God is in communication with God Almighty. The spirit of God knows the mind and heart of God. So afzu stand there in the spirit and ask the spirit to make intercession through you and to lead you in your prayers then you are praying **“With all prayer and petition...in the Spirit...,”** and it says, **“...and with this in view...,”** now watch what he says, **“...be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)** One of the things that J. O. Fraser said in his book, “Mountain Rain” was he was so thankful that he had built a strong prayer base people back home that would intercede for him, because that’s part of

winning the warfare. So he says and pray he says, “...**be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.**” (Ephesians 6:18b) I know a woman that was awakened in the middle of the night. And this missionary was on her heart. And she began to pray for her and as she prayed she was led by the spirit to pray for her protection. Well that woman was a single woman on the mission field. And a man had come in and was at the edge of the bed and ready to attack her and God woke her up and she sat there and she knew that she had on the armor of God and she resisted that man and she commanded him to leave and he left. But what did it take? It took her resisting and it took a woman clear across, I mean many time zones, praying for her. So he says, “...**Be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf....**” (Ephesians 6:18a-19b) and that’s what I would say to you. “...**Pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me....**,” and Paul is saying, “...**in the opening of my mouth....**” (Ephesians 6:19a-b) He was under house arrest but God could bring people to him and that he did. And there Paul shared the gospel. He says, “...**To make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I [might] speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**” (Ephesians 6:19c-20) He said support me in my warfare. “[I’m] **an ambassador in chains...**[and yet I want to] **speak boldly as I ought to speak.**” (Ephesians 6:20) Now I’m telling you that’s living as more than a conqueror.