

## Sermon Discussion – 28 April 2024

Read Ephesians 6:10-24

### **Getting Started** *Sharing from personal experience*

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "spiritual warfare"? What emotions come to mind when you even consider discussing this topic? Fear? Excitement? Uncertainty?

### **Observation** *Discovering the context*

As we conclude our study in the book of Ephesians, we come to the final major section that many people are familiar with. What's surprising about this passage is that it appears to be a hard left turn in contrast to what Paul has been speaking about household and workplace relationships. However, if we take a step back, we see this section helps tie up the letter, speaking to how believers need to know there's more at play behind the curtain in their day-to-day lives. Paul uses battle imagery as he calls all of us to stand firm amid the spiritual war that is in progress.

- How would you define spiritual warfare?
- Do you agree with the analogy of Christianity as a battle? Why or why not?

### **Interpretation** *Discovering the meaning*

1. In Ephesians 6:12, it clearly says that our battle is not against flesh and blood (that is, people) but is against the rulers, authorities and powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (demonic, spiritual beings). Why is it so difficult to realise this sometimes? Why do some people (or even we, ourselves) spend so much time "fighting" against people rather than addressing problems and difficulties as issues of spiritual warfare?
2. Paul describes the main pieces of equipment for protection in v. 13-17. Read Isaiah 52:7. How does this help us to understand what is meant by "and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace?"
3. One of the main ways we can extinguish the "flaming darts" of the evil one is being familiar with the Scriptures to combat lies with truth. Can you think of a time Jesus did this during His life and ministry? See Matthew 4:1-11. What were the lies/deceptions Satan attempted to use against Jesus? How did He respond to each one?
4. Yet again, we find repetition in Paul's words, stressing something important. In verse 18, "all" appears four times, instructing the believers on prayer during the war. What does each "all" say about the importance of prayer in our lives?

5. Four times in this small section, the word "stand" is used. Why do you think that is? If the victory has been won for us already, how does that change the way we approach spiritual warfare? How do we claim the victory already won for us as we encounter spiritual warfare?

**Application** *Putting knowledge into practice*

- Spend some time as a group, or individually, thinking through the past 17 weeks of this study. What stands out the most for you? How has this letter affected your understanding of God? The church? Your Christian walk?
- Is there anyone with whom you need to share this message? How can you make a point of doing that this week? What practical things can you do this week to engage in spiritual warfare with your family? Is there anything else God has placed on your heart through listening to the sermon or working through these questions?