

# How to Stand Against the Enemy

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[ 0 : 00 ] Bibles turn to Ephesians chapter 6, Ephesians chapter 6, we've spent several weeks studying the enemy and struggle with that some because it's not an attempt to glamorize the evil one, to focus us on the evil one, but instead to educate us on the evil one because he's dark and he's diabolical and he's deadly and he's dirty. Jesus told us in John 10, 10 that he comes for the only reason, to steal and to kill and to destroy. I'm going to tell you something, he don't want to give you a headache, he wants to ruin your life. He wants to set your kids off course, he wants to ruin your marriage, he wants to upset your family, he wants to weaken your church, he wants to blow your mind. He's not playing, he's dangerous and dirty and he's not straightforward in how he does it. He's diabolical, he is not hurtful, he's deadly. It's guerrilla warfare and it's filled with sabotage, filled with subversion.

He'll lie to you. He'll lie to you about you, even in ways that he'll quote scripture to you and he'll twist and turn that scripture into mistruth or he'll misquote it to you. He'll fill you with filth and then let you feel justified by it. He prowls around for an opportunity and then roars as if he's unable to be defeated. And I want to be clear, he hates the gospel.

He hates the gospel and encourages false parodies of the real message of the gospel. He blinds minds by the loud voices of public opinion, hot trends, current fads. His effort is the same as it's always been and he fights to make your life worthless. He fights to make your life baseless. He is at war and his time is limited and he knows it and he's like a wounded animal. He only comes, it often comes when the devil continues to, it's a hellish battle and we get weary in it, quite honestly. And that weariness comes sometimes when the devil does those body blows throughout the normal day. And then there are those days, our scripture today calls it the evil day.

In those days, that's kind of the focus of our passage today. You don't have those days every day, but somebody is having one today. There's a pain on every pew in this place. I don't know what that is, but the reality is there's people hurting all around us. And it would help if we knew when those days were coming because if we did, we'd get ready. Therefore, we have to prepare ourselves for whenever it is.

And when you do that, when you prepare for the bad day, the evil day, the life-changing day, when you prepare for those rough days, you'll also prepare for the every day. I want you to see this this morning.

[ 3 : 47 ] Ephesians chapter 6, beginning in verse 13, just verse 13, says, therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. The Lord wants us to stand. Trials are going to come. Battles are going to come. Some of them are going to be nasty.

And we're responsible for this. We didn't talk about exposing the enemy for the last few weeks to not prepare for the battle. And so we are to resist. Or as the scripture puts it here, we are to stand. I want to tell you how to stand. We are to stand firmly, firmly. I want to be clear. The battle's bigger than us. Let us not think that we have the stamina or the spiritual strength to stand in the valley by ourself against the enemy on our own power. It's not going to happen. It's not in our strength. Our feet are not going to stay planted. We will slip. We'll fall. We need help. And thank God the Lord will provide you with all that you need. He'll provide me with all that I need. He'll provide us with all that we need. We can rely on him because he knows the battle plan. He understands the enemy. He's stronger and better than the enemy. And it's our responsibility to follow the Lord's instructions and to come out with victory. However, it is not a light manner.

I'm not speaking of stepping deeper into your Christian faith so you can be with the Christian elite. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about warfare, folks. I'm simply talking about winning.

And sometimes winning is pretty and sometimes it's not. But folks, we got to win this. We got to stand firm. When I, Gideon was challenged by God to take on the Midianites. And I try to say that carefully because I preached on that one morning and we had a group of builders from the Mennonite church that attended our congregation that morning. And I kept talking about how we need to defeat the Midianites. And they got offended by me because I thought I was talking about the Mennonites.

But anyway, he had an army of 32,000. And he told them, if you're scared, on the Lord's instruction, he said, if you're scared, go home. And 10,000 were left.

[ 6 : 23 ] I spoke to football teams on Friday afternoon for about 30 years. And when I gave to this story, I'd always say, men, if you're scared, go home. Tell the coach because you won't amount to anything on a ball field if you're scared. You won't hold on to the ball. You won't catch the ball.

You won't make the impact. Go home. You're not going to help us. And church, let me tell you something. If we flinch in the battle, we are not standing firmly and we are susceptible to fall. Period. There's no excuses. We have to stand firmly. We also have to stand completely, completely. Take up the whole armor of God. And we'll talk about the pieces of this armor in the next few weeks, about how the truth holds everything together and how righteousness protects us, how we need to be ready with the gospel and letting our faith lead and trusting in our salvation. And we'll talk about the fact that the only offensive weapon that we have is the Word of God. That's it. The sword of the Word of God. However, I want you to know from the get-go that we don't need to, we don't cherry pick through the spiritual attributes that we'd like to have. We don't cherry pick through our strengths. We don't cherry pick through our resources that we're hoping to lean on. The reality is the army that we represent establishes the battle gear. We strap on what the commander tells us to strap on and we need to be able to stand in the evil day. Now, when it speaks of the evil day, it's not talking about the last spiritual battle on earth, it's not talking about the last day of some apocalyptic battle. It talks about any day regardless. And we don't know when that day's coming. Remember the strategy of the evil one. If you understand his strategy, you'll know that he hits when you least expect it.

You got to gird up every day, not just for certain days. And when you do that, you'll be prepared for when those certain days come along. And he can hit at any time. When I was in seminary, I lived in South Mississippi and met my wife and we married. And shortly after that, we moved to South Carolina.

[ 8 : 53 ] And I don't remember, I'm sure they had them, but I don't remember a tornado siren in South Mississippi. Maybe I was just too busy doing Greek and Hebrew and commuting to New Orleans. I don't know, but I don't remember that. But when I moved to North Mississippi, they had tornado sirens. And I'd never heard that before. And so what I was familiar with was a nuclear siren, for instance, you know.

And so when we were in our first storm like that, that siren went off and we had a yard full of trees and so we got in the car, got the dog in the car, got some sorry weather radio that we bought on sale and put it in the car, found out how sorry it was during that storm. And we went to the church because outside of my study was a closet that was made of cinder block and there was no trees around. So we we hunkered down right in the middle of that facility to watch and see what was going on.

But when we were on our way there, the siren was getting louder and louder and louder. And that was new to me. I didn't quite understand that. And I thought this tornado is chasing us.

And what I didn't realize is the siren's not hooked to the tornado. It's hooked to the pole that we were driving near. And as we got closer to the pole, the louder it got. That's how freaked out we were.

My family will freak me out like that. I'm supposed to be the calm one. They panic and get me fired up. And in the midst of that, in 2011, we had catastrophic storms in our county. Two tornadoes, 12 hours apart, crossed paths with each other, killing people, destroying homes. It was horrible.

[ 10 : 45 ] And FEMA came in, or as the old boy in the church called her, FEMA, came in. But when he broke his leg, he said he broke his FEMA. So I think he got mixed up. But anyway, but FEMA came in and said, if you can buy a storm shelter and we'll pay you back, it was either 75 or 80 percent of the money.

So we went into prayerful discussion of whether the government ever pays you back and bought a storm shelter, big concrete block made by a septic tank company. Basically, two septic tanks put on

top of each other with a big door inside of it. Basically what it was.

And we put it behind a building in the backyard. And I told my family, I said, I bought that building so y'all can go out there when the storm comes. Leave me in the house to die. I'd rather die in the house and be in that box with y'all. So that's...

But in 1936, Tupelo, Mississippi was wiped away. They didn't have sirens. An F-5 tornado came through and leveled 48 city blocks. Up to a thousand homes were destroyed and at least 216 people died. Among the survivors was a one-year-old boy named Elvis. Elvis Presley.

Now, what was the difference? An F-5 and no warning. Even when we bought that big old concrete block and put it in the backyard, they told us, we don't guarantee this against an F-5. They're different.

[12:28] Two-by-four will go through solid concrete and an F-5. I don't understand that. I'm just telling you what the salesman told me. I'm sure he was telling the truth. You can't even completely prepare for that tornado. But if you don't know it's coming, there's little you can do to prepare yourself and be saved.

And I want you to understand something. I prepared this message two weeks ago in preparation for last Sunday. Seven o'clock Sunday morning. God changed my tune last Sunday morning and I preached a different message. I had no idea when I put this image in this slideshow of what we would experience over the last few days. What North Carolina, looks a lot like that in some cases, would experience.

We had some warning. Not quite three feet of water coming into a valley. That didn't prepare us for that. I remember seeing 12 to 15 inches. But we had some warning. But Tupelo had no warning. Didn't know it was coming. And it so devastated that area and they became so familiar with it that it got their attention. Because tornadoes often go in the same places often. And it's went through tornado.

We lived 15 years in North Mississippi and Tupelo got hit hard at least twice in that amount of time. Interesting to see how that happens. Let me tell you something. The devil comes rolling through like a tornado and we don't know when. There's not a siren that goes off.

[14:10] But we can prepare for it. And the key is to always be ready. He's a prowler and he's a lurker and so he knows when to hit. He knows when you're on your game. He knows when you're not. He can come at you as a roaring lion, clawing as he knocks you off your feet. Or he can come as an angel of light, camouflaged as something good and seductively and luringly lead you away but with a venomous bite.

He'll come after you when you're tired. He'll come after you when you're depressed. He'll come after you when you're discouraged. He'll come after you when you're disgruntled.

He'll come after you when you're not feeling good. We don't have power yet. We live right here in the city. We don't have power. We've been picked out about five people that don't have power. Right there in our little area.

And I am thankful. I am thankful that I'm not experiencing what so many other people are experiencing. I am very thankful for that. But I'm just going to tell you, I heard that generator one too many times.

Yesterday morning. And it just got me. It just got me. And I began to feel myself just kind of sinking. This is getting old. And I realized the evil one just just wants to mess me up so I can mess other people up and not be on my game.

[15:45] It's what he does. He'll hit you. When things aren't right. When it ain't fair. He'll hit you. He carefully strategizes.

He customizes his plan of action against us. He aims at us at the right time and the right place and the right method. If you don't think you're being watched you don't need to worry about big brother. You need to worry about the evil one.

He keeps up with our weaknesses and our strengths. Sees us when we feel like we're too confident. Knows when we're on guard.

How do you combat that? How do you combat that? Well, you stay ready. You stay ready with a sense of urgency. You don't just put pieces of the armor on.

You put the whole armor on. Not just the helmet. Not just the mouthpiece. Not just the padded pants. You play a ball game you got to put it all on. When I was in high school we had a running back.

[16:43] Man, that guy could outrun anybody. If we could just get him to the corner nobody could beat him down the sidelines. We were braggadocious. We were 5-0. We were ruling the roost because that boy could run.

Nobody could catch him. He's a track star. He was little as he could be. You couldn't even see him. But man, he could move the ball. You could see the ball. As the season went on he got popped a few times and stopped running and we started losing.

So it kind of changed everything. But I remember one time he ran and he got tackled and his helmet broke. And the coach said, Renga! That's what they called me. Renga!

So I said, Well, I'm not a running back but I'm ready to serve. I said, Yes sir. He said, Give me your helmet. The boy can't go out there with half an outfit.

He's got to have the whole thing. I won that ball game that night. Put the whole armor on. We've got to stand completely, folks. We've got to stand victoriously.

[17:46] The scripture says, Having done all to stand. That means fully equipped. That means ready and carrying through. When the fourth quarter comes people raise up the four.

You know why? Because games are won or lost in the fourth quarter. You can blow it or you can win it in the fourth quarter. You've got to keep playing. And if you're in battle, you've got to keep fighting. John F. Kennedy, our 35th president, was a commissioned naval officer in World War II. And in August 1943, the patrol torpedo boat that he was in charge of, PT boat 109, that he commanded, was rammed and sunk by an enemy destroyer near the Japanese-held Solomon Islands.

And he and another officer swam from one enemy-occupied island to another looking for friendly islanders. They finally found some.

They got a message back to the U.S. forces. And those in that ship were saved. It was a heroic act. And Kennedy was known as a war hero because of it.

[18:58] And when they asked him afterwards, how did you do it? He said it was involuntary. They sank my boat. He had to. And I'm telling you folks, listen, child of God, this ain't an option.

To fail at this is spiritual treason. And there are no participation trophies. I'm sorry. 1 Corinthians 16, 13, 14 says this. Be watchful.

Stand firm in your faith. Act like men. Be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Listen, the thief comes when you least expect it.

So you need to stand firm in your faith. You have to trust God. You have to follow his lead. The Apostle Paul warned us, and I've read this passage before, and I'll read it again.

I think you ought to hang your hat on it. 1 Corinthians 10, 13, no temptation has overtaken you except what's common to man. You are not an exception to the rule.

[19:57] The devil plays the same games with all of us, quite honestly. God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but thank God. But with the temptation, he'll provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

God will step in if we'll turn to the Lord. This passage in 1 Corinthians 16, 13, 14 says, stand firm in your faith.

And then it says, act like men. And sadly, we live in a day when I need to explain what that means. The feminization of America requires me to be clear, and I'll probably upset someone.

I'm sorry, but I'm going to tell the truth. When Scripture says, act like men, it means act like someone who will protect what's precious to him.

When it says act like men, it means act like somebody who will be courageous when the enemy comes, somebody who will be valiant, somebody who will stand their ground. And then it goes on in the next phrase to say, be strong.

[21:03] Don't quit. We have a lot of males today that quit. They quit on their family. They quit standing for what is right. They quit living morally.

They quit having a zeal for the Lord. And it's a sad sight to see, to see somebody who walked with the Lord faithfully and just tapered off over time and now is distant from the Lord and don't even recognize it.

I meet with men on Tuesday mornings, every Tuesday morning at 6 a.m. and at 9 a.m. to basically say, don't quit. Men, don't quit.

Don't quit. You get tired, I'm tired too, but don't quit. Ralph Waldo Emerson says this, the hero is no braver than an ordinary man.

He's just brave five minutes longer. You stand until the fight's done. You don't back up. Faithful to the end from this day forward.

[ 22 : 00 ] Because I want you to remember, ladies and gentlemen, you're not fighting for victory. You're fighting from victory. Christ has already won. And because he's won, we can claim that.

He has, 1 John 4, verse 4 says, he who is in you is greater than he who's in the world. And because he's won, thank God, your faith in him will lead us to victory.

We're to stand victoriously. Lastly, we're to stand gloriously. How do you stand? You put the whole armor on. What a powerful statement that armor is. It's like a military man dressed in dress blues, but yet still ready for battle.

The armor reeks of power. The Apostle Paul is who penned these words, and he's intimately aware of the Roman army. He was chained to a Roman guard in prison.

He knows what they wear. He knows that they represent, at the time, the greatest army of the world. He knows that they dominated the known world for a time. Their reputation went before them.

[ 23 : 03 ] Roman soldiers had the respect not only of their own citizens, they had the respect of the rest of the world. Their military army was not wasteful. It was not inconsistent. It didn't waver.

The authority of all the empire was represented by the armor of the Roman soldier. But folks, we're not talking about the power of the Roman army in our situation.

We're not talking about the prestige of the Roman army in our situation. We're not talking about the reputation of the Roman army in our situation. We are, I am telling us to stand in the strength of the strongest army in the known world for a season.

We're talking about putting on the full armor of God. You want to stand in the might of God? You want to stand victorious for the Lord? You want the power of God working through your lives to win the daily battles, to deal with the daily struggle, to fight all hell when temptation hits, when difficulty comes, when worldliness seeps in?

If we do that, then we're to put on not the mighty armor of Rome, but the glorious, almighty, ever victorious armor of a living Lord who came and lived and died on a cruel cross and rose again so that we could stand gloriously in the midst of spiritual battles we face.

[ 24 : 25 ] I'm telling you we ought to gloriously stand for the Lord. 1 Peter 5, 9 through 11, I've leaned on a lot the last few weeks. I've shared it a lot and I don't apologize for that.

Resist Him. Firm in your faith and after you've suffered a little while the God of all grace who's called you to His eternal glory in Christ, listen to what He'll do for you.

with Himself restore, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever.

Amen. How do we stand victorious? Only in Christ. And when we turn that over to the Lord, whatever it is, folks, I'm not making light of it.

I know in your life it may be very serious, it may be very weighty, it may be very difficult to deal with. There are beat down, shackled people in this room.

[ 25 : 29 ] I don't know who you are, but I know how the evil one is. And I'm telling you, whatever that is, turn that over to the Lord and we win.

Revelation 12, 11 says that we'll conquer Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of the testimony. Stand firm in the Lord. Not just in the major battles, not just when all is on the line, not just when you feel an added weight.

Stand firm in the Lord daily. Stand firm in the Lord right now. Stand firm when you leave this place. Stand firm when you feel like you're alone.

Stand firm when Monday hits you right in the face. Stand firm when your pet sin that you've been nursing creeps back in. Stand for the Lord.

2 Corinthians 2 verse 15 through 17 says this. So then brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us either by our spoken word or by our letter.

[ 26 : 39 ] In other words, the word of God. Now may our Lord Jesus himself and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace comfort your hearts and establish in every good work and word.

May God lead us and may we stand with Christ and be victorious gloriously not for our honor but for his honor.

With every head bowed and every eye closed, I want to ask you today, has there ever been a time in your life when you've surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. He's asking to forgive you of your sins and to come into your life and to change you and you've committed your life to Christ. Seven people we baptized this morning have all committed their life to Christ. Surrender to the Lord. That's the only way you're going to have strength to fight the battles in which you do. The devil will try his best to deceive you to keep you from making a commitment to Christ. You can't live up to it. Well, he's right. You can't live up to it but thank God by the blood of the Lamb he gives us the strength to. You surrender your life to the Lord today and he'll give you victory in your life.

[ 27 : 56 ] Maybe you're here and you have done that and you never acknowledge the Lord through baptism. Every time we baptize people it leads somebody else to do the same. Jesus by his commission and by his example told us that we're to proclaim our faith through baptism.

It's a first step of obedience for a believer. If you've never been baptized you come. I'll talk to you about that we'll line that up. Maybe God's leading you to First Baptist Church. God's doing a wonderful work in our church and I thank God for that.

God's drawing you I encourage you to just respond. I'll guide you in that process. Maybe you're here and you're just shackled you're just burdened. You just got stuff going on. You're having trouble standing.

I want you to know we're here today to encourage you to call upon the Lord and let him hold you up. We can be victorious. We can get through this and I encourage you to follow the Lord Jesus.

Do exactly what he's told you to do. I don't know what God's speaking to you about but I encourage you to simply be obedient and do exactly what he tells you to do.

[ 29 : 08 ] Nothing more or nothing less and he'll be honored and he'll be pleased and he'll give you the strength to do exactly what he's told you to do. Lord Jesus I love you and I thank you for these dear people.

I ask that you'll move and you'll work right now and help us to follow your lead in everything that you tell us to. Give us a courage that's beyond ourselves dear God. Be clear to us in what you'd have us to do and give us the strength to do it Father I pray in Jesus precious name.

Amen. Stand together.