

BE STRONG & DO IT!

Ephesians 6.11b-13: In spiritual warfare we must stand firm and fulfill the mission!

Theme: Be strong and do it—know your enemy; know your objectives; be strong and fulfill the Mission!

As I spent some time reading and studying our text for the message this morning, I ran across a reference that struck a chord with me: 1Chronicles 28.10.

- David charged his son, Solomon, to “be strong, and do it”!
- (1Chron 28.3, 6) He was charging Solomon with the work of building the Temple, the House of God among men.
- And I was reminded of the charge we have received to do much the same thing today, spiritually...
 - ✓ (1Cor 3.10-15) We are called to build *this* house (us, the Temple) of God among men today by *being disciples*—by growing in Christ and Christ-likeness.
 - ✓ (Eph 4.11-12, 16) We are also called to build the house (the Temple) of God among men today by *making disciples*—by ministering to others through evangelism and edification.
- (1Cor 16.13) And God, our Father, has charged us to *be strong, and do it!*
 - ✓ God has charged us to *stand fast* (stand firm!), and that requires that we... be strong... and do it!
 - ✓ There will be times when we are tired, weary, and worn out in the fight. So: Be strong, and do it!

This morning, as we continue our study on spiritual warfare, I want to talk about two essential elements to survival in our daily battles—two elements that are ultimately essential to our fulfilling of the Mission.

1. We must know our enemy (who he is and what he does).
2. We must know our objectives (both defensive and offensive).

I. (Eph 6.11b-12) Know Your Enemy

- We need to understand that our enemy is highly organized and very motivated...

A. Our Enemy: Who is he and what is he like?

1. The devil: The leader of our enemy is, obviously, the devil.

a) Our fight is never with the devil himself, but rather with the demons organized under his leadership. However, by knowing a little bit about the leader, we can learn a lot about his tactics through his troops (the demons mentioned later in verse 12).

b) The term *devil* is a title, and it is a transliteration of the Greek word *diabolos*.

(1) The same word is translated as *false accuser* in 2Timothy 3.3 and Titus 2.3, and as *slanderer* in 1Timothy 3.11.

(2) That is the devil—that is what he does! Know your enemy!

c) The tactics of the devil and his objectives.

(1) The devil is the one who will *accuse* you and *slander* you. Why...? What does he hope to gain from his slanderous accusations?

(a) He wants you to *quit*, so he *accuses* you in order to *demotivate* you.

(b) He wants to *disqualify* you, so he *slanders* you.

(c) He wants you *out* of the fight, *out* of the mission, sitting on the sidelines.

(2) (Rev 12.10) The devil accuses us day and night... he never lets up.

- (3) What is most demoralizing about the devil's accusations is that they are usually... *true*.
- (a) (Zech 3.1-3) Joshua the priest gives us a vivid picture of the tactics of the devil...
- i) We have all done wicked things. We all have hearts as dirty and vile as the worst inmate in any prison.
 - ii) And even our “good and righteous deeds” are as filthy rags before the Lord because most, if not all, of them were done with selfish, ungodly motives.
 - iii) The devil doesn't have to work very hard to find plenty of filth to accuse us of.
 - iv) And what is the result of his accusations...?
 - **He says:** You're selfish. You're covetous (never satisfied, and look how much you have). You're a sex pervert. You're a liar. You're lazy. You're a failure. You yell at your children (if you really loved them, you wouldn't do that). You don't evangelize enough (and you know it; that's why you feel guilty). You don't read your Bible like you should. You don't pray enough.
 - Is that true? Sure it is. How does that make you feel? You are useless to a holy God! How could (how would!) God ever use you!? Just forget it. Quit!

(b) (Zech 3.4-5) But... *Christ* is our righteousness!

- i) (Isa 61.10) In our salvation, God has removed *our* filthy garments, and He has clothed us with *Christ's* righteousness!
- ii) But, do you see what your enemy is like (accuser!) and what he does (accuses!)?

d) The devil is our enemy: He is the accuser of the brethren, the slanderer.

- (1) He will accuse you of *your* faults, *your* failures, *your* weaknesses, *your* shortcomings, *your* sins, *your* filth... He will simply point to *you*.
- (2) You need to know your enemy, so you can identify his attacks!
- (a) Because if you do not, then sooner or later his accusations will wear you out... and you will quit. Why? Because they are *true* and *you know it*.
 - (b) So set your eyes upon Jesus! Stop looking at *yourself* and *your* failures. Jesus Christ is righteous and He took *your* place... so you can take His!
 - i) If we do not do that, then the devil and his accusations will eventually wear us out.
 - ii) And we will quit: “*I'm not good enough... How could (how would!) God ever use someone like me?*” And we just check out.
 - iii) That's the devil! Know your enemy! So you can identify his attacks.
- (3) Also know this: Satan has highly organized his troops to carry out his plans...

2. Principalities: Demons in Charge of Nations

- a) Think of a “principality” as a “prince” in charge of a “municipality” (nation, kingdom).
- b) These demons are the spiritual “princes” over nations and kingdoms.
 - (1) (Dan 10.1-3) Daniel had been praying for three weeks.
 - (2) (Dan 10.12) God sent a messenger (probably the angel Gabriel) to answer his prayer.
 - (3) (Dan 10.13) But, it took that messenger three weeks to get there because the *principality* over Persia withstood him.
 - (4) (Dan 10.20-21) And the messenger knew he had to face that *principality* again, along with the *principality* of Grecia, in order to return.
- c) Principalities are demons given charge over entire kingdoms, nations, or people groups. And under them (under their authority) are the “powers”...

3. Powers: Demons in Charge of Specific Regions within Nations

- a) (Rom 13.1-3) The same word (*powers*) is used to refer to the civil authorities that govern a specific jurisdiction within a kingdom or a nation.
- b) Satan has placed principalities over nations, and under each principality there are powers that carry out the devil's plans in specific regions within those nations.
- c) These powers (the governors of jurisdictions) have “rulers” working under them...

4. Rulers: Demons in Charge of Keeping the Subjects in Darkness

- a) These demons/devils are called the “rulers *of the darkness of this world.*”
- b) (2Cor 4.3-6) These *rulers* appears to be demons that are in charge of the more personal work among us—the work of keeping individual sinners in darkness (blinded, lost, enslaved to sin).
- c) (Eph 2.1-2) It appears that the god of this world, the devil, uses these *rulers of darkness* to work in the lives of individuals to make sure they walk according to his wishes.
- d) (Eph 5.8) And that is why we *were* darkness before Christ saved us: We followed the *rulers* of the darkness of this world as they worked in our lives *personally*, or through the *flesh*, or through the *world system* around us.

5. Spiritual Wickedness in High Places: The “Step-and-Fetch-It Boys” of the Enemy

- a) “Spiritual” speaks of their nature: They are spiritual beings, not physical (they're fallen angels).
- b) “Wickedness” speaks of their disposition: They are evil.
- c) “High Places” speaks of their territory: They work in places “above” the earth (i.e., in the heavenlies, in the spirit world).
- d) From that description, we can understand that these demons are the “step-and-fetch-it boys” of the devil's angels.
 - (1) There is a demon for every task that needs to be done in Satan's campaign against God.
 - (2) Yes, there is a demon behind every bush (and most probably more than one). They are called “spiritual wickedness in high places.”

6. (Eph 6.11-12) Our enemy: Who is he and what is he like?

- a) We need to understand that our enemy is highly organized (it begins with the devil—the accuser of the brethren—and spreads out into a highly organized hierarchy of demons).
- b) But, we also need to understand also that our enemy is very motivated in his operations...

B. Our Enemy's Tactic: What does he do and how does he do it?

1. We have already seen, through the title given him (“devil”), that our enemy, from the top down, is an accuser and a slanderer.

- a) The devil and his demons will accuse us in order to *demotivate* and *discourage* us because the soldier that is *demoralized* has *no fight left in him.*
- b) But we also need to be mindful of what God has told us about *how* Satan and his demons will go about reaching this objective of getting us out of the fight—out of the Mission...

2. Wiles: Satan's main tactic to get us *out* of the fight to fulfill the mission centers around his *wiles*.

- a) The term *wiles* refers to a “trick” meant to *fool* or *trap* or *deceive* or *lure* another.
 - (1) We always joke about “feminine wiles” that women use to deceive men and lure them into the trap of marriage (that's joke; truth: wiles to lead them into adultery or fornication).
 - (2) Satan's main tactic in battle is not a frontal attack—it is not brute force. He is the deceiver who will come at you from where you least expect it; and he will trick you and deceive you in order to trap you... and get you side-tracked... *out* of the war.

- b) Satan and his demons will most always appear as “angels of light” (2Cor 11.14), looking all nice and clean, respectable and Christian.
- c) And yet, through their wiles (deceit meant to lure and trap) they will always be casting doubt on the certainty of what God has told us to do:
 - (1) He wants you side-tracked. He wants you to stop fighting to accomplish the Mission. So, he will cast doubt on what God told you to do and how God told you to do it.
 - (2) Main Strategy: (Gen 3.1) “*Yea, hath God said...? Did God really say that...? Is that what God really meant...? Maybe if God told you personally through a prompting or dream or vision, then you would be sure...?*” Wiles! It is subtle! It is a trap!

3. **Warfare:** Do you think you are smart enough or clever enough to beat the devil at this game?

- a) He took Adam and Eve down with a piece of fruit (and they were perfect and used 100% of their brain). He took David down with pornography (and David was a man after God's own heart). He took Solomon down with women (and Solomon was the wisest man on earth).
- b) How can you hope to stand against the wiles of the enemy (the subtle trickery and deceit of the devil to get you sidelined, out of the fight, out of the battle, out of the mission)?
 - Whether it's his accusations (which are usually true!) or his subtle casting of doubts.
- c) **Don't miss this!** The day you step away from the authority and sufficiency of Scripture alone, is the day you have fallen for the wiles of the devil. He got you! And you are out!
 - (1) (Mat 4.4, 7, 10) Jesus Christ shows us how to stand firm against the wiles (accusations and deceit) of the devil—how to resist the enemy: “***It is written...***”
 - (2) Jesus did not say “It was written”: If you do not have the written Word of God (Scripture), then you will be deceived. You will fall prey to the enemy. It is only a matter of time.
 - (3) If you are resting on “it was written” (in the originals, etc.), then you have no certainty of the words of truth and you must rely upon some other authority outside of Scripture.
 - (4) And because of that, you cannot stand firm because you will always have doubt (does it really say that... or does it maybe say something else... yea, hath God said...?).

C. Know Your Enemy (who he is, what he does, and how he does it).

- 1. If you do not know your enemy, you will find yourself beaten and defeated very quickly.
- 2. And God has called us all to stand firm against this enemy—his wiles and his accusations.
 - a) That requires that the we **know him** (we need to be able to identify him and his attacks).
 - b) And then to stand firm in the attack, we need to **know our objectives** in this ware (because in the heat of battle, if you lose sight of the objectives, you will be defeated)...

II. (Eph 6.11, 13) Know Your Objectives

A. There are two main objectives in our warfare.

- 1. One of these two objectives is mentioned in our passage (Eph 4.11-13): “Stand against,” which is our defensive objective.
- 2. However, it is very important to understand that God has also given us an objective to reach (to go on the offensive).
 - a) We need to touch on this objective first (our ultimate objective in this spiritual warfare).
 - b) Because it is not only about defense (holding ground). God expects us to advance.

B. Our Ultimate Objective: (Eph 6.18-20) Offense! Advance the Cause of Christ!

1. Our ultimate objective in the Christian Life (in our spiritual warfare) is our Mission: To seek and save the lost (search and rescue).
2. That was Christ's mission when He came to this earth the first time.

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. [Luke 19.10]
3. That is Christ's mission today through the work of His Spirit throughout the world.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. [John 16.7-11]

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. [John 12.32]
4. And that is *our* Mission (our ultimate objective) that we should never lose sight of!

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. [John 20.21]

 - a) Christ has sent us, His followers, out with the same Mission the Father gave Him.
 - b) We are called to *go* and *make disciples* (to seek and save the lost).
5. (Php 1.12-18) And we make disciples—we advance the cause of Christ—in this world principally through *preaching*.
6. (Eph 6.18-20) And to that end Paul asked for prayer: To fulfill the Mission.
 - a) We should *never* lose sight of our ultimate objective.
 - b) We should *never* quit going on the offensive: Preaching the Gospel (God's Word) to the lost for their salvation.
7. But... there are days (Eph 6.13: “the evil day”), and even seasons in life, when the opposition is so much that we cannot advance the cause of Christ. What are we to do then...?

C. Our Under-Fire Objective: Defense! Stand firm!

1. (Eph 6.11) We are called and expected to *stand against* the wiles of the devil.
2. (Eph 6.13a) We are called and expected to *withstand* the attacks of the enemy in the day of opposition.
3. (Eph 6.13b) And when the opposition hits its peak, and we think there is nothing we can do... when we are ready to just *quit*... after we've done everything in our power that we know to do... we are called and expected to *stand*.
 - a) We are *never* to quit.
 - Even if all we can do is stand (just maintain; “survival mode”), we are never to quit.
 - b) We are *never* to give back ground we have taken.
 - (1) Victory over sin is ground taken (victory over alcohol, pornography, fear in evangelism).
 - (2) Never give that ground back to the enemy no matter how heated the battle may get.
 - c) (v11) If you do what God says, then you *will be able* to stand.
 - (1) So: (v10) ***Be strong (in the Lord) and do it!***
 - (2) (Jam 4.7) If we will stand, God has promised us that the opposition will eventually let up, and will be able to advance toward our ultimate objective again.

Conclusion:

There will always be opposition in our Mission to advance the cause of Christ in this world.

- We will find ourselves tired (weary in well doing). We will find ourselves hurt in battle.
- That should not surprise us, nor should that deter us. God told us that we live in the midst of a raging spiritual battle with an enemy who is highly organized and very motivated.
- And this war has an objective—we have a mission to accomplish: Seek and save the lost (Eph 6.18-20).

Do not let the opposition of the enemy (not his accusations, nor his wiles) deter you from that Mission.

- God promised that if we resist the devil, he *will* flee from us... eventually (but we have to stand, and stand firm). But that's not easy—it's not fun or comfortable or entertaining.
- And that is why Paul tells us (like David told Solomon): (1Cor 16.13) Quit yourselves like men, be strong... and do it! Build the house! Edify the Temple! Fight the good fight! Preach the Gospel!

Because... most of God's people today don't care about the Mission.

- Take a few minutes and look over the poster “Who Cares...?”
<http://www.ldmers.org/LDMers/Mauricio/art/whocares.htm>
- The people on the dock, not involved in rescuing the perishing, are those who *quit*. They *failed* to stand fast. They were *deceived* by the wiles of the devil. They are *out* of the warfare.
- *They are what defeat looks like in this spiritual warfare.*

Now is not the time to lose hope. Now is not the time to quit.

- Now (at the end of the Church Age) is the time to be strong and do it!
- Now (in our days of apostasy and idolatry among God's people) is the time to stand firm and fulfill the Mission through the preaching of the Gospel.
 - ✓ (Dan 11.32) Now is the time to be strong and do some exploits for our God!
 - ✓ Preach the Word... in season and out of season. Preach the Gospel to every creature. Be strong. Do it.