

A Preparation for battle (Ephesians 6:10)

❖ Call to battle.

- When an ancient army prepared to go to the battlefield, the general would stand at the front and rally his men to embolden them for the impending battle (1 Samuel 4:9).
- But when God's people faced an army, the rallying cry included a different aspect. The soldiers' courage was not based on their own strength but on the fact that God fought for them (Deuteronomy 20:2-4; 2 Chronicles 32:6-8).
- Aware of the spiritual battle we are immersed in, Paul encourages us to strengthen ourselves "in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).
- We can only overcome enemies much more powerful than us by relying on Christ and putting on His armor.

❖ Forces for victory.

- The conflict surrounding us is not a war against us as simple soldiers on one side or the other but a war between God and Satan.
- While Satan focuses on attacking the church, each member is supported and strengthened by the three persons of the Trinity:
 - (1) Jesus: He provides us with the power of His might (6:10)
 - (2) The Father: He provides us with His armor (6:11)
 - (3) The Holy Spirit: He provides us with the weapon to attack (6:17) and the battle plan (6:18)
- Who do you think will be the victor in our battles against the prince of evil?

B The battle (Ephesians 6:11, 13)

❖ The cosmic conflict.

- Using clear military language, Paul urges us to put on "the armor of light" (Romans 13:11), "with the breastplate of righteousness and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:8). But he doesn't speak of a physical confrontation (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).
- How do we participate in this cosmic conflict "in heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12)?
 - (1) Out of love, God gives us life and enlists us in His army (Ephesians 2:4-6)
 - (2) He uses us as ambassadors to the enemy powers (Ephesians 3:10)
 - (3) He strengthens us with power (Ephesians 3:16)
 - (4) He provides gifts to equip us (Ephesians 4:7, 12)
 - (5) He clothes us in righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24)
 - (6) He gives us His armor to withstand the battle (Ephesians 6:13)

❖ Standing firm.

- Battles in ancient times unfolded in three phases: (1) Advancing toward the enemy; (2) Standing firm and defending the position in hand-to-hand combat; (3) Advancing and forcing the enemy to retreat.
- The decisive point that marked victory was the second phase. If they could stand firm in their position, they could force their enemy to retreat. Therefore, Paul invites us to "stand firm against the schemes of the devil," to "resist in the evil day," and, having pushed back the enemy, to continue standing firm (Ephesians 6:10, 13).
- Unity also plays a significant role in achieving victory. We are called to present a united front against the enemy's power (Philippians 1:27).

C The enemy (Ephesians 6:12)

❖ Principalities and powers.

- Often, we make the mistake of misidentifying the enemy. We think the enemy is the boss threatening to fire us if we don't work on Sabbath, or the sibling who spoke hurtful words.
- The true enemy is hidden behind, imperceptible to us. The "powers that dominate this world of darkness" are "evil spiritual forces" (6:12 NIV). Our enemy is Satan and his angels. Let's not underestimate them; they are stronger than us.
- Therefore, God urges us to put on His armor, fight with His strength, and achieve victory. With this equipment, we cannot fail. Victory is assured (Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 15:24).