

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Ephesians 6:10-17**.
- B. From Roy H. Enoch (9-11-94).
- C. Paul has given many instructions and admonitions on Xian living in the previous chapter and the first part of this one.
 - 1. Be imitators of God (5:1); Walk in love (5:2); Forsake uncleanness (5:3-7).
 - 2. Have no fellowship w/the works of darkness, but expose them (5:8-14).
 - 3. Look carefully how you walk, redeeming the time (5:15-20).
 - 4. Husbands give yourselves for your wives, and wives be in subjection (5:20-33).
 - 5. Children, obey your parents and honor them (6:1-4).
 - 6. Servants, obey your masters and Masters, deal kindly w/your servants (6:5-9).
- D. Then Paul says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." See 6:10.
 - 1. He uses the analogy of warfare in the first century.
 - 2. But the Xian is fighting spiritual foes in high places.
 - 3. Our protection is the spiritual armor of preparation and service to God.
 - 4. Our objectives are a spiritual country and a spiritual home.
- E. In this lesson we want to study what Paul says about how to be strong in the Lord.

I. PAUL TELLS US WHY WE NEED TO BE STRONG.

- A. We are in a battle for our lives against wickedness.
 - 1. But some do not want the church to fight at all for anything.
 - 2. Do we consider ourselves "regular army," "reserves," or "honorary?"
 - 3. Do we only "play Xian," and want it to be a fun-game at our convenience, or is it a commitment for which we are willing to give our life in service and willing to die?
- B. Paul uses clear bold language to describe our dangers (6:11).
 - 1. If the devil had a red suit, pointed ears and tail, he would be easier to identify.
 - 2. Even a physical enemy is easier to confront than spiritual wickedness (6:12).
 - 3. These spiritual classifications need examination.
 - a. *Principalities* is translated "power," "principle," or "rule."
 - b. *Powers* refers to "mastery," "potentate," or "authority."
 - c. *Ruler of darkness* is a world-ruler, and also a name for Satan.
 - d. *Spiritual wickedness in heavenly places* seems to refer to religious error and to false organized religions.
- C. We need great spiritual strength to keep from giving in to the worldliness that confronts us.

II. PAUL DESCRIBES HOW WE CAN BE STRONG SPIRITUALLY.

- A. There are several essentials to proper growth and strength:
Proper food (1Pet. 2:2) and exercise (Heb. 5:12-14) is needed. See 1Cor. 12:25-26.
- B. To be strong in battle, we must have proper equipment and have the training to use it (6:11):
 - 1. Even with the best equipment, and skills, one is defenseless unless there is a will and commitment to fight.
 - 2. Soldiers must believe that the cause is worth fighting for.
 - 3. Christians who love the world, or their own pleasure more than the Lord, will not fight.

III. PAUL DESCRIBES THE XIAN ARMOR WHICH PROTECTS US.

- A. He first admonishes us to take "the WHOLE armor of God" (6:13).
We cannot succeed with only part of it. Any missing part will leave us vulnerable.

- B. Every part of the armor is based on the word of God.
1. "...*having girded your waist w/truth...*" (6:14).
 - a. The girdle kept the loose robes on the body: for leisure, a decorative belt held it loosely about the chest for comfort.
 - b. For strenuous activity such as work or battle, it was a leather belt at the waist to let the long robes be gathered and tucked in for mobility and it served as a equipment belt for sword and other weapons.
 - c. The Xian's robe is controlled by the truth of God's word that controls him in work, battle, and leisure.
 2. "...*having put on the breastplate of righteousness...*" (6:14).
 - a. The breastplate covers the chest protecting the lungs, heart and other vitals.
 - b. It is described as "righteousness," and a righteous life is marvelous protection against the devil.
 - c. Righteousness has as its basis, the word of God (Psa. 119:172).
 - d. Righteousness is doing what God says.
 3. "...*and having shod your feet w/the preparation of the gospel of peace...*" (6:15).
 - a. Protection for the feet is not as important w/smooth ground, and in grass and weeds as in rocky mountainous terrain w/thorns and thistles.
 - b. Spiritually, we are very vulnerable if we do not have the preparation of the gospel in our lives.
 - c. We must have a knowledge of the truth and a commitment to live by it that we will keep to death.
 4. "...*above all, taking the shield of faith w/which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*" (6:16).
 - a. A shield protects us from attacks.
 - b. Our faith in God causes us to trust Him even when the world ridicules and contradicts God's word.
 - c. Jesus used the Scriptures to repel the temptations of Satan in the wilderness after His baptism (Mt. 4:1-11).
 - d. Faith must be based on God's word, not in man's wisdom (Rom. 10:17).
 5. "*And take the helmet of salvation,...*" (6:17).
 - a. A helmet protects the head, one of the more vulnerable parts of the body.
 - b. There is no salvation apart from the word of God (2Tim. 3:15).
 - c. Many good moral people try to do what is right without the protection of a helmet, and they fall short.
 6. "...*and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God...*" (6:17).
 - a. I have heard some suggest that this is the only part of the equipment that represents God's word, but as we have shown, every part is based on God's word.
 - b. This is not the only time that God's word is pictured as a sword (Heb. 4:12).

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. We can only be strong in the Lord.
- B. Our strength in the Lord depends on our use of the armor of God.
- C. We need the armor because the danger is great.
- D. If you are not in the Fight for the Lord, you are in the world.
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring-Xians.