

# Mystery and Clarity//“The Mystery of the Unseen World”//Ephesians 6:10–13

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How’s everybody... I’m going to discuss something that might be a little difficult for some of you to get your minds around, so let me give you a little context for it...

Up until the time of **Louis Pasteur** people believed in something we now call “spontaneous generation,” and that is that living organisms could just pop up out of nowhere... and so a disease would pop up and doctors would assume it was genetic, they had too much blood in their body, maybe even the hand of God... Louis Pasteur demonstrated that spontaneous generation in the natural world was impossible... and that all life came from other life... which meant that when someone contracted a disease it didn’t just happen... **it had to be caused** by little tiny living organisms called microbes or germs that we can’t see with our eyes...

Later when we developed powerful enough microscopes we figured out those little microbes are *everywhere*. You’re breathing in 1000’s of them, right now... I read somewhere that at any given moment we have over **20 million of these little living microbes on your skin** (crawling, eating, hooking up and breeding).

**Purell.** This is our answer for that, now, right? (\$100)

- Some of you, this is more important to you than your wallet.
- When we take our kids overseas we’re going to get these so our kids can hook them on their belts so V and I can just nod...

**Here’s the thing:** People in the medical community 150 years ago didn’t buy this new microbe theory, at first... because they couldn’t see any of these things. And they were like, **“You’re trying to tell us**

**that these life-threatening sicknesses that we observe come from things we can’t observe?”**

- In fact, about 15 years before Pasteur had perfected his theories there was a guy named Ignaz Semmelweis who had had the same idea... doctors in that day would frequently go between dealing with diseased patients or even from dealing with the corpse of a dead person to deliver a baby... all these women were dying... this guy pleaded with them... “Just wash your hands!”
- But nobody would really listen to him, because his whole theory was built on something they couldn’t see... **And they had a hard time believing that things that they could see could be caused by things they couldn’t see.** Today, can see all those things through a microscope. But during that time they couldn’t.

Paul ends the book of Ephesians by reminding the Ephesians that, on a totally different plane, there is an unseen world that just as radically affects the world they live in... He tells them:

**<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

- Now, this is a confusing verse, because Paul certainly wrestled against actual flesh and blood.
  - He was **beaten** 4x by flesh and blood;
  - **criticized** by flesh and blood;
  - **imprisoned** by flesh and blood;
  - he was **abandoned** by flesh and blood friends.
- So, he wrestled against flesh and blood, but what he’s saying is that he realizes that he doesn’t wrestle *only* against flesh and blood...
- Behind that world of flesh and blood Paul recognized the presence of a powerful and active spirit world... *cosmic powers*

*of darkness; spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (or, spiritual forces of unbelievable power.)*

- In the oppressive governments; in the dysfunctional relationships; in his bouts with loneliness and depression and even sickness and in his struggle with pride and temptation there was something larger and more powerful at work... a world you can't see with your eyes.

**C. S. Lewis said in his book *Screwtape Letters* that when it comes to devils and demons there are 2 equally wrong and equally damaging errors. He said, "One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to have an unhealthy interest in them."**

Those are the 2 errors I am going to try and correct: **(2 errors people make about the spirit world)**

- *(I) Failing to recognize the spirit world is there*
- *(II) Engaging the spirit world wrongly*

### **I. Failing to recognize the spirit world is there**

Now, the Ephesians, to whom Paul is writing... had no trouble believing in the demons... The Ephesians were a very superstitious people...

- Remember, when we started this series on Ephesians, I walked you through Acts 19 where Paul enters Ephesus and one of the things he does is cast out demons... and there in Ephesus is a local ghostbusters squad called 'the 7 sons of Sceva,' and they think that this is great... so they start going up to demons and saying, "*I command you to come out by the name of Jesus whom Paul preaches.*"
  - So, in one of the greatest stories of Acts, one of the demons responds to them, 19:15, "Uhh... Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And then vs. 16 says the evil spirit "leapt on them and *mastered* them so that they fled out both naked and wounded."
  - And I asked you if it was really necessary for the author to point out: naked *and* wounded, because if you're in a fight

where you get the clothes beat off of you, you are not just wounded physically, you're wounded emotionally, spiritually, psychologically—in just about every possible way. (Someone beats the pants off of you, that's a *soul* wound.)

- So they were very aware of the spirit world
  - *(In fact, I was wondering if they had Christian bookstores in Ephesus that sold cheesy things after that like Jesus belt buckles that say, "These pants held up by the Holy Spirit.")*

Our culture has the opposite error... we tend to think that educated people don't believe in the demonic. They don't show up in our microscopes... we have microscopes that see down to the electrons...and they are not there... so they can't be real."

**So let me tell you why I do; both of them are here in this passage: (2 reasons I have become convinced the spirit world is real:)**

- (1) There is no question as the Bible presents them as real.** *This is especially true in the life of Jesus. Jesus spent his whole ministry fighting demons. If they are not real he is reduced to a buffoon or at best a comic book figure. I trust that Jesus understands all the realities of the universe better than I do...*
- If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and reveals truth you don't really have the option to not believe in an active and vibrant spirit world.
  - Faith is accepting what I cannot understand based on what I can understand... so if you understand that Jesus is God, you can accept what he says about a world you can't see.

2<sup>nd</sup> reason I believe the spirit world is real:

- (2) We can see the effects of the demonic world in our world.**
- Just like people in the 1850's could see the effects of disease before they could see the actual germs.
  - How so?

- Look at the 2 names Satan is called in this passage (vs. 11) a “schemer” and vs. 12 a “ruler.”
- “Schemer” (v. 11) means that his role is to deceive... comes up with schemes of deception.
  - What scheme is he up to? Well, you have to start with where he comes from. **Isaiah 14:12–14** describes the fall of Satan... highest angels, some believe the worship leader of heaven... and Isaiah gives you the speech Satan made when he rebelled before God: “I will ascend to heaven... I will set my throne on high... I will make myself like the most High.”
  - 5 times in these verses Satan says “I will.” I will because I know better than God; I will because I want to be the point; I want to be in charge... I will do what I want to do it because I want to be God.”
  - Sin is the “I” problem...
  - That is Satan’s heart...And that is his scheme... to convince others to follow that same path. To repeat, after him, “My will be done” rather than “God’s will be done.” Or, in the words of Frank Sinatra, “I did it my way.” (Believe me, that’s not a song you want to be humming on judgment day.
  - He is scheming to get people to do do what he did.
  - I went through the NT and tried to pull out most of the places where it describes how Satan goes about that. In addition to the possessions you see in the Gospels...:
    - Jesus told us in John 8:44 that the devil is the father of lies.
    - 1 John 3:10 calls him the father of hatred and murder
    - 1 Timothy 4:1 says he spins out false doctrines and corrupts truth
    - 2 Cor. 11:14-15, says that he imitates religious authorities, even giving them the ability to imitate signs and wonders, 2 Thess 2:9.
- In the Gospels we see him taking over people’s bodies to the point that he drives them insane
- Genesis 3:1–7 shows us that the devil plants doubts in people’s minds about the word of God, makes them forget about death, and puffs them up with a sense of self-sufficiency.
- 1 Cor 7:5 tells us that he tempts the saints, specifically, with illicit sex (cf. 1 Tim. 5:15)
- 2 Cor. 2:11 tells us that he turns unresolved anger into bitterness in the hearts God’s people
- 1 Thess. 2:18 tells us he puts obstacles in the way of God’s missionaries
- Romans 16:17–20 tells us he sows discord & division over doctrine and leadership among God’s people
- In Matthew 4 we see he tempts us with power and makes us question God’s love for us and our identity in Him
- 2 Corinthians 4:4, he blinds the mind of unbelievers
- Ephesians 2:2, he keeps unbelievers attracted to their sins and even ensnares them so that they get addicted to them (2 Tim 2:26)
- 1 Thess. 3:5, he attacks faith wherever he finds it (cf 2 Cor. 11:3)
- 1 Tim 3:6 He puffs Christian leaders up with pride so they will fall
- 2 Tim. 2:24-26 He brings to the minds of unbelievers the pride and other faults of

Christian leaders so they won't take the Gospel seriously

- **He is a schemer!** And I would say you can probably see the effects of these things in your own life... That's what is behind your confusion, temptations and depression... and I certainly can in mine. Some of you, this is right where you are right now... and I plead with you, just because you can't see it, don't dismiss it as just not being there...
- **Vs. 12: "Ruler" (v 12)**, "authority," "spiritual forces" means that he controls many of the world systems.
  - There is a question among theologians as to whether or not Paul in vs. 12, when he says, "rulers, and powers and authorities" is referring to actual governmental leaders like Caesar or if he is referring to some other unseen spirit-realm governmental structure. The answer? Both. A lot of commentators, myself among them, think that Paul is deliberately ambiguous.
  - It means that Satan is thoroughly at work and dominating direction in the most powerful institutions on earth.
  - When Jesus is in the wilderness... and Satan takes Him high up on a high mountain and shows him the kingdoms of this world and says to him, bow down to me and I'll give you authority over all of these... but listen to his logic **Luke 4:6, "...To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will."** And here's the thing: Jesus doesn't dispute it. "Naww... that's not true..." He concedes that Satan is ruling and controlling these kingdoms and they are his to give!
    - Now, true, Satan's authority is a derivative authority... he couldn't have it if God wasn't

temporarily tolerating it... but, the fact remains that for now is the ruler.

- **Or check this scene out: Daniel 10**, Daniel, the prophet, of 'Daniel and the Lion's Den' fame is praying, and in the midst of his prayer an angel shows up and says, the angel is so large and glorious it makes Daniel fall on his face afraid he's going to die **"Fear not, Daniel,** (which, btw, the little chubby angel with the harp... every time an angel appears to someone in Scripture the 1<sup>st</sup> words out of their mouth are, "Wait, don't die!") **for from the 1<sup>st</sup> day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me 21 days, (explain... but my buddy but Michael, one of the chief angelic princes, came to help me, for I was stuck there with the kings of Persia... Now, I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I go out, the prince of Greece will come."** **(Daniel 10:13, 20-21)**
- Satan is the ruler and power behind this world; he's the dominating influence in our world.
  - The world governments are his governments; its Wall Street is his Wall Street; its entertainment his entertainment; its educational system his educational system. And if you want to succeed there he's going to bombard you with enticement to play by his rules.
- And you can see unmistakable evidence of his work in human history.
  - You look at certain chapters of human history and say, "How could that have happened?" **The holocaust...** you ask German people about it and they get embarrassed by it. The holocaust was not just something where they got ticked off and went

on a killing spree... they planned, thought it out, justified it... How? Bible has an answer... there was a deceiver whose goal is to kill, still and destroy.

- Child pornography? To those on the outside, you say... not just aberrant desires... it is beyond that. Where does that come from? *The Bible says there an enemy who twists and amplifies evil and persuades us to do the most vile and things, things we may normally think about doing...*

- Can't you see that? Can't you see there is something greater at work in the world than just human dysfunction or bad parenting?

So, our culture doesn't recognize the reality of the spirit world, but...

- (Interestingly, the idea of evil has made a comeback in our century... At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the idea was that evil could be explained by psychological and biological and sociological factors and if you'd just change those things, people would be fine...
- ...then we lived through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the bloodiest century of mankind to date and lots of people began to say, "Wait...? Where does this come from?" Bible has an answer...

**Andrew Delbanco**, a self-described secular liberal at Columbia University wrote a book 'The Death of Satan', and it received a lot of interest and attention. He opens the book with these poignant sentences:

*"A gulf has opened in our culture between the visibility of evil and our intellectual resources for coping with it. The evil that was always there is still there, but we got rid of the idea of sin and sinners; we got rid of the idea of original sin; we got rid of the idea of the Devil; we got rid of the idea of all the transcendent aspects; and now we're*

*absolutely astounded by the fact that there is clearly something beyond what we can manage or control here, but we have no way of dealing with it now."*

Delbanco says he thinks the best place in modern literature where this is evident is the novel and film, 'The Silence of the Lambs'. Hannibal Lector (Anthony Hopkins) is an incredibly evil man and Officer Starling (Jody Foster) at one point is listening to the things he is saying and responds with:

*"What could have made you like this? What happened to you?"* [Delbanco says 'Those are such modern questions she's asking.' They assume we are only wrestling with flesh and blood - What biological thing caused this? What psychological thing? Did you parents not potty train you right?]

Hannibal looks at her and says (worked on my A Hopkins voice):

*"Why, nothing has happened to me, Officer Starling. I happened. You can't reduce me to a set of influences. You've given up good and evil for behaviorism, Officer Starling. You've got everybody in moral-dignity pants – it is never anybody's fault. Look at me Officer Starling. Can you stand to say I'm evil?"*

Delbanco comments:

*"These words are the epitome of the modern horror and dilemma – the horror of knowing that we cannot answer the monster's question."*

- So, you may not be religious at all... but most of us can see that things that go on in the world are beyond just biological abnormalities... there is real *evil*.

- And I would argue that most of you, practically, can see the effects of the spirit world even in your own life...
  - Do you ever look back a certain time in your life, some decision you made, and you ask, “What could I have been thinking?” But at the time, it made sense... it seemed so attractive, and nobody could talk you out of it...” I’ve got places in my life like that. You say, “What came over me?”
  - The Bible says, “That’s easy. There is a deceiver who schemed against you to trick you, because his goal is to destroy you.”
  - For some of you, you’re dealing with it right now. There’s something more to what you’re dealing with than just flesh and blood.
    - The timing and the strengths of the temptations is just too good and too strong (you want to shake some destructive habit and you just can’t...); the fierceness of the opposition against what God is wanting to do;
    - the difficulty even for you to get here this morning...

So, my whole point is this: **We’re in a war**; We live in a society that doesn’t recognize the presence of this spirit world because we can’t see it in a microscope. But just because you can’t see it doesn’t mean it’s not there... We know it is there because God tells us it’s there and we can see its effects.

**Now, 1 more thing before I move off of this:** Some of you are like, “Wait... I’m studying to be a scientist and the whole scientific method... I mean, if you were a scientist analyzing the weather and you said, “*Well, that hurricane might have been caused by a low pressure system... or, it could be that a demon is just really ticked off,*” you’d be laughed out of the academy. And you say, “If I believe in this stuff, I can’t be a scientist.”

- I need you to expand your mind just a tad... realize that when the Bible describes the effects of demons, it is putting them into the moral, spiritual forces not in natural, biological ones. But what about when the spirit world affects the natural world? If God ever trumps them, like when Jesus rose from the dead, He’ll make it obvious. And clearly He has done that at a few times in history...
- But that doesn’t mean you don’t let the rules of nature rule your experiments. God set up the laws of nature and caused them to work consistently; science discovers.
- So, you don’t have to abandon, even slightly, the scientific method.
- Here’s what I’m saying: You have to realize that there are certain realities which aren’t captured by the microscope. Just like you have a category for scientific realities; you need to have a category for spiritual realities.
- And the instruments used to detect 1 are not the same used to detect another. Almost like if I said (*putting hand in the air*), “Are there any radio waves in here?” Wrong instrument to detect radio waves. For me to say, Is it light in here? “I can’t feel it, so it’s not there...” that would be foolish.
- Do I love you? I got the DNA test back, I do!
- As Hamlet said to Horatio, “*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your little philosophy.*” Hamlet

So, the 1<sup>st</sup> error people make about the Spirit world is they fail to recognize it is there; here’s the 2<sup>nd</sup>...

## II. Engaging it wrongly

So let’s turn our attention to that one in our remaining time... Paul talks about engaging in warfare with these demonic realities and he tells them to <sup>11</sup> *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.* Now, next week, we’re going to actually go through this list in a little more detail, but, for now... let me make a few observations.

- Pretty clearly, there are both some defensive and offensive weapons.
  - *Defensive armor (vv. 14–17)*
    - Belt of truth
    - Breastplate of righteousness
    - Shoes of the spread of the Gospel
    - Shield of faith
    - Helmet of salvation
  - *Offensive weapons (vv. 17–18)* (2 of them)
    - Sword of the Spirit
    - Prayer
- Here's the thing... and it may disappoint you... these things are not that *weird*...
  - Paul doesn't instruct them to engage the territorial spirits. He doesn't say... figure out who the prince of Durham is... and bind him. UNC fans... "It's Coach K."
  - I've been in a lot of Christian circles, and so have some of you, where they tried to do just that... I've been told, "Pastor, you have to bind the strong man of the area before God and do his work."
  - A lot of times this is combined with prayer walking, claiming ground for Jesus and banishing the demons.
  - Hate to disappoint you, but Paul doesn't mention that at all!
  - The same thing is true (let me be cautious here—because I consider myself a raging charismatic who just doesn't speak in tongues) about "warfare praying."
    - I've been inundated in my life with that. I've been told, 'J.D., you know, your prayers are too anemic. You're praying for greater love of the Gospel, greater faith, for opportunities to preach the word with boldness... that's all good, but none of that stuff is helpful until we bind the strong man!'
    - But Paul has given you 2 model prayers in Ephesians which we studied... Ephesians 1:15–23
- and Ephesians 3:14–21, and in neither of them is he binding or casting out demons.
  - Even here, in this passage Vs 18, he tells them exactly what to pray: **6:18–19** *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication... making supplication for all the saints,<sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.* He says, pray for open doors for the Gospel.
  - Nowhere in this section or any other section does Paul instruct Christians to obsess over praying against demonic activity.
- The weapons of warfare are pretty simple: *the belt of truth; breastplate of righteousness; shoes of the spread of the Gospel; shield of faith; helmet of salvation; sword of the Spirit; prayer*
  - Can I summarize all of these for you? "Faith in the Gospel." That's why he gives the imagery of armor... let the Gospel be all over you; your head, heart, waist; hands...
  - You say, "Well, wait a minute... praying in the Spirit (v. 18)... that's got to mean something." Paul told you in Ephesians 3:19 exactly what he meant by "filled with the Spirit;" he said when you have a sense of the length and breadth and height and depth of God's love then you would be filled with all the fullness of God. In other words, you pray in the Spirit when you are filled with sense of God's height and breadth and length and depth...
- **You say, "But aren't we supposed to bind the strong man? Didn't Jesus say that?"**
  - **Luke 11**, where Jesus makes that statement, he tells a parable right after he says that... He talks about a demon being thrown out of a house... the guy is excited and cleans it up... (like a bad roommate) 7 of his buddies... "the last state of that man is worse than the 1<sup>st</sup>." **Then Jesus says that the only way to get rid of a strong man is to get a stronger man to keep him out. The point is clear. If you want to keep the devil out of your life, you have to have**

**an active relationship with one much stronger than Him... which is not you, it's Jesus.**

- So, if you want to go to war against demons, just let Jesus be strong in your life. **Don't focus on the demons at all;** just let Jesus be large in your life; let Him be control; let the Gospel saturate every part of you—
- Paul is saying with these pieces of armor... “let the Gospel cover your head, and your feet, and your waist and your chest—that's the armor, because when something is covered by and fortified in the Gospel, Satan can't touch it.
  - **You want to keep Satan out of your marriage?** Learn what it means to establish and ground your relationship in the Gospel! Don't anoint your marriage album with oil... pour it on your spouse's head; learn to base it on the Gospel! If you don't know what that means, come and let us explain it to you.
  - **You want to keep Satan from messing with your self-esteem?** Learn to establish your identity in the Gospel.
  - **You want to be able to resist his temptations in your soul?** Let the Gospel fill you with satisfaction in God's presence and love in your life.
- **The command is not to do warfare, *per se*, but to be strong in Jesus.**
  - **Vs. 10, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.”** (Little thing commentators point out about Paul: when Paul says, ‘the Lord’ (*kyrios*), it's a reference specifically to Jesus). Be strong in the story of Jesus, the Gospel
  - **Or just think about the metaphor** of darkness Paul uses in vs. 12, calling the demons “the power of darkness.” *How do you do war against the darkness?* If you walk into a room and it is dark, how do you do war against the darkness? When you go in a dark room, you don't say, “I rebuke you

oh spirit... figure out where the darkness is coming from and bind it and throw it out... or punch it...  
“Just turn on the light!

- Sometimes, people focus on Satan when they should be focusing on applying the Gospel to themselves.
  - For example, in 1 Corinthians 1, when Paul is addressing the division in the Corinthian church (which he said in Romans 16 could be demonic—and this would have been the prime example, they were the Jerry Springer show of churches), he never tells them to rebuke the spirit of division, he tells them to be united in their minds and charitable to each other.
  - 1 Cor 5 when he talks about the problem of immorality in the church—some guy sleeping with his mom (some scholars say ‘step mom’! I don't care; if you take her to the prom and also call her mom, that's twisted... (which he says in 1 Cor 7 can be spiritually induced), he doesn't rebuke the spirit of incest, he urges the Corinthians to exercise church discipline and encourage the guy to repent.
  - That means when my kids are rude to each other...
    - Let Jesus be strong in your life, let Him be present, and the demonic cannot touch you.

*You say,* “Well, pastor, what's the danger of the other? Here's why: It keeps us from doing what we ought to be doing!”

- Mary... “my fault the car got broken into.” (but wouldn't it be better to teach your son to be responsible, and lock the doors!)
- Christian growth is learning to saturate every part of our lives in the Gospel... I'm against anything that takes you away from focusing on *that*.



My point: **People engage in warfare wrongly by making it weird and superstitious rather than by simply being strong in the Lord (strong in the Gospel).**

**Now: let me be clear... what I am not saying is this:**

- **I am not saying we never have direct encounters with demons.**
  - Probably more than you realize you do... And I've seen it.
  - And every believer has authority over demons... through the Gospel.
    - Do you remember the whole 'sons of Sceva' story? Demon: "Jesus I know, Paul I've heard of... but who are you?" Paul is telling the Ephesians to interrupt the demon and say, "So, you know Jesus? Well I know Jesus, too, and I am in Him, and He is in me. Therefore I have His power. So, in His name you are rebuked." (and then twitter about that convo...)
    - If he's messing with a certain part of your life... You say to Him: I've yielded the part of my life you're wanting to mess with to Him and since you already know Him... if you want to mess with this part you really ought to go get permission from Him..."
      - If you try to engage in warfare with Satan, you might get messed up... you might end up beaten up like the sons of Sceva; if you just stand strong in Jesus, you have nothing to worry about.
      - Just be strong *in the Lord*, Paul says, and in the power of His might.
- **I'm not saying healthy Christians cannot be afflicted themselves by demons**
  - People ask, "*Can Christians be demon-possessed?*" Bad English translation... Bible doesn't use that word. It says "demonized..."
  - Can you be "demonized" or "afflicted by a demon"? Yes. Any part of you that is not surrendered to Jesus and placed

under the protection of his blood. **I don't even like to say it's just any part of you that is not surrendered to God...you may just not be aware that certain parts of you have not been brought under the Gospel...** you may not know that your marriage and your career and your temper and the way you see yourself is not grounded in the Gospel... but Satan is using those things that haven't been established in the Gospel to destroy you. That's why I tell you that Christian growth is learning to drive the Gospel deep into every part of your life until you think out of it... until it saturates all of you... until all of your life and relationships and thinking are established on the Gospel.

- So, no, a Christian cannot be demon-possessed in the sense that a demon takes over the core of your being... because every Christian has the Gospel at the core of his being. But those parts of your life where the Gospel has not taken over and become the pattern and foundation, the demon can afflict and take control. And this includes your marriage, your temper, your emotions, your ambitions, your self-esteem, your love of money... anything. Many of you, your problems are spiritually, demonically induced, and it's because you haven't learned to ground that part of your life in the Gospel!

- **I'm not saying that when we pray we should do so as if we're ignorant of the powerful spiritual forces at work in our world...** we're just not supposed to obsess about them or undergo a bunch of techniques and rituals to counter them.
  - Ex. Why I pray for my kids each night... God, keep my children from the lies. Keep their hearts from being deceived. And it is why I teach them the Gospel...

**Conclusion:** If I could open your eyes and let you see the world around you... it would drive you to God. When people saw angels they almost die, much less a demon.

If you could see the spirit world with your eyes it would make you realize that this is not a game. The temptations you are indulging in are not harmless fun... there is an enemy who is bent on destroying your life. When you say, "Yes, I'm not surrendered to God but I'm a good person..." that's not a small flaw, that is a cosmic, demonic rebelling against God.

And If you choose the path of our enemy, the consequences are drastic... even if it seems harmless and you seem like you are not that bad of a person... If you choose his path of "I will," regardless of how moral or how harmless you think you are, you will end up with him in hell, you will end up in hell.

Only 2 categories: those who are surrendered to Jesus; those in the domain of Satan. Satan's goal for you is absolute death and total destruction. You going to trust and follow Him, or Jesus?

On the other hand, for those of you that are the followers of Jesus, if I could open your eyes and let you see the vast array of angels around you... Jesus said they number like the stars of heaven... you would see how perfectly in control of your circumstances God is over your life and that you are never outside of His care. Psalm 91:12 says you don't even stub your toe without an angel approving it.

If I could open your eyes... But I can't do that. These things must be perceived by faith in God's word. But they are real.

**Can we pray?**

Stand in the strength of *his* might... don't fight the way Satan fights, fight the way Jesus fights (the Lord is a reference to Jesus). His might comes through weakness and faith. Don't turn to fleshly strength, put faith in the armor of God. In no other context can you be simultaneously weak and strong... e.g. when you are criticized, you can deal with it by saying: "But I'm better than these people; or 'but I'm really good at these other things", or, I am a Christian, I should forgive... those are all the strength of your might. When you rest in what God has done for you and base your identity on Him and His relationship to you, that is turning to the power of His might.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth**, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**, <sup>15</sup>and, as **shoes for your feet**, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

- Satan's attacks: on Christ; etc

<sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God,

Campus pastors can do this (theme of warfare is in all of Ephesians, etc)

<sup>18</sup> **praying at all** times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

- In the Spirit... Ephesians 3
- If you are on the front lines... as Paul assumes, you are experiencing it. If you are not... why not? Not on the front lines? You are either actively fighting it or you are a captive!
- We have 80 who knows on the FL; we have 4000 that should know

<sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

<sup>21</sup> So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. <sup>22</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. <sup>23</sup> Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

- Girl in Indonesia.
- We experience it at the church... and a lot recently.

## Bullpen:

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Opposition:

- 

It's been abused...

The idea of evil has made somewhat of a comeback in our society...

My whole point is that there is a world you can't see... that affects your life... and Paul ends his book with reflection on it. epistles...

Already: <sup>11</sup> *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...*

<sup>13</sup> *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.*

Before I move on... I hope you get this 1<sup>st</sup> point... **There are invisible forces that saturate our world.**

- “But I can’t see it...”
  - You can see the evidences of it...
  - You have to decide who you will believe. *Horatio*.
  - As for Satan now... His goal is to do as much destruction while staying as invisible as possible. If you don’t realize that, you’re likely to try and stand strong in your own might. Realizing the power of the enemy in your marriage, family, makes you trust in God’s might.
    - When I realize the enemy’s power in my kids, I get on my knees...
    - When I realize his power in my family, I plead...
  - I’m not saying you should be afraid...
    - Snake in the glass...

Error #1 is people don’t realize that it is there... Now, I want to talk about another error... people who know it is there, but fight it wrongly.

Let’s just walk through this passage...

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of *his* might.

- *Whose* might? His might. At the end of the day, Christianity is not about techniques for this or the best practices of that... but you need the strength of His might...

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God Why is that? *that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil...* <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- Very curious scene from the life of Jesus: Jesus is in the wilderness... and Satan takes Him high up on a high mountain and shows him the kingdoms of this world and says to him, bow down to me and I’ll give you authority

over all of these... but listen to his logic (this is in the Bible),

- **Prince of Persia**
- Satan and his demons are rulers... He promotes. It’s his world.
- And I need some of you to really think about the implications of that... One of the things I love about being here is how many college students, young professionals we have... and many of you have so much ambition. You have dreams about conquering the world... to get rich; get famous; to rule it...
- But I want you to think about this: its systems are his systems; its governments are his governments, its Wall Street is his Wall Street, its public education is his public education. And if you are going to succeed there, many of you are going to be **enticed** to play by his rules, because he is the ruler.
- Now, what am I saying, real Christians are not involved in these things? You should pull your kids out of public school; live as poor, powerless hermits in conclaves? No. We should be redemptively and subversively at work in the world, declaring Jesus’ rightful rule and demonstrating the peacefulness and blessing of His kingdom, but you should be aware of whose world it is; and whose game you’ll have to play to succeed in it.