

Spiritual warfare!

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning again. The 11th of September 2001. One of the most significant dates, not just in modern history and not just in the history of the United States, but in the history of our world.

We still, even in South Africa, remember that date, don't we? Each year, probably many of us remember what we were doing on that date. Just a few weeks ago, we remembered the 17th anniversary of that date. Because it's an event that still haunts us.

The day that a number of terrorists, 19 terrorists, hijacked four airliners and deliberately flew them into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, killing 2,996 people.

It was an evil day. But what made it even worse was that it turns out, it turned out after, in the weeks following the event, it became known that the U.S. government had a lot of warning of this before it happened and there's a lot they could have done to prevent it.

For example, a number of the terrorists involved had been on a CIA watch list for many years before this. A number of those who eventually committed this crime. Three of them trained to fly planes at a U.S. flight school in Oklahoma and the FBI in America had known about this.

[1 : 2 5] A month before the attacks, there was a warning issued by the Central Intelligence Agency that terrorists may be planning to hijack airliners. They knew that terrorists were planning to do that.

And the most sad thing that I read was that a day before the attack, September the 10th, the NSA, the National Security Agency, intercepted communications between the terrorists saying in Arabic, tomorrow is zero hour.

The NSA intercepted that communication, but it was in Arabic and it was only translated on September the 12th. And so the U.S. government actually had all the information they needed to stop these attacks.

But despite all that information, they still weren't prepared for the day when evil struck. Which is exactly the same kind of situation that Christians can find themselves in spiritually.

We may have all the information we need in the Bible and yet still not be prepared for when evil strikes in our lives. We know the enemy is there, but often we don't do anything with that information.

[2 : 3 2] We don't fight him. And that's why Paul ends his letter of Ephesians like he does here. By issuing us with this rousing call to spiritual warfare.

A call for us to fight our enemies. Not just to know about him, but to fight him. Because he's been giving us information the whole letter. We've got all the information we need.

He's been talking about God's great plans to create a new humanity through Jesus. To inhabit a new world. He's been telling us what that looks like in our lives.

If that is true, how that translates into daily living. That's what we've been reading in Ephesians so far. But now, before he goes, he wants to sit us down and tell us one more vital piece of information.

And that is that while God is creating this new humanity. There are at the same time forces at work doing everything they can to destroy it and to prevent you from being part of it.

[3 : 30] And so this is what he says from verse 12. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. But against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world.

And against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God. So that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. But against the rulers, against the authorities, and against the powers of this dark world.

South Africa's last armed conflict, as far as I know, was the border war in Angola, right? That was the last time we were officially in a state of war. We're not officially in a state of war now.

So we assume we're living in a time of peace. The Bible says we are not living in a time of peace. The Bible says don't fool yourself into thinking that we are living in peace.

[4 : 29] The Bible says we are at war. A spiritual war. But you think, oh well that's not as important as if we were at war in the physical world.

But actually, it's more important and it's more dangerous. Because in a physical war, you can lose your life. In this war, you can lose your soul. You can lose your eternal life. So it is far more critical to concentrate on what's going on in this war.

That we are at, the Bible says. And what makes this war even harder to fight is that it's invisible. You can't see your enemy like you can in a physical war.

You know, after the September 11th attacks, the U.S. government responded by launching what they called a war on terror. And they sent their troops into Afghanistan and other places that housed terrorists.

But they found it really difficult to fight. And that war in Afghanistan is still in many respects going on 17 years later. And the reason they found that war so difficult to fight, their war against terror, was because they couldn't see their enemy.

[5 : 36] The enemy didn't wear uniforms. The terrorists would disguise themselves. They would look like normal civilians. They'd be experts at hiding away in caves and blending in.

You couldn't see who they were. Well, Paul says here in Ephesians, it's the same with the war that Christians are fighting. We can't see our enemies. They're not visible to our eyes.

And so it's not that easy to engage them. I mean, it would be great, wouldn't it, if they were physical and you could just shoot them with a gun. Like if they were standing right in front of you, but they're not.

It's not that easy. It's much harder to fight them than we think. But now, just because they're invisible, don't make the mistake, like many people do, of thinking that they're not real. These are real living beings that Paul is talking about, actual intelligent creatures that exist right now.

And if you doubt that, if you think it's all hocus pocus, then just read the Gospels and look at what happened when Jesus came into this world.

[6 : 41] When Jesus came into the world, we saw these spiritual creatures who had previously been hidden. We saw them react violently and cause all kinds of effects in the physical world.

Chilling effects that these spiritual forces had in the physical world. They gave superhuman strength to a man who could break chains. They influenced a herd of pigs to go drown themselves.

These are chilling things which happened in the physical world because of these real spiritual forces that exist today. And they can do things like that in the physical world we live in because they are powerful.

Paul calls them powers here. They're able to influence people physically and emotionally. And they're described as evil because they have no goodwill towards you.

They have only harmful intent. For you. And they will resort to any method to get to you. And they're constantly thinking of new methods.

[7 : 43] They're intelligent creatures. We're told in verse 11 they're scheming. Scheming. Right now. They're thinking up new strategies to get you away from God.

And there are particular times in your life when they will execute those plans that they have been planning and putting into place in your lives. Which Paul calls the day of evil in verse 30.

Now he's not talking about one final day in the future. He's talking about particular days in this life when evil will come. Into your life. When evil will attack. The day of evil.

And you'll least expect it. It'll be just like another day. You'll start out. You'll wake up. You'll go to work. Just like the people on the morning of September 11th in New York did not expect anything.

They just went to work. It was just like another day. You won't suspect a thing. Everything will seem fine. And then they'll attack. Then they will execute the plans that they've been carefully laying down.

[8 : 41] To attack you spiritually. And everything will start to fall apart. And it seems like a perfect storm of maybe a relationship breakdown. At the same time as a temptation that you never expected.

During a period that you've been so busy that you've been skipping church. And it all works together. And you fall. And you think it's random. But it's not. It's the scheming of those intelligent, evil, spiritual beings who exist and are present in this world.

Working to sabotage God's people. And they do not rest. And they offer no quarter. No mercy. And they're ruthless. And they will use anything at their disposal to get to you.

Are you scared yet? You should be. But now don't worry. Don't worry. Because if you're a Christian. God has given you a way to fight them. God has given you weapons of war.

Paul tells you. Look from verse 10. He tells you. To be strong in the Lord. And in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God. So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

[9 : 48] You are able. To take your stand against the devil's schemes. Because of the weapons of war that God has given you. God has given you this powerful spiritual equipment. To fight these spiritual beings that exist.

And he calls it the armor of God. But it's your responsibility to put that armor on. He says put it on. It doesn't. You don't have it automatically. You've got to consciously put this armor on.

If you're going to engage in the spiritual war. So that verse 13. When the day of evil comes. And it will come. When it comes. You may be able to stand your ground. And so how do you do that?

How do you get ready for that day? That's going to come. When you will need to stand your ground. When those spiritual forces will attack you. And it's not necessarily just one day in your life.

It can be many days. Well before we answer that question of how you do it. I want to tell you why you need to. If you're not yet convinced. Because I still think there are people sitting here.

[10 : 47] Who are not that bothered by this idea of spiritual warfare. They think it's something for other people. And it's not something that really bothers them too much. Maybe that's you this morning. They don't.

People who don't make any effort to put on this armor of God. Because either they don't think spiritual warfare exists. They don't think demons and these intelligent spiritual creatures actually exist.

Or are any threat. Or they don't think. Well they think they can live without having to engage in spiritual warfare. Other people will do it for them. Or surely these spiritual forces of evil aren't that interested in silly old me.

Well actually. You can't live without having to engage in spiritual warfare. And there are two reasons. Why you can't. There are two reasons why you can't avoid spiritual warfare.

That we see in this passage. Firstly. Because the devil is going to attack you whether you like it or not. Right. And no matter who you are. Verse 11 says the devil is already scheming against you.

[11 : 47] Right now he's planning how he can get to you. And he doesn't make plans without intending to carry them out. Right now. And so to say that you don't need to engage in spiritual warfare. Is kind of like the US government saying they don't need to engage with terrorism.

You know. If you live with blinkers on. You're going to be taken out. Secondly. You need to engage in spiritual warfare. Because God wants his people to carry on his fight. This is God's fight.

In fact. That's what he's left us on earth to do as Christians. As his people. To fight. To engage in a spiritual battle. And we're reminded of that when we actually start to look down in this passage.

At the spiritual armor itself. And we realize Paul is not just making this stuff up. On the spur of the moment for illustrative purposes. What lots of people don't realize is that this armor of God.

You might be quite familiar with it. You may have read this before. In Ephesians. But what you might not realize. Is that this armor of God is mentioned in the Old Testament. Already. Like the breastplate of righteousness in verse 14.

[12 : 47] And the helmet of salvation in verse 17. This is not the first time they've been mentioned in the Bible. Because listen. To Isaiah chapter 59. Now Isaiah. Is describing the world then.

The Old Testament world. That's been covered in thick darkness. And the devil and his servants have had their way with the world. And all hope is lost. That's the situation in Isaiah.

Until the Lord intervenes. And listen to how Isaiah puts that. I'll read it. The Lord saw that there was no one. He was appalled that there was no one to intervene.

So his own arm achieved salvation for him. His own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate. And the helmet of salvation on his head.

He put on the garments of vengeance. And wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. So what this is saying is that God. God looked at this world in its lostness.

[13 : 46] It was the victim of the spiritual forces of darkness. And what did God decide to do? He decided to get dressed. In his battle armor.

And to come down. And to sort it out. To fight the evil that covered this earth. His earth. And the very next passage. Isaiah 60.

You can look at it later at home. Is the one we read two weeks ago. You'll recognize it. I'll read it again. The very next passage. After this. God putting on his armor. To come down to earth. To fight evil.

We read. See darkness covers the earth. And thick darkness is over the peoples. But the Lord rises upon you. And his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light.

And kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lord. If you're a growth group. When we studied this. You'll recognize these verses. And so. What Isaiah is telling us.

[14 : 43] In prophecy. Is that God is the one who puts on the breastplate of righteousness. And the helmet of salvation. In order to come himself. And defeat the spiritual forces of evil in this world. And he did that.

We know. We just remembered in the Lord's Supper. He did that. In Jesus Christ. The breastplate of righteousness. The helmet of salvation. Is what he wore. Jesus.

When he came. And in his life. Showed us true righteousness. And in his death. Gave us. Salvation. But here's the thing. Now that Jesus has achieved his purpose.

And he's risen again. And ascended into heaven. You know what he's done. He's taken off his armor. That armor that he wore. And he's given it to us. To carry on the fight. He's given us his righteousness.

And he's given us his salvation. To carry on the fight against evil. Because while he's already won the decisive victory. The war is not yet over. And now Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of his father.

[15 : 41] And he is directing his troops on earth. His army that he is equipped. To carry on his fight. Against the forces of evil. And now in Ephesians 6.

He calls us to step up. And put on that equipment. And fight. And so that's why each of us needs to be engaged in this war. Because it's our job. If we call ourselves Christians.

To fight. Okay. So now how do we do that? Back to that question. Well that's what Paul goes on to explain. And there are six pieces of equipment. That he specifies that we need to have.

Before we step into the war zone. I mean a soldier. Has to put on his equipment. Before he steps out into the war zone. You don't see a soldier. In shorts. And a t-shirt. In the middle of.

You know the Iraqi desert. Or wherever there's a war zone on. No. The soldier will make sure that he's equipped. He will check his equipment. He will test it out. He will make sure he has everything he needs. Before he steps out into that war zone.

[16 : 36] And so we mustn't think. We can step out into the spiritual battlefield. Out there. Without these pieces of equipment on. And they are as follows. These are the six. The first one.

And I've used different words than Paul. Just to help us to understand. What he's talking about. The first one. Our first piece of equipment. Is doctrine. Doctrine. Now where do I get that from?

We'll have a look. Verse 14. Stand firm then with the belt of truth. Buckled around your waist. Now what Paul means here by truth. The word truth. Is what he meant in chapter 4 verse 21.

When he spoke about. Having our minds renewed. By the truth. That is in Jesus. In other words. All the things we know to be true. About the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Summarized for us. In statements of faith. Things like the Apostles Creed. And the 39 articles. And taught by the pastors and teachers of the church. Who've been equipped to teach doctrine.

[17 : 34] That is our doctrine. The truth about Jesus. And doctrine is not something that only qualified scholars have. Doctrine is something. Each and every Christian has a doctrine.

A belief in the person and work of Jesus. And who he is. And what he did. And knowing that truth. And fighting false teachings. About Jesus. Is the basis of all our other armor.

You know. It's the information war. If you're a student of military history. You'll know that the information that an army has. From their spies. And their intelligence officers.

Is critical. To them being able to. Effectively fight a war. Right? If an army doesn't have the right information. Well then they've lost before they've started. No matter how much equipment they have.

And. If a church. Does not have the right information. Then we've lost. No matter how big we are. No matter how much equipment. Or resources we have. If our doctrine is not right.

[18 : 31] We stand little chance. In the battle. And that's why God made a point. Of making sure. That we know doctrine. And that we have. Teachers and pastors in the church.

Who can. Who can teach. And can help us. To be on the same page. When it comes to what is true. Secondly. We need holiness in our lives. So. The first piece of armor is doctrine.

The second piece of armor. Holiness. Ethical. And. Right. And just living. Which Paul calls the breastplate. Of righteousness. Which he's already spoken about.

In. Chapter 4. Verse 24. In Ephesians. When he says. We must put on the new self. Created to be like God. In true righteousness. And holiness. And so we must.

We must. Keep striving. For holiness. And good works. In our daily lives. Not because that saves us. But because it's essential. To the fight. You know.

[19 : 28] Often. A person. If they understand the gospel. They will ask a very good question. They will say. Well if. If I'm saved by Jesus. Jesus righteousness. And not my own. You know.

If it's. If it's all because of what Jesus. Did for me. In my place. Then. Surely it doesn't matter. How I live. Surely I can. I can live how I want. I don't have to live righteously.

Because. Jesus has done it for me. Now that's a good question. And it shows that the person. Actually gets the gospel. But what they are missing. Is that. Righteousness. Is not only the purpose. For which God made us.

And glorifies him. It's also the way. We fight the battle. You see. Righteousness. Of living. Is key. To not giving the devil. A foothold. Not giving him a way in.

Thirdly. We need. Proclamation. Of the gospel. Verse 15. And with your feet. Fitted with the readiness. That comes from the gospel. Of peace.

[20 : 22] Now lots of people. Interpret this. As the gospel. Giving us stability. And that's why it's described. As footwear. It's like having. Having some. Some big chunky cats. On your feet. You know.

You know. I'm not talking about the animal. I'm talking about the shoe brand. By the way. And that. People read this. And they think. Yeah. Yeah. So the gospel gives us stability. So we can fight. Well. But actually. I don't think that's what Paul means at all.

I think he's referring to Isaiah 52. Because it's the same language. We read it earlier. I'll read it again. It says. How beautiful on the mountains. Are the feet of those who bring. Good news.

Who proclaim peace. Who bring good tidings. And proclaim salvation. And so to have your feet fitted with the good news. Of peace. Which is what Paul is saying.

Is this piece of armor. Means. To be ready to share the good news. And not to keep it hidden. But. But to help people in your life.

[21 : 18] Hear and understand what Jesus has done for them. Jesus said. We are called to be a light in this dark world. And a light is not hidden under a bowl. You put it in the middle of the room.

So that everyone can see it. That is what a Christian is meant to be in society. In your workplaces. In your sports clubs. Wherever you exist. Where God has placed you in this world. You are called to be a light. If you are a believer in the gospel.

And that means. Not to keep the best news you have ever heard. Hidden. And we learn here. Proclamation is actually one of the pieces of armor. One of the weapons if you like.

That we put on. To fight in the spiritual war. Because by it. We bring the fight to the enemy. And we march into his stronghold. And we capture people out of his clutches.

You see. So. In that way. Your. Your shoes of the gospel proclamation. Are an offensive weapon. They go. They're not just standing waiting for the enemy to attack. This is the way we attack the enemy.

[22 : 16] Because. You know. They say a good. The best offense is a good defense. Right. It's also. I think in this. In the spiritual war. It's the other way around. The best defense is a good offense.

It's to take the battle to the enemy. Fourthly. We are to trust. We are to trust. Trusting God. Is another. Piece of armor.

Verse 16. Take up the shield. Of faith. With which you can extinguish. All the flaming arrows. Of the evil one. And this is really the most important.

Defensive. Item. Now. Paul was writing in the time of Roman soldiers. He probably had one. Guarding him. As he wrote this letter. He was in prison. And these Roman soldiers.

Had these big shields. It was their. That and their swords. Pretty much their most effective. Most important. Pieces of kit. And so. What Paul is saying. Is that your most important.

[23 : 10] Defensive item. Is trusting God. In every circumstance. No matter what's coming your way. Faith. It's trusting. God's promises. Specifically. His promises. In the gospel.

His promises. Of what's coming. If we endure. His promises. To keep with us. His promises. To preserve us. If we trust in him.

Daily. In everything. No matter what. Arrows. Are flying. Your way. If we trust in him. The devil. Will have a hard time. In bringing you down.

The fifth piece of armor. Is assurance. Assurance. That you are saved. Verse 17. Take the helmet. Of salvation. That is the knowledge.

That we are saved. As believers. The sure knowledge. We are saved. From our sins. See salvation. We read in Isaiah. Is what God wore.

[24 : 05] In coming down. To defeat evil. Which he now. Gives to us. The sure promise. That we are saved. Not based on what we do. But on what he's done. For us. And that's where we get our assurance from.

Because it's not up. To what we do. We can't mess up our salvation. Once we have it. Because it's not because of what we do. Assurance. The salvation.

By grace alone. That we read of in chapter 2. You know grace. Grace. If you understand what that means. It's. Grace is. Undeserved favor.

It's. It's God. Giving you a place. In his family. And in his. New world. In eternity. Without you. Having done anything. To deserve it. And it's through faith alone. We're told in chapter 2.

And grace. Is the devil's kryptonite. He can't stand it. And he can't fight it. Once you have it.

[25 : 01] It's one thing. The devil cannot. Resist. And he can't. Fight against. No matter how much. He causes you to sin. No matter how much. Guilt he tries to pile you with.

Believers. Can always come back to the cross. And know that their sins are forgiven. And repent. And trust. In the blood of Jesus. That has washed them clean. And that's the helmet. That we get to put on.

To protect ourselves. From the devil's lies. And the devil's accusations. And then finally. The sixth piece of equipment. That Paul mentions.

Is scripture. And he calls it a sword. Your main attacking weapon. Verse 17. The sword of the spirit. Which is the word of God.

And this is our main weapon. That we are given to strike back. Against the forces of evil. And the sword of the spirit. And we do that. Every time we open the bible. And it's words penetrate.

[25 : 59] Into people's hearts. As the holy spirit. Makes it effective. It's the sword of the spirit. It's not a sword. That we wield. It's a sword. That the spirit wields. Through us. As we open it up.

And read it with people. The spirit uses it. To. To. To. To get in. Where nothing else. Could get in. And.

That doesn't. Just because the spirit uses it. Doesn't mean. That we. Must not. Know. How to wield it. Effectively. It's a sword. And any.

Swordsman. Or anybody. In battle. In those days. Who was good. As a soldier. Would know. How to use their sword. Well. They would know. Blocks. They would know. Moves.

They would know. How to parry. They would be. Taught swordcraft. From when. They were young. And it's the same. With. With scripture. You need to know. How to wield it. Skillfully.

[26 : 52] To. Make advances. Into the darkness. In people's lives. What passages. And verses. To turn to. Highlight. Things. Memorize.

Verses. Take notes. Of verses. That you can share. With people. As you. Come to growth group. You're not just. Growing in your own. Ability. To understand. The bible. For your own.

Benefit. But you're growing. In your ability. To understand. The bible. So you can wield it. Effectively. Out there. In people's lives. Who desperately. Need it. Because. You want the spirit. To work in those people's lives.

Your family. Or your work colleagues. You pray God. Holy spirit. Please. Work in their lives. Well you're saying. Well. We'll take your sword. Out of its sheath. And use it. Open the word.

And I will do that. I will answer those prayers. Just. I've given you. The weapon. Use it. And then when you do that. When you know.

[27 : 46] Your bible. And you're able to open it up. And know where to go. And read it with people. Well then you can make. Military advances. In the most unlikely of places. Where the devil's least expecting it.

You can attack his flank. At a coffee shop. In a squash court. Change room. After the game. In a cafeteria. At school. You can bring God's word. Into people's situations.

And strike a blow. Against the darkness. In their lives. Will you do that? Will you do that? Will you resolve. To take the fight. To the enemy? Will you learn. How to. How to wield.

This weapon. Effectively. But then there's. One final piece. Of equipment. We need. That no modern soldier. Can. Go without. What is the piece.

Of equipment. That no modern. Soldier. Can go without. I'll tell you. It's his walkie talkie. You see. The most effective. Military units. Are those.

[28 : 43] Who have. Communication. With home base. Constantly. And if soldiers. Had used radios. Back in the first century. Paul probably. Would have made it. A seventh. Piece of equipment.

Here. But he puts it. This way. Verse 18. And he actually. Spends more time. Talking about. This piece of equipment. Than any of the others. He says. And pray. Pray in the spirit.

On all occasions. With all kinds of prayers. And requests. With this in mind. Be alert. And always keep on praying. For all. The Lord's. People. Prayer.

Is the final. And in some ways. The most important. Item. In the Christian. Soldiers. Arsenal. Who's watched. The. Classic war movie.

Saving Private Ryan. Rip your hand. Okay. There's this scene. In the war movie. In the movie. Towards the end of the movie. Where. Tom Hanks' character.

[29 : 39] He's. He's been injured. And he's been targeted. By of all things. A German tank. That's bearing down on him. And he is just sitting there. Helpless. All he has.

Is his pistol. His side arm. And he. He can't move. And there's nothing he can do. He's in a hopeless situation. So he just. He. He just shoots. His pistol. At this tank.

With no effect. But then. Something unexpected happens. And. And have a look. I've actually got the clip. And I'm going to show it to you. That is what happens when we pray.

Brothers and sisters. Things that we think are too powerful. For us to fight. That are bearing down on us. Situations. We can't handle. We've given up all hope. Prayer.

Prayer. Is the means. That we call in close air support. Prayer is the means. That we tap into God's. Own resources. To do far more. Than we could ever do. Now.

[30 : 32] Now God doesn't promise. To remove all our problems. When we pray. The tank. In that clip. Is not our problems. Right. It represents. Our spiritual enemies. Bearing down on us.

Who may use our problems. To get to us. But they may also use our pleasures. To get to us. And it's those enemies. Not our problems. Which are our true. Problems. In our life.

Our true enemies. Are those spiritual forces. That Paul is talking about. Who overwhelm us. And run us down. And tempt us. And are powerful. To drag us away from God. And they're bearing down on us.

And we are helpless. There's nothing we can do. But it's those enemies. That God is ready. And willing to take out. As we pray against them. Because in prayer. He gives us a direct line.

To home base. To call in. Close air support. And so we are called to pray. Pray. All kinds of prayers. For all kinds of things. Going on in our lives.

[31 : 26] On all occasions. And to pray for all the Lord's people. And to pray for one another. Not just for ourselves. Because in a battle.

Soldiers have to watch each other's back. Don't they? Soldiers have to help each other. And drag each other to safety. When they're injured. If soldiers were all just on their own mission.

In a battle. They would lose. They work as a team. We work as a team. By praying for each other. By supporting each other. And watching each other's backs. In prayer. By asking.

What can I pray for? What's going on in your lives? Let's get together. Let's meet for prayer. Informally. Formally as a church. That is how we fight together. By meeting to pray.

And making prayer. A priority in our lives. And Paul says here. We must be alert. Do you notice that he says. Be alert. The original says. With all watchfulness.

[32 : 20] With all perseverance. We must pray. And keep on praying. You can. You can actually tell. How seriously. A church is taking. Spiritual warfare. By how much they're praying.

Because. There's a very real risk. Of forgetting. That we're at war. We. We. We. We. We kind of. We like. To be comfortable. And it's not comfortable. To constantly.

Be at. On guard. And. Realize. We're at war. And so. We like. To forget. That we're at war. To be comfortable. As churches. We can do that. And we become. Complacent.

And our complacency. I'm going to say it again. Sorry. I harp on this. Our complacency. Is seen. In the lack of attendance. At our prayer meetings. Well. You know what? When a church.

Is complacent. Which is seen. In prayerlessness. Those are the times. The devil is waiting for. Because that's when. He will strike.

[33 : 18] So you see. As believers. Ephesians has taught us. That we are citizens of heaven. Because of what Jesus Christ. Has done for us. But. Until we reach heaven. Brothers and sisters.

We are at war. Never forget it. And never drop your guard. For one moment. But put on the full armor of God. And be vigilant. In regular.

Daily. Prayer. And go through. These. Pieces of equipment. And ask yourself. What you are lacking. What you need to put on. So that when the day of evil comes.

You may be able to stand your ground. And after you've done everything. To stand firm. Let's pray for God's help to do that. Heavenly Father.

We do thank you for this. Ending of this glorious letter. Where we've learned. So much about who we are. And what you call us to be. We thank you for this warning. That you've given us this morning. Through your word.

[34 : 14] We thank you for opening our eyes. To see what we can't see physically. The spiritual battle. That's going on around us every day. And so Lord. You've given us the equipment. Help us to put it on now.

Help us to go away from this place. And not forget what you've spoken to us this morning. Help us to put on all the armor. That you give us to fight. Help us to engage.

In this battle. And help us always to keep channels. With home base open. So that we will be praying. We will be a church of prayer. We will not be complacent.

And we will not give the devil an opportunity to attack us. Help us in this. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.