

# God Gives Strength

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 03 October 2010

Preacher: Jonathan Smith

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Take a seat guys. Come to the end. Come to the end of our journey through Ephesians. This is week 10, if you believe it. And I think we've seen some pretty amazing things over the last nine weeks, and this being the 10th week, going through six chapters of the book of Ephesians. We've seen really that the book is made up of two parts. So you've got the first three parts, which are about the big picture, sort of cosmic view of what Christ has done. Jesus, in dying on the cross, achieved so much in the cosmic realm. So we saw that before the foundation of the world, God had chosen people for himself to be saved.

And that from that point on, before there was anything created, Jesus was on his way to the cross to atone for the sins of the world. And when he came to earth and he lived a perfect life, he died that death on the cross for us in our place. He was raised from the dead three days later. He was seated at the right hand of God, that is in ultimate power over every other thing that there is, including the powers of Satan and demons and darkness, including us. All things were placed under his feet. Then we found out amazingly that when we're saved, when we put our trust in Jesus, we are effectively seated with him, that we have a guaranteed inheritance with him in heaven, that we have the promise of the Holy Spirit living in us. So that's what we saw in the first three chapters, the cosmic consequences of Jesus' death and resurrection. And then the next three chapters are really about our response to that. How do we live? If that's true, if we put our trust in God, how do we live?

And so the bar's been set really high for us in terms of living holy lives, righteous lives, living like Jesus, rejecting sin. Remember we talked about putting off the old self and putting on the new self, putting away our old life and living a new life for Jesus.

And we also saw along the way when we've been talking about the way we ought to live that I hope you've been realizing that it's really, really hard. To live a Christ-like life is really hard. And part of that is because we still hang on to part of this sinful nature that Jesus died to kill off. That ultimately we won't be made perfect. We won't be glorified until he returns and we go to be with him in heaven. So partly it's just a struggle day by day against sin. But we're going to see tonight that another big reason that we struggle to live as Jesus wants us to live is because we are in the midst of a battle. That there are powerful, dark, spiritual forces that are warring against us as the church. Leading us away from Jesus, causing us to sin, darkening our minds, getting us to forget about the grace of God that we so beautifully saw in chapter 2. That salvation comes to us by grace and yet Satan and demons and the powers of darkness work against Jesus, work against the

Holy Spirit and cause us to stumble. So we're going to talk about Satan, we're going to talk about demons, we're going to talk about the powers of darkness in the spiritual realm tonight.

[ 3 : 29 ] That's how Paul finishes his letter and I think he does it deliberately as sort of a climax to all that he's been speaking about what Christ has done for us. As so often happens, Christians fall into two really bad extremes when it comes to talking about Satan and demons. You might be there sitting there kind of feeling a little bit awkward that I'm speaking about Satan and demons. In our modern society we don't have a lot of room for the spiritual realm and so you might be thinking this is a little bit crazy. There are those of us even who call themselves Christians who doubt the existence of Satan, the existence of evil spirits and the dark spiritual realm. Equally there are Christians who spend far too much time thinking about Satan and talking about Satan instead of focusing on Jesus. C.S. Lewis wrote a really helpful quote. I think it's in the opening to the screw tape letters which is about demons and devils and so on. He wrote this. He said there are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. And so what I want to do tonight is go to neither of those extremes. We don't want to disbelieve in the presence and in the reality of

Satan and demons because Jesus himself thoroughly believed in them and did war against them. Paul obviously believes in them if you were listening to the passage tonight. And we equally don't want to go to the other extreme of spending too much time thinking about them and getting too worried about them. So to do that I'm going to need God's help. So why don't we pray and then I'm going to tell you a story about my own experience with Satan. All right let's pray. Father in heaven you are the great king the great God above all other gods. We thank you that you are powerful and mighty that you stand over Satan not as his equal but as his creator and master.

We pray now that you would help us. We know that Satan when the word is spoken moves amongst us and looks to take away the word like a bird pecking away a seed. So pray against that. We pray against his followers against their works and their effects. We pray that you prevent Satan from distorting the truth from leading me into saying anything that's untrue or unbiblical. Please help us to come away from tonight with a greater respect for the power that Satan wields but a greater sense that you have conquered him and seated us with you in the heavenly places. Pray this in Jesus name. Amen.

So my encounter with Satan and demons is a pretty full-on story and I still sort of tremble to tell it but around 10 years ago year 2000 I finished high school in 99 year 2000 didn't go to uni I actually went overseas to the states and it was there that I started working at a Christian camp. The weird thing about this was that I wasn't a Christian not a disciple of Jesus not following Jesus but I found myself at this Salvation Army camp. The mistake I made was to think that the Salvation Army was a charity. It turns out that it's actually a Christian denomination. So anyway I turned up at this place and they're doing great things. They were getting inner city underprivileged African-American kids out of Pittsburgh which is the nearby city that I was in and getting them out of that town which is a really rough town and getting them out of that country where they had this amazing camp. And it is there that they not only fed them and you know taught them cool things but also shared with them the gospel.

So I turned up. I didn't know how to share the gospel. I got fired twice my first week because it was clear that I didn't know what I was doing at this Christian camp. But they persevered with me and it was then in probably the second week that I came up against stiff, stiff spiritual opposition.

[ 7 : 58 ] I believe that Satan is a very intelligent, very cunning, very shrewd enemy. And just like any intelligent enemy, Satan knows the strategy of war. So he knows as a good war strategist that you go and throw your biggest offensive against the biggest threat. And so we see this when Jesus comes on the scene. Suddenly there's demons everywhere. He's casting them out. They're attacking him. They're confessing that he's Lord. They're afflicting people with sicknesses, possessing others. That's what happened when Jesus came on the scene because he was such an enormous threat to Satan's dark kingdom. And for me when I came to this camp they were doing a lot of good things for the gospel. Little kids were getting saved. Just about every night they would have an opportunity for kids to respond to Jesus. The Salvos are great evangelists and so they were doing great work there. And myself, I was coming into contact with this ministry that was blowing my mind and with a Jesus that was astounding me. And so the opposition came. And it came in many forms.

And I won't go into everything but for me there was a physical manifestation of evil that is quite unusual for people at least in our context here in Australia. It's a little more frequent in places like Africa and other places. But anyway, I came into contact with this force of evil that absolutely terrified me. In the second week I was hospitalised with a fever. I went to my room because I was feeling a little bit ill. The next thing I knew I was on the floor sweating. I started hallucinating. I started seeing Satan in the room with me. I started hearing accusatory voices.

And so someone came into the room and found me some hours later. They took me to the hospital and they said that I was within a degree of death in terms of my temperature. They ran a bunch of tests and never found anything. So I went back to the infirmary, the sick bay and spent a few days there.

Eventually someone came in, laid hands on me and prayed for me and I was healed. That was my first encounter with this oppositional force. It didn't stop then because the cabin that I was staying in, there's a central sort of room where I stayed with a couple of other leaders. And then there was two wings where the kids stayed. And these kids who came from different parts of the state, never met one another. Every night that they were there from week to week would see the same manifestations of, you know, like shadowy figures. I won't go into all the details, but these kids who turned up with guns and knives. One kid put a knife to my throat when I was in bed one night. These kids are not easily scared and they were huddled in the corner crying their eyes out because they were so terrified of this thing, whatever it was that was in the room with them. And we had electrical appliances turning themselves on without being plugged into the wall. Just crazy, crazy stuff. Physical manifestations of Satan. And what it did for me was, I had this Bible that was given to me when I was 13 years old. I don't think I'd opened it since. It still had the gold gilt edging on it, which falls off after about a week if you read it. I'd had it for six years and it was still there. It kind of cracked when I opened it. Anyway, I opened it and I just had it there next to my bed, hoping that it would do something. But eventually this opposition led me to read the Bible.

And I came into contact with a Jesus who was supreme over Satan and demons. I came into contact with these letters from Paul that talked about believers, Christians having power over these oppositional forces. I got so taken up with it that I just read and I read and I read and eventually just thrust all my hope and trust in Jesus. And the attacks and then these manifestations continued for a while, but eventually they left. I didn't sleep with the light off for a year after that. It was a little bit awkward because after there I went traveling around and stayed in dormitories and backpackers and stuff.

[ 12 : 35 ] And I always had something, some kind of light on. But anyway, I was absolutely terrified. terrified. So what I want from us tonight when we look at this passage, I want us to be very aware of who Satan is, what some of his strategies are against us. Hopefully you got some notes on the way in, biblical references to what Satan does, his strategies of war against us. But I don't want us to leave terrified. I don't want you to be sleeping with the light on tonight. I want you to see that Jesus is supreme over Satan. So let's do it. Let's just turn to the Bible. We're going to go verse by verse through this. And so if you go to verse 10 of chapter 6, let's read it.

Paul writes this, Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We need to know the wiles of the devil if we're going to stand against him. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Make no mistake about the reality of Satan and demons. Satan is very much at work today, even if our society and even if the church has become dull to his presence, has tried to explain away his works using scientific means or whatever. Satan is a reality. Jesus battled with and believed in Satan. Paul speaks here freely of the opposition that we face. And it's not opposition of flesh and blood. It's spiritual opposition, cosmic powers of this present darkness.

When we talk about Satan, it's important, as I've said, to acknowledge that he is a defeated enemy. I think it's Colossians 2 talks about how Jesus, when he died on the cross and then rose from the dead, as he rose from the dead, it was like he was making a mockery of Satan.

And his enemies. It was like he was putting them on public show as being defeated enemies. It's like a king who conquers a city and then, after he's left that city, he drags behind him his prisoners. That's what Jesus was doing as he rose from the dead.

[ 15 : 27 ] He was dragging Satan behind him and his demons, showing everyone that they were defeated enemies. But at the very same time, you cannot think about Satan in terms of him being made impotent by this defeat.

He is still very powerful, very intelligent and very much at work today. So, Jesus talks about Satan being, or those outside of him, those who don't have faith, being in the power of Satan.

Remember earlier, I think it was in chapter 2, Paul talks about Satan being the prince of the power of the air, that is, the world that we live in. He also calls him the God of this world.

So, Satan is very powerful, the God of this world. Is that how you think about Satan? The prince of the power of the air. The people outside of Christ who are living today are in his power, in his grip.

That's how the Bible represents Satan. Defeated, but still very much at large in the world. And very much opposed to us.

[ 16 : 36 ] And very powerful, and very dangerous. He's the roaring lion who prowls around looking for someone to devour. He's also the father of lies.

And so, while he himself tries to deceive us, I think he is probably deceived himself. He doesn't think that he's a defeated enemy. He thinks that he might still win in the end.

And so, he's very busy at work looking to deceive and destroy and distract and distort God's truth. That's Satan.

And so, Paul's very serious when he starts talking about what we ought to do in response to this reality. Alright? So, Satan's against us. What the hell are we going to do?

Verse 13 says this, Therefore, take up the whole armour of God so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day and having done everything to stand firm.

[ 17 : 36 ] It talks about the armour of God, putting on the armour of God. And this could be the armour of God as in it's his armour that he wears or it could be that it's from him. It's probably both because as we saw in the Old Testament reading, Isaiah 59, you might have noticed that God himself is a warrior who puts on armour.

And the Old Testament tells us too that we are, as believers, like his warriors. So, he's got armour and he gives us the same armour. It's the armour of God. He talks about putting it on so we'll be able to withstand that evil day.

Now, this is a day that is coming in the future, probably just before Jesus returns when evil escalates. Satan goes crazy and people are deceived. That day is coming but also it refers to the day-by-day struggle that we find ourselves in against Satan.

We'll come across certain days that are absolutely almost intolerable. That evil day is coming to you perhaps this week.

you know, it's just the day where you feel extraordinary amounts of lust. Or, it's just the day where you just feel extraordinarily greedy or angry or just opposed to the things of God.

[ 18 : 55 ] We have these days, we experience these days where Satan is particularly against us. So, he says, so that you can stand on the last days, in the last days when Satan escalates and so that you can stand on the day, maybe this week, where you're tempted in an extraordinarily strong way.

Put on the armour of God. And he says, having done everything, stand firm. And that's really the major sentence of this whole passage.

His major point, he says it three times, stand firm. That's what he wants from us. There's opposition, there's powerful, dark opposition, but stand firm.

And so, you need to get this sort of battle metaphor into your head. For most people who think about Christianity and church, the metaphors are about lambs and butterflies and harps and it's just a really soft, weak world that Christians live in.

That's not the world that Christians live in according to this passage. We live in the kind of situation that you find in old times where you'll have armies ranked facing each other about to do hand-to-hand combat.

[ 20 : 15 ] It's not modern warfare where you press a button and a missile goes across the other side of the world and blows someone up. This is hand-to-hand, close, sweaty, blood-spattering combat like you see on Braveheart.

It's that kind of combat that we're in with Satan and demons. And what he says is stand firm. One of the strategies in older ancient times when it came to fighting a battle was to try and avert the battle altogether.

Try and avert losing men, losing lives, losing money, fighting a war so that people would turn up, the army would turn up and they would do certain things to try and avert the battle. They would yell war cries, they would arrange themselves in such a way that they would look numerous and fierce and the whole idea was that either the enemy would surrender or perhaps part of the enemy would come over to your side knowing that you were going to win and they didn't want to get cut to pieces.

And so some of the most successful armies were the ones who could stand firm no matter what. If you're outnumbered, if you have a worse position on the battlefield, if you can stand firm, you've got a chance of winning.

And Roman soldiers in Jesus' time and in Paul's time were particularly known for standing firm against the odds no matter what situation they would stand firm.

[ 21 : 37 ] And so that's what Paul wants from us. He wants us not to capitulate, not to surrender to Satan, not to go over to his side and renounce our faith but to stand firm. Are you with me?

Are you getting it? Good. Good. Stand firm. Verse 14. It says it again. Stand.

Stand therefore and fasten the belt of truth around your waist. Someone once told me that this belt of truth was made for young men to keep their pants on until they are married.

It's not that. It's not that kind of belt. I think that's good teaching but the belt of truth is actually what Paul is doing. And bear in mind this is an interesting part of the story.

You notice at the end there that Paul says he's an ambassador in chains. He's actually imprisoned as he writes this letter and he's probably chained to a soldier as he writes the letter.

[ 22 : 37 ] So he's probably peering over at this guy and seeing the armour that he's in and then writing this part of the letter using those pieces of armour as metaphors. So that's interesting. Anyway, he's talking about the belt that soldiers would wear that's kind of a skirt.

Don't say that to his face but it's kind of a skirt. It's like a leather skirt that goes around the thighs and so this would protect you from arrows coming in. It would protect you from a slash from a sword.

Hopefully you'd have this dried hardened leather skirt to protect your thighs that would go under the rest of your armour. And so he says fasten the belt the skirt of truth around your waist.

All through this letter to the Ephesians Paul has been talking about truth the importance of truth the truth of the gospel that Jesus died on the cross for our sins rose for our salvation.

He wants that truth to be around us so that we'll be protected from the evil one. The truth of the gospel. Remember in about the third or fourth week we talked about the fact that it's not enough to just hear the gospel once go down the front put up your hand whatever become a Christian and then go away not really thinking about the gospel ever again just using it as a sort of get out of hell pass.

[ 24 : 03 ] No we've got to go deeper every day you've got to preach the gospel to yourself you've got to read the scriptures and so that's why Paul says have this truth fastened around your waist have it on hand use it to defend yourself against the evil one.

Then he says put on the breastplate of righteousness we read this in the Old Testament reading God himself has this breastplate of righteousness and you remember in chapter 4 we talked about the clothes putting on the clothes that form our identity putting on the new self remember I had clothes here and I talked about how clothes represent our identity and Paul talks about putting on Christianity putting on righteousness putting on the new self and discarding those clothes that represented you when you were an unbeliever and here he says put on the breastplate of righteousness it's not primarily talking about how God makes us righteous but more about living a righteous life living the life that Jesus has called us to live that we've heard about so often through this book how do we live as Christians we live righteous lives and so we need to put on this breastplate of righteousness live the way that we ought to live we saw in that same passage that if we don't put on the new self if we don't put on these clothes that represent Christ then we fall into things like anger and dissension and quarrels and it's there that Satan is at work remember he said don't let the sun go down in your anger because that provides a place for Satan so here he's saying the same thing put on the breastplate of righteousness live a righteous life so that you'll be able to withstand

Satan's attacks 15 verse 15 he says as shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace it's kind of a paradox we're in this war metaphor don't leave the battlefield yet he's still there we're standing in ranks we're going to face the enemy he's shooting arrows at us battle cries are going off and then he talks about peace the gospel of peace it doesn't fit very well but what we need to sort of see in our mind is as we look across the battlefield okay and we see Satan and demons the principalities and powers of this dark world arranged against us shouting stuff at us as we look across and see them we also see behind them that there are people there there are people there who aren't Christians there are people who aren't trusting in Jesus and they are prisoners of Satan they're being held captive by Satan and so what Paul wants us to do is just be prepared so that when we're fighting the battle if you see someone there who's being held captive to Satan and by the way these people don't even know it as far as they're concerned they're just sitting in a field we can see with the eyes of faith that they're surrounded by Satan in chains being tormented by him and what he says is when you come across these people be prepared to share with them the gospel of peace be prepared put on your feet whatever will make you ready or prepared to proclaim the gospel of peace you come across these people these people are shackled in chains by Satan you come across them every day what Paul wants from you is that at the same time as fending off Satan and his attacks you need to be prepared to share with them the gospel of peace so that they can come to know Jesus so that they can see that he has saved them from all of that darkness into his wonderful light verse 16 right what have we got so far we've got the belt of truth around our waist we've got the breastplate of righteousness on our chest we're ready to share the gospel of peace with whoever we see and then he says with all of these things take the shield of faith with which you'll be able to quench the flaming arrows of the evil one what he's saying is if you're going to have truth around your waist that is if you're going to proclaim truth and believe truth if you're going to be putting on a new self and living a righteous life and if you're going to be looking for opportunities to share the gospel with people who are in darkness then you will expect to be attacked by the flaming arrows of the evil one you should expect it with all of these things take the shield of faith with which you'll be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one the shield that they had was not like the silly little round tin lid that you see on movies it's not a little shield like that it's like a door if you're going to imagine a door that's the kind of shield they had these roman soldiers they would form what's called a phalanx and you'd get guys with forearms like tree trunks who could hold a door on their arm and the door was covered in hardened leather because what they did back in this day was dip their arrows in pitch or tar light them up and then fire them and hope that everything would catch on fire and people would go crazy and they'd win the war you might have seen it in

Braveheart anyway what they do was use these doors shields soak them in water cover them in leather and then that would quench these flaming arrows that would come their way and what they do is make a shield wall so you'd get a bunch of guys together 50 100 200 500 with these shields in front of them and it would literally lock into each other these shields and make a wall and then you'd have other shields placed on top so that you could shoot as many arrows as you like they're not going to hit the army because they're they're fixed under the shield wall and then at the right time you would run forward with these shields and literally burst through the enemy ranks behind you would come swords and the horse and so on so that's the kind of shield he wants us to take up this massive shield that keep completely covers your whole body and it's called the shield of faith what does it mean to hold up the shield of faith all throughout this book

Paul has talked about faith in terms of faith securing for us strength and power remember he prayed that we would have strength and power according to our faith in chapter 3 Paul wants us to hold up the shield of faith so that we would have power to overcome the evil one I believe that we as a church can hold up a collective shield of faith against the evil one I believe that we should be doing this regularly in our prayer meetings that we should pray that as a people here we would be able to form like that shield wall putting our shields of faith together so that we might be able to quench the arrows of the evil one verse 17 he says take up the helmet of salvation again this was in Isaiah 59 God himself wears a helmet of salvation and it's literally the salvation that's the helmet okay so your helmet is your salvation and this book again has been all about salvation we saw that from week one it is a book written about glorious salvation that comes to us through faith by grace according to Jesus works and so what he wants for us is to take hold of the truth that Jesus has died for us that our sins have been forgiven remember throughout over a couple of weeks we've talked about the fact that there seems to be something something powerful and effectual in just thinking about the truth that we already know do you know what I mean there's something that happens when you think about and take hold of truth that you already know that you've already confessed it's that same thing you can confess to know Jesus and then go out throughout your life without really thinking about it and you'll end up in a different place than the person who literally every day thinks about the fact that he's saved that Jesus has died for him when we think about the salvation that Christ has won for us it becomes for us a helmet that is useful in fending off the blows of the evil one so take the helmet of salvation preach the gospel to yourself daily and then he says take the sword of the spirit which is the word of God again this sword that he was thinking of it's not like a big brave heart sword okay it's a short sword because for most of the warfare that was going on at this time it was close close hand combat okay and that's why when he talks earlier on he says our struggle isn't against the enemies the literal word there is wrestle our wrestle isn't against these enemies that's the kind of fight that we're doing with

[ 33 : 38 ] Satan it's close wrestling hand-to-hand combat and so what you'd have a big sword's useless when you got someone a foot away you need a short sharp sword and so he says take up this sword of the spirit the sword of the spirit means that it's the spirit that makes it powerful it's a spirit that makes it sharp and usable it's a spirit that gives it its edge and the sword of the spirit is the word of God it's interesting here that the word he uses for the word the word of God is not the usual word that he uses talking about the Bible now we know that the word of God the Bible is like a sword we know that in Hebrews it's like a two edge sword cuts to the core but here what he's really talking about is the word preached it's the gospel preached so the sword of the spirit which is the word of God which is the word of God preached it's the gospel it's evangelism this is your sword it's preaching the gospel so far you've been given a lot of armor to protect yourself now you're given something to do some damage with this is your offensive weapon against

Satan if he's arrayed in his darkness and he's got people taken captive then a way that we can offend him a way that we can do damage to him is to take our sword the proclamation of the gospel speak it to people in darkness and so weaken his numbers the sword of the spirit which is the preaching of the word of God now Jesus says that that on this rock I'll build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it when I heard that because I've got the same ears as most people who think about the church being soft and weak and useless I always thought we're the church and hell is coming against us but it won't prevail against us but that's not what he says if you think about it he says the gates of hell won't prevail against the church it's the church that comes against hell it's the church that storms the gates of hell and the gates of hell won't prevail against the church and this is how we storm the gates of hell we take the sword of the spirit and we go and do some serious damage it should be your objective in evangelism you want to free the captives and you want to land a few blows against the prince of darkness our greatest enemy so that's the armor Paul is assuming in all of this in fact his language tells us that he expects us to take all of this on board another translation a bit a little bit more literal it says having taken up the shield haven't taken up the helmet having taken up the sword he assumes that you have done this and that you will do this taking the belt of truth around your right your waist the breastplate of righteousness on your chest having shoes or having the preparedness that comes to share the gospel of peace taking up the shield of faith the helmet of salvation the sword of the spirit if we do all of that and if we take the time day by day to do all of that we'll be able to stand our ground against Satan even when he looks really scary and really dark and even when he manifests himself in crazy ways you'll be able to stand firm and having done everything to stand just want to finish with verse 18 it's a really important verse it says this pray in the spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication to that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints he's still in the battle metaphor here okay so we're still thinking about our situation with opposition powerful dark opposition and he says you've got to pray in four ways it's not in our translation but he talks about praying all okay so he says pray at all times with all prayer and supplication with all perseverance for all the saints we say that again pray at all times with all prayer and supplication with all perseverance for all the saints he finishes on prayer because I think that prayer is one of our great weapons against Satan you might have heard people referred to as prayer warriors and it normally means just people who pray a

lot but I think really every one of us if we pray should be called a prayer warrior it's a great weapon in our artillery and so he says let me just explain each one of those and then we'll finish he says pray at all times the reason he says pray at all times in the spirit is because the war is always raging it never lets up the battle is going to keep going right until Jesus comes and finishes it once and for all so you might experience temptation and you know satanic opposition at heightened periods throughout your life but the reality is that every minute of the day you're facing this opposition every minute of the day even now Satan is at work against us and so he says pray at all times in the spirit some people say this is praying in tongues it's not praying in tongues okay Paul says that not everyone has the gift of speaking in tongues personally I don't have the gift

I know people who do have the gift that's great but what he's talking about here is praying through the spirit so we pray to the father through the spirit by the son and that's what he means by praying in the spirit at all times we should pray at all times because the war is always raging and he says pray with all prayer and supplication this is just a way of saying pray all different kinds of prayers so supplication is asking God for those things that we need intercession is asking is praying on behalf of other people we know that the spirit intercedes for us praise for us we know that from Romans 8 there's all different kinds of prayers Paul says pray all those kind of prayers at all times I think it's Philippians 4 4 says not to worry about anything but to pray about everything and then he says pray with all perseverance and the idea of perseverance there is to keep alert keep awake some of you look like you're not really keeping awake right now the eyes are drooping and you spent too much in the time in the sun but what Paul is saying to us is to keep alert at all times and what he's thinking of there is if you're camped out at war a great time to be attacked is right before sunrise right where everyone's the most tired if they've been staying up worrying about the war and so they'll keep watches through the night you might have the watch from 12 to 3 next guy comes along 3 to 6 or whatever and it was imperative that if you had that night watch that you stayed awake that you stayed alert so that if the enemy came against you you could raise the alarm and so that's what he means by praying with all perseverance stay alert keep watch watch for Jesus coming again watch at all times throughout the day for when Satan might strike for many of us it's at the very end of the day when we're most tired that we can get most tempted you guys who are addicted to porn you know what I mean it's right before you go to bed you're on the computer too late you're just wasting time you're tired your defenses are down that's when you fall and this is what

Paul's talking about don't grow dim don't fall asleep keep alert persevere in prayer and finally he says to pray for all the saints the fact is that you need me to pray for you and the fact is that I really need you to pray for me you think about that war metaphor again this the guy next to you has got to have your back if you're going to survive the war you need to have his back as Christians we we form an army together and we've got to be looking out for one another so keep praying for all the saints pray for me please that I wouldn't fall into one of Satan snares I'll pray the same for you and not only the Christians you know but Christians throughout the world think of Christians who are going through persecution at the hands of Satan the Bible says that in Revelation that Satan can throw people into prison that Satan can afflict people with all kinds of persecution and sickness and trouble and trial so pray for Christians around the world that they would be spared they would be kept safe I want to challenge you each morning from now on this is a big challenge but every one of us every day has a common experience and that is putting on our clothes unless you sleep in your clothes which I did from about 99 to 2003 but that aside if you if you bathe yourself you put clothes on each morning and so the challenge to you guys this is just a real practical reminder as you put your clothes on think about the armor of God that you ought to be putting on each day have this passage plastered on the mirror so that when you check yourself out you can remember the armor of God Paul's really practical here he wants us to take these things up and there's something about our cognizant deliberate thinking about these things that makes them effective so that's Ephesians do you like it 10 weeks if you knew if you're visiting if you want to know more about the book of Ephesians then you can go online and you can get the whole series you can get all of our sermons there I recommend if you've got iTunes to podcast it and then as soon as it comes up on the web you'll get it on your computer so look back on this series remember what we've learned Jesus is supreme over all things he has guaranteed your salvation right to the end he's worthy of our worship and we ought to respond to him with righteousness all the days of our lives let's pray for God's help father thanks for the reminder tonight about

[ 45 : 20 ] Satan I confess this week that I hadn't thought of Satan in so long that I hadn't thought about his strategies and his snares for too long we live in a world that doesn't have a place for the spiritual realm father please forgive us for neglecting to know our enemy well father I pray that you would help us to have a healthy respect for Satan's power healthy knowledge of the fact that this world is a dark place a healthy love and compassion for those who are held in bondage to Satan and sin healthy appetite for doing evangelism for landing some blows against Satan and his dark realm for saving people out of that domain of darkness into your wonderful light we thank you that you've led many of us into that light thank you that each one of us who trusts in you has the promise seal of the Holy Spirit which is our inheritance of an eternity with you so Lord please help us each day to take up that armor of

God protect us prosper our work for the gospel in Jesus name amen amen you you you you you you