

## Who or What Are You Fighting?

Ephesians 6:12 Sunday AM, February 25, 2024

**Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-12** (NASB95) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

**Finally, be strong IN THE LORD.** This has been the heart of Ephesians and is the lifeblood of the gospel. It is the perspective necessary to join Paul as a “prisoner of the Lord”—the posture from which he implored us to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” All called to walk worthy are first tied in relationship by the seven one’s—one body, one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Grace given to each tied in relationship to God leads to each taking their part to grow together in all aspects into Him who is the Head, even Christ. Relationship with God and those God has redeemed is the center and goal of growth, hence all that destroys these relationships must be laid aside, 17 So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles (those outside of Christ) also walk, These live according to their own thought processes and desires resulting in impurity, greediness, the lusts of deceit. Instead, put on the new self—telling the truth, anger under the control of the Spirit—no bitterness or unwholesome word, but instead, a tender-heart that is kind, that can and will forgive. All this stems not from yourself, but from a life controlled by the Spirit of God—a life that looks to God, seeking to imitate Him, walking intentionally, making the most of the time because the days are evil. Because of our position as beloved child, we are content and full of gratitude. These relationships live with an attitude of submission—the past few weeks spent looking at the roles of husband, wife, child, parent, slave, and master. **This picture overwhelms some and underwhelms others.** The answer for both lies in doing all in the fear of Christ. This does not mean “scared of Christ” unless you haven’t yielded to Him. It DOES mean Christ fills your gaze both to follow as well as to provide what is necessary for you to be in fellowship with God and bring glory to Him together with the rest of the church. Do you live in the fear of Christ? Those who do are secure. Sing meditating on and praising God for the secure position of those in Christ.

### \*Hymn #286: A Mighty Fortress

This secure picture of a mighty fortress fits our passage today as we talk about struggle and battles—NOT just with your desires, your circumstances, desire for control, but something greater. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. What place does this struggle have in your life? How does being aware of this struggle affect your other struggles? Proper awareness leads to watchfulness, preparation, and a prayerful dependence on God and His resources for this battle. Listen for these themes in this song.

### \*Hymn #405 (Red): My Soul Be on Thy Guard \*Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn **Choir: Almighty God** Scripture: Daniel 10:1–21

(NASB95) In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision. 2 In those days, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. 3 I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed. 4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. 6 His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult. 7 Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. 8 So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. 9 But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground. 10 Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. 12 Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. 13 “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. 14 “Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.” 15 When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, “O my lord, as a result of the vision anguish has come upon me, and I have retained no strength. 17 “For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.” 18 Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 19 He said, “O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!” Now as soon as he spoke to me, I received strength and said, “May my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.” 20 Then he said, “Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. 21 “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.

### Offering: \*Doxology:

Note the struggle of Daniel 10. Daniel 9 includes Daniel’s prayer for God to fulfill His Word to restore His people as He promised after their 70 years of captivity. It speaks of Gabriel coming to Daniel in his extreme weariness from confessing the sins of the people of Israel and giving insight of what was to come. Our passage in Daniel 10 speaks of Daniel mourning for three entire weeks, fasting, and another vision resulting which made the others near FLEE and left Daniel with no strength, and his face a deathly pallor. Living under God for His kingdom goals includes this kind of struggle. Next week, we will focus on putting on the armor of God, but today, we focus on the greatness of the struggle. Professing Christian, where do you struggle? Whether it is because of your own sin OR because of the struggle for your LORD’S kingdom advancement, you MUST turn to Christ. Look at the hope of this song. THIS TOO is included in living under God. Praise the Lord!

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): Afflicted Saint, to Christ Draw Near

You will go AWOL—walk away if you don’t know both who your God is OR His resources for being faithful in His service. Who is God? He is Almighty God, El-Shaddai as the choir sang. He is Jehovah-Tsidkenu—the Lord our righteousness. He is Adonai—Our LORD and MASTER. He is Jehovah-Sabaoth—the Lord of hosts. He is Immanuel—God with us. Worship our holy God—there is none like Him. Remember this as Pastor preaches about our struggle.

### \*Hymn (Powerpoint): Only a Holy God

Message: Who or What are you Fighting? Eph. 6:12

\*Hymn #486: Faith is the Victory

\*Prayer