

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 2:10:2007

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

THE WELL DRESSED CHRISTIAN

2. “ STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS,”

Dudley Tyng was a young uncompromising Episcopalian preacher in Philadelphia during the great spiritual awakening in the middle of the 19th century. From time to time he organised noonday meetings at the YMCA in downtown Philadelphia at which great crowds came to hear the dynamic young preacher. At the meeting on Tuesday 30th March 1858. over 5,000 gathered to Tyng preached from the text, “ *Ye that are men, go and serve the Lord.*” (Ex 10:11) Over one thousand men committed their lives to Jesus Christ. During the course of his sermon the young preacher exclaimed, “ *I must tell my Master’s errand, and I would rather that this right arm were amputated at the trunk than that I should come short of my duty in delivering God’s message.*” A week after this event Dudley Tyng visited the Pennsylvanian countryside and watched men work at a corn threshing machine in a barn. Accidentally the young preacher caught his loose sleeve between the cogs of the machine. His arm was severely lacerated. As a result of the severe injuries and shock Dudley Tyng died.

A group of sorrowing friends and ministers gathered at Tyng’s deathbed and one of them asked for a final

statement. Mr. Tyng feebly whispered “ *Let us all stand for Jesus.*” On the Sunday following Dudley Tyng’s death, his close friend and fellow worker George Duffield, pastor Temple Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, preached the morning sermon as a tribute to his ministerial colleague. He concluded his sermon by reading a poem that he just written in tribute to the final words of his great friend.

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross
Lift high his royal banner it must not suffer loss
From victory unto victory, His army He shall lead
Till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed*

Is this not what Paul was exhorting the believers in Ephesus to do ? Standing for God means to not quit. It hints at “ **no surrender attitude,**” which demands confidence and courage in spite of prevailing circumstances. During the battle of Waterloo when the fight was grim and hard, an officer galloped up to the Commander, the Duke of Wellington, reporting on behalf of his superior that they were being destroyed where they were, that they could not hold the position and that they must have reinforcements. Said the Iron Duke, “ *tell him to stand.*” The soldier galloped back to deliver the message. Presently another officer came with the same message. The Duke’s answer was the same, “ *tell him to stand.*” The second officer went back and a third came, begging in the name of his superior for the needed help. “ *I have no help to send you,*” said the Duke. “ *Tell him to stand.*” The officer saluted and said, “ *you will find us there Sir.*”

When the battle was fought and won, they were there, all of them in their place dead. In obedience to their Commander, they had stood and laid down their lives in order that there might victory on the field. Now in studying any passage of the Word of the Lord, one word or term often serves as a key so that we may open up the meaning of the passage and enter into its truth experimentally. There is such a key word in this passage, and it's the word "**stand.**" Look if you will at the three verses where this word is used by the apostle Paul. (6:11, 13, 14,) Dr. Ted. Rendall says "*the verb is a word of command such as that used by a commander in chief to his soldiers before the beginning of battle. It is a word that calls for conviction and courage, for backbone and boldness, for strength and steadfastness in facing the foe. It's as though Paul is saying "Stand your ground."* Now I want to take this word and use it as a key to open up the wealth of teaching implicit in this passage. I have divided our study into 4 parts.

(1) THE SOLDIER'S ENLIGHTENMENT

In other words, Paul calls on Christian soldiers to stand enlightened. Look at (6: 11-12) During the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 President Kennedy and his staff was doing their utmost to prevent a war with Russia. In the dramatization "*The Missiles of October,*" secret of Defence Robert McNamara asks a naval officer of if anyone of the American ships could speak Russian, just in case one of their ships had to be boarded. The officer is very upset that anyone would question the navy's ability to handle a problem at sea. He reminds McNamara that

the navy has a manual to guide them and tell them exactly what to do in every emergency. McNamara's reply is this, "*I don't care what John Paul Jones would do, I want to know what you plan to do ?*" Now military manuals may be outdated but not the Word of God. Do you recall the Psalmist's words ? "*For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.*" (119:89) My the better you know your Bible, the better you will know the enemy and what his strategy is as he seeks to defeat you. Notice that in this passage Paul wants us to stand enlightened concerning,

(a) **THE SPHERE OF OUR ENEMY:**

Do you see what (6:12) says ? Another Translation puts it like this, "*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.*" **Negatively:** we are not warring primarily against flesh and blood. Now of course this does not mean that Christians never face folk who oppose them and the gospel message. I mean the Acts of the Apostles the history book of the early church is the record of that pristine church being persecuted by "*unreasonable and wicked men.*" (2 Thes 3:2) Of course behind their wicked hands there was even a more sinister one, the hand of the devil. You see, our conflict is one fought in the spiritual realm, Paul describes it here as "*in high places,*" or "*in the heavenlies.*" Paul says in his letter to the church at Corinth, "*for though we walk after the flesh we do not war after the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.*" (2 Cor 10:4)

You see, Paul lived a normal human life, that is he walked in the flesh, but he did not employ the weapons of the flesh to prosecute what is essentially a spiritual conflict. Positively: the church wars “ *in the heavenly places.* ” My that there is another world, a world of the spiritual or heavenly is one of the basic truths of the Bible. As Dr, Rendall says, “ *from Genesis to Revelation the Bible bears its consistent witness to the reality of another realm than that of flesh and blood. This realm though invisible to our physical sight, is just as real as the world of mountains, seas, lakes, and trees. The Bible does argue the case for the existence of this other world, but simply announces it as one of the basic principles of its teaching.* ” Paul says, “ *we are not fighting with mere frail men with all their physical and mental infirmities.* ” (1 Cor 15:50)

Our conflict is not with the human and visible but with the superhuman and invisible. My Look at our world tonight ? What have we got ? Murder, rape, violence, murder, perversions of every kind. Who instigates all this ? Satan and his agents are unceasingly active. (a)

(b) THE STRENGTH OF OUR ENEMY:

Look at (6:12) again. You see, Satan is not a solitary enemy. He has a force of demon beings who are highly organised. When Satan rebelled against God one third of the angels sided with him. (Rev 12:4) This group of angels which Satan led, he brought together into a kingdom like God’s system. Turn with me to (Col 1:16) Now Paul here divides creation into two distinct spheres.

There is the sphere of heaven in which invisible beings exist, and there is the realm of earth in which visible beings exist. The one sphere is no less real because it is invisible. Now will you please notice here that angels are divided into ranks, “ *thrones, dominions, principalities, powers.* ” Of course these angels were created to serve and glorify God. They glorify the Lord with their praise. (Rev 4: 8) The book of Hebrews calls them “ *ministering spirits,* ” for they carry out God’s bidding. Now when Satan rebelled against God, one third of the angels sided with him and he brought them together into a kingdom like God’s system. Did you notice that the 4 different ranks in (Eph Ch 6) that are under the authority of Satan correspond to the 4 different ranks mentioned in (Col Ch 1) which are under the authority of God. What are we trying to say ? Simply this. That Satan is supported by a whole hierarchy of evil-beings who acknowledge the Devil as their king, and these evil-beings are arrayed against God and His people.

Now do you realise that the enemy we face is strong ? Don’t be deceived into thinking only of the poverty, the ignorance, the idolatry of the world’s masses, but take into account the fact that these people are held captive by the Devil and his forces. (2 Tim 2:26) Paul says we are to stand enlightened concerning (a) (b)

(c) THE SUBTLETY OF OUR ENEMY:

The word “ *wiles,* ” (6:11) in English refers to subtle trickery or craftiness to deceive. The Greek word used by Paul means the same. The same word is used in (4:14)

My the Devil is a master strategist who can completely out manoeuvre us by his deceptions and devices. We need only turn to the familiar story of Adam and Eve in (Gen Ch 3) to find an illustration of the wiles of the Devil. Error is made to look like truth, questions apparently innocent in themselves lead to tragic consequences, evil is disguised to appear like love and goodness. My the Devil like a spider, weaves his web of trickery and deception. Do you know anything about the wiles of the Devil ? Has he been making inroads into your life ? Through evil speaking (Jam 4:11) through doubt (Gen 3:1) through false teaching (2 Tim 4:3) through an unequal yoke. (2 Cor 6:14) Paul says we are to stand enlightened concerning,

(d) THE SEASON OF OUR ENEMY:

“ *The evil day,*” is literally “ *in the day of the evil,*” that is the day characterised by evil. You say, “ *when is the evil day ?*” Today, yesterday, tomorrow, any day is the evil day as long as evil reigns in the world and as long as Satan is “ *the prince of the power of the air.*” (Eph 2:2) Now Paul wants us to stand enlightened. Of course the better you know your Bible, the better you will know the enemy and what is his strategy as he seeks to defeat you. The better you know your Bible, the better you will know yourself and what God wants to do for you. The better you know your Bible the better you will know your Saviour and what He can do to help make you a conqueror. (1)

(2) THE SOLDIER'S EQUIPMENT

You see, we are not to stand enlightened, but we are to stand equipped. Dr. Ted Rendall says, “ *Paul's teaching on this point may be summarised thus, the whole armour for the whole church, for the whole time of conflict.*” Let's look at these aspects individually. Its,

(a) THE WHOLE PANOPLY:

You see, just as a nation equips its soldiers for war so the Lord has provided Christian believers with all that they need to wear in this spiritual war. Now the word “ *armour,*” here is panoply a complete suit of armour for no part of life must be exposed, for one vulnerable place would mean defeat. For that very reason Paul lists the various pieces of armour that must be put on. We should his words as a checklist to determine whether one important piece may be missing. Note them.

- The Belt of Truth
- The Breastplate of Righteousness
- The Gospel Shoes
- The Shield of Faith
- The Helmet of Salvation
- The Sword of the Spirit
- Prayer

Now do you notice something very important here ? No armour was provided for the soldier's back as no provision was made for retreat. Do you recall that when David volunteered to face Goliath, King Saul tried to fit out David in armour that was not made for him and did not belong to him. The ill-fitting armour was of no use to

David so he discarded it and went to meet Goliath in the strength of the Lord. (a)

(b) THE WHOLE PEOPLE:

Do you see how Paul puts it in (6:10) ? When Paul addressed his “ *brethren*,” he was not speaking to a group of spiritual elite, he was addressing all believers in the Ephesian church. Now it was not an easy to be a Christian in Ephesus. Its citizens liked to call it “ *the Metropolis of Asia*.” This was a very large prosperous business centre because it was situated on the trade route from Rome to the East. Four major roadways intersected at Ephesus, bringing business men and merchants from the important cities of the Roman provinces. Ephesus was also a centre of pagan worship. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world was located here in Ephesus, the Temple of Diana, a massive structure that was as long as two football fields. With temple worship, there not only came idolatry but immorality. Small wonder businessmen travelled the four major highways to Ephesus. They came flocking into the temple to have their every sexual fantasy fulfilled.

Ephesus became know as “ *the Vanity Fair of the Ancient World*.” The people in this church endured in the midst of a tough city. No wonder Paul says, “ *Finally, my brethren, put on the whole armour of God*.” Now do you see this word that Paul uses here “ *brethren*,” ? Well, in using this word he is not limiting this to pastors, teachers, elders, missionaries, evangelists. No, indeed from the context you will notice that the word “ *brothers*,” is all inclusive. In (5:22) wives are counselled, in (5:25) it is

husbands, in (6:1) it is children in (6:4) its fathers in (6:5) Its servants in (6:9) it is masters. You see, all believers regardless of sex, position, or relationship are to put on the whole armour of God. No-one is exempt for the Lord has no place for a spiritual pacifist. So it’s the whole panoply for the whole people for,

(c) THE WHOLE PERIOD:

Of conflict between God and Satan. We are to take up and put on the whole armour and keep that armour on during the entire course of life. There is not time off, there is no vacation, no holiday period. As in the days of Nehemiah we must build and be prepared for a battle at a moments notice. “ *The builders*,” we read “ *every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded*.” (Neh 4:18) It is said of Oliver Cromwell that he always wore under his outer garment, a coat of mail, whether he was in the camp or in the court. He wore this protection all the time because he never knew when a dagger would be thrust at him, so he was always ready. My do you want to be a winner in the Christian life ? Then you need to put the armour on for you will be facing battles until the day you die.

If you think it will get easier you’re wrong. Do you recall that Christ’s public ministry began with conflict ? After the Lord Jesus had fasted 40 days Satan tempted Him. (Matt 4:1) Was that the end of the conflict ? No. Satan attacked Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane as Christ began to sweat “ *as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground*.” (Lk 22:44) The Saviour had conflict at the

beginning of His ministry, and if anything there was an intensification of effort on the part of the enemy as the Saviour came to closer to accomplishing His goals. Has someone ever told you “*you ought to begin witnessing the more you do it, the easier it gets.*” Does it? My the more effective you become, the harder Satan works. People have said to me, “*you’ve been preaching so long, it must be easy.*” It isn’t any easier now that it was before. Sometimes it’s more difficult. Satan wants to keep from me studying, from praying, from preaching. What I am saying is this, the Christian life never stops from being a war. How then can we wage this war? For we certainly have no strength of our own. Well, look, Paul talks about,

(3) THE SOLDIER’S ENABLEMENT

You see, we have no strength of our own, so we must “*be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*” We are not to depend on our own strength, experience or expertise. We are to depend on the strength of God. Paul speaks about,

(a) OUR STRENGTH IN CHRIST:

Notice he uses the word “*in,*” twice in (6:10) “*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*” “*In Christ,*” is one of the key clauses in Paul’s letter to the Ephesian Christians. Although they lived in Ephesus they were secure in Christ. (1:3-4, 2:6) This little clause not only provided a sense of security in Christ, but also a sense of sufficiency in Christ. You see, we are one with Him His life is our life, His power is our power, and

His truth is our truth. In Christ we are strong. No matter how strong our enemy is, Christ’s strength is superior. Do you recall the Risen Lord’s message to the church at Philadelphia? It was just one of two churches in the New Testament that did not receive condemnation from the Lord. Look at (Rev 3:8) Do you see what the Risen Lord says to them? He says, “*I have set before thee an open door,*” this church was reaching out and was blessed by God. Christ says, “*Thou hast a little strength.*” God is so much more powerful than Satan that even a little of His strength is enough to overcome all of the church’s enemies. Listen to John’s confident assurance, “*greater is He that is in you than he is that is in the world.*” (1 Jn 4:4) The smallest amount of divine power can overcome the greatest amount of hell’s power. My that strength is ours in the Lord. “*For,*” says Paul “*I can so all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” (Phil 4:13)

The Psalmist affirmed, “*The Lord is my strength and song and is become my salvation.*” (Ps 118:14) Mind you he did not say “*The Lord was my strength,*” as though he boasted of a past experience. He was up to date in proving that God’s strength is sufficient for every day. Do you remember Moses? He tried to fight the Lord’s battles without using the Lord’s weapons and he failed miserably. (Exod 2:11-14) My there was nothing wrong with Moses **Head or Heart**, but there was something seriously wrong with Moses **Hand**, and God had to put him to the backside of the desert with sheep for 40 years, just to teach him how to depend on the strength of the Lord. Can I ask, what way are you fighting the

Lord's battles ? With the weapons of the world or with the weapons of the Lord ? Paul talks about, (a) and then about

(b) OUR POWER IN CHRIST:

For look if you will at (6:10) You see, we are going to win the war because Christ has gained the victory.

(Heb 2:14) Rendall paraphrases it like this, “ *we are to empowered in the risen and glorified Lord Jesus and in the overwhelming strength of the power that is inherently His because He is God.* ” Now what kind of power is this ?

1. Its Resurrection Power:

Look at (1:15-21) What kind of power do we have ? The power that conquered death, that exalted Christ to the right hand of God and put every angel and demon in the universe under His feet. Every Christian has resources within him to deal with Satan, no matter what onslaughts the Devil may bring. But we must remember two things.

- * Our strength must be in the Lord and not in ourselves.
- * We must utilise the armour, the provision that God has made for us.

2. Its Glorious Power:

Do you remember Paul's prayer in (Col 1:10) ? Now our enemy is formidable. You can't see him, touch him, or outwit him, because he is an enemy of the supernatural realm. My there are millions of demons making up a Satanic system that's beyond our comprehension. There is

no way your human intellect can deal with that system. But know this. God's power is available and if you put on your armour the entire evil system is impotent against you. What an incredible truth. God is our strength, but His strength can be appropriated only by obedience. But let me end on a note of encouragement.

(4) THE SOLDIER'S ENCOURAGEMENT

The Christian life is not easy. There are many battles and our enemy is extremely powerful and subtle. Sometimes we feel that we are standing alone. What kind of encouragement do we have from the Lord ? The greatest encouragement is that the Lord Jesus has already won the fight and we need only follow Him by faith. You see, we are not fighting for victory we are fighting from victory. Do you recall Paul's words ? “ *Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place.* ” (2 Cor 2:14) The purpose of the armour is to help us to stand so we don't lose the ground that Christ has won for us. You see, this book of Ephesians divides neatly into two parts.

(a) THE CHRISTIANS WEALTH IN CHRIST:

Paul deals with this in the opening three chapters. There he presents the great realities of being in Christ, what it means to be a believer, to belong to God, to have the indwelling Spirit of God, to become adopted into the family of God, and to stand in Him. These things describe the position of the believer before God. But then Paul

brings before us,

(b) THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK IN CHRIST:

And he deals with this in the last three chapters. So chapter's 1-3 deal with our **Position**, chapter's 4-6 deal with our **Practice**. John McArthur says, "*the idea of the Christian's practice can be illustrated by a car. The first three chapters of Ephesians describe the car, its engine and its capabilities. The second three chapters are the road map the car is to follow.*" The first three chapters describe the wealth we have inherited through faith in Christ. Because of His grace we have the privilege of being seated with Christ in the heavenlies. (2:6) But in (Ch 4) Paul moves from talking about Wealth in Christ to our Walk in Christ. (4:1) Because we have the privilege today of sitting with Christ in the heavenlies we are to walk differently. Look at (4:17, 5:2, 5:8, 5:15) Now anyone is seated with Christ on His throne, and is walking with Him, revealing Him to an evil world is going to be attacked by the enemy.

Spiritual warfare goes hand in hand with our wealth and our walk. The privilege of partaking in the riches of His grace and glory as part of His body is not without its responsibilities. We should not expect to sit and walk with Him unless we are also willing to stand for Him in the battle against Satan. Christ has already won the war for us, it's our responsibility to hold on to His victory. Now of course we are involved in a conquest. Christ said, "*I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Matt 16:18) He was talking about the

movement of His army, the church, in gaining territory and claiming the spoil. But even as you are conquering never forget that you do not fight for victory but from victory. (Heb 2:14) The Lord Jesus has already won the victory for us and we have already entered into our spiritual inheritance in Him. Thus, our role in the battle with the Devil is that of claiming and holding on to the territory and inheritance won for us by the Saviour. Do you recall when the Children of Israel were preparing to enter the Promised Land, their inheritance.

Do you recall what God told Joshua ? "*Arise, go over this Jordan, thou and this people unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.*" (Josh 1:2-3) In other words, God was saying, "*start walking, you already have the inheritance now claim it by faith.*" Now while the Israelites had to fight the inhabitants of the land, they did not do it to conquer new territory, but to claim the inheritance that the Lord had already given them.

My we wear this armour not to gain new territory but to prevent the Devil robbing us of our inheritance. Satan wants to spoil and pillage our wealth and enslave us. But when we stand in the strength and power of the Lord we'll be victorious in the fight. The Lord's call to us is, "**Stand up, stand up for Jesus.**" (1) (2) (3) (4) General Howard one of the heroes of the American Civil War, once said, "*There was one proud day of my life, and that was when a vote of thanks was moved to me on the floor of Congress for my stand at Gettysburg.*" My in that day when the

church militant becomes the church triumphant and we stand together in the Lord's presence, will a vote of thanks be moved on our behalf, because having done all, we stood for the Lord against the powers of darkness ?