

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups July 23rd 2006

Live a new life! – Be strong in the Lord!

Ephesians 6:10-23



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Paul concludes his letter to the Ephesians with what must be one of the most well known passages in the Bible on spiritual warfare. At first glance this may seem somewhat out of context! One moment Paul is writing about relationships in the church, family and work place then suddenly we are catapulted into a battle ground with devil's schemes, struggles against powers of darkness and spiritual forces of evil. Paul's point is that there is no separation between spiritual warfare and our daily lives. The Christian life is a battle and if it is not fought out in relationships, family life, marriages, jobs, lifestyles and the church family, where is it fought?

Three questions for us to consider:

1. Who is it we are battling against?

Read v 11 and 12. The devil's schemes or wiles reveal a cunning deceit. 1 Peter 5:8 describes the devil as a raging lion yet 2 Cor 11:14 describes him as disguised as an angel of light. Both paint a picture of a personal power of evil at work in the world that would seek to prevent us from knowing and loving God and his purpose for our lives. Paul's four descriptions of powers of evil emphasise the battle between good and evil and link the power of evil at a cosmic, world and personal level. Our baptismal liturgy urges us to "fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil."

2. How can the battle be won?

Read 2 Cor 10:3 and 4. These 'weapons' are listed in Eph 6: 14 -17. – read. Paul is urging us to hold on to truth in the way we speak and act, take justice to heart and live lives that reflect the goodness of God, be at peace with God and man and exercise the ministry of peacemaker, have faith in Jesus as risen Saviour, accept that Christ died for us and have confidence in his plan and purpose for our lives (all these are equated with defensive weapons) and to speak out the good news of the gospel through word and action (the one offensive weapon). All of this in the context of prayer – read v18. Simply put, to be effective in battle and not vulnerable to attack the Christian needs – truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Holy Spirit and prayer.

3. Where is the chink in the armour?

All the pieces of armour are needed if a soldier is to be effective in battle but if we are honest all of us have chinks in our armour – a weakness vulnerability which is why God never sends us into battle alone! As Paul well knew the Roman soldier was well equipped to battle not alone but alongside his fellow soldiers and if that soldier should fall others were trained to maneuver and close ranks above the fallen to protect. There would have been army surgeons to help the wounded and return the soldier to their rightful place on the battle field. Read Eph 2:9 -22. We have been called together with Christ himself to live the new life, to battle for his kingdom alongside one another, to lift one another up when one of us falls and to win the victory that is Christ's.



Witness: Questions to discuss

1. How do you picture/imagine the devil?
2. Do you think that we underestimate the effect that 'spiritual forces of evil' have on our lives/ small group/church/the world?
3. Has/does your life ever felt like a 'battle ground?' Do you ever equate this with a spiritual battle?
4. What does it mean for us to "fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil"?
5. Look at Paul's spiritual armour – where do you think your chink is? Share together as a group and pray/minister to one another.