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## EPHESIANS 6:10-24

Ephesians: Recognizing Who You Are in Christ

Today we're coming to the end of Ephesians. This is the last week that we're in the book of Ephesians, but it's a real good study. It's a powerful study and it's an encouraging study, a hopeful study for us.

We're going through the Bible verse by verse. We happen to be in Ephesians now. Next week we're going to start the book of Esther. You can read ahead and you can try to catch along with what's happening in the book of Esther and I'll be teaching through it verse by verse. We'll be taking each chapter one at a time and trying to understand what God has for us.

Today though is going to be a really valuable message that Paul ends his epistle with. I really use this kind of teaching that we have at the end of Ephesians 6 to teach people a concept. So I want you to grab a concept today, a biblical concept, although the words I created myself. I call it Level 3 thinking. Level 1 thinking is the things we're doing all around us. We're cleaning house, we're driving, we're playing video games. Whatever we're doing, that's Level 1 thinking, just the activity that we're in. Level 2 is being responsible, thinking about whatever else I'm supposed to be doing. But Level 3 thinking is thinking what God is doing in every situation.

I am convinced we all need to be moving more into Level 3 thinking and understanding what God has for us. So as Paul ends his letter in Ephesians 6 he talks about this Level 3 thinking and helps us understand more about how we then can see what God is doing on the bigger scale of things.

Let's look at Ephesians 6:10-24. Starting in verse 10 it says, *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power*. Paul has this understanding of the Holy Spirit's power that is very significant. That's why in Ephesians 5:18 he says, *be filled with the Spirit*. Then he applies it to family dynamics – wives, husbands, children – he then applies it to the workforce where we're talking about employees and employers.

He's ending this book about how powerful it is and he's talking about standing firm in the Lord. So we must understand the power that spiritual forces have. We must understand what they look like. He's going to talk about this, not only by describing the Holy Spirit's power, but reminding us of the satanic power, spiritual forces of evil, that also exist.

The key verse here is verse 10. He says, *Finally, be strong in the Lord*. Not be strong in yourself. Be strong in the Lord.

The word 'Lord' is used twenty-two times in this epistle. Submit in the Lord. Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*. Find out what pleases the Lord. Often he's talking about the Lord and the Lord has this idea of boss, that He's the controller. He's the one controlling us.

He says, *be strong in the Lord*. Not being strong in your own self, but be strong in the Lord. He doesn't say just pull it together and be strong, he's saying be strong in the Lord. What does that look like, what does that mean?

The word *be strong* in this passage is passive. It's not saying strengthen yourself, it's saying be strong in the Lord. Allow God to strengthen you. Don't be strong in your opinions, don't be strong in your experiences, don't be strong in your bank account. That's not what he's talking about here. He's not talking about being strong in your career or in your knowledge. He's talking about being strong in the Lord and in His *mighty power*. He's going to illustrate this mighty power and what it is as we go through here.

He's going to say in verse 11, *Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes*. So we have today our visual illustration that actually sits here every week. It's usually on the stage, but I told them to bring it down. This thing is so big. I look like a shrimp compared to this. But it's a good reminder of the Holy Spirit's power against the forces of evil. So we can look at that as an example of a soldier and some of the armor that a soldier might have.

He says in verse 11, *Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes*. We don't live in a dualistic world, that is, we've got equal powers of bad and good fighting against each other. Some people think that's what we are. It's bad and good fighting a war and we have to decide what we're going to choose. That's not the picture that God gives us.

God gives us a picture of Him being created in the first words of the Bible, *In the beginning God*. Not in the beginning there were two things going on battling back and forth. *In the beginning God*. God created everything including angels who fell, among them Satan, so Satan is a created being. So we must understand that the power that God has is much greater than any power that Satan might have. But we must respect the power that Satan might have or the demons might have or the spiritual world might have even in our lives.

There are two dangers when it comes to the spirit world, the evil spirit world. One is the danger of overemphasizing demons. There are some people who find a demon behind every problem in life. They even call it that. There's the demon of fear and the demon of anger and even in the Bible it talks about a spirit of fear. Instead of viewing that as an attitude of fear, they view that as an actual demon of fear. I'm not sure that's wise or what the Bible's intending, but there are some people who see a demon behind every problem and so they're continually looking to fight a spiritual battle for everything that happens. We want to be careful not to overemphasize that. We can become preoccupied with all of those things and it can distract us from what God has for us.

The second danger is to underestimate the power of Satan, underestimate the power of demonic world, and trivialize it. To look at the red devil with the pitchfork and the tail like on deviled ham. Whatever it is, it's on there. Some people trivialize the Satan and they make it out to be something that's just nothing. That also is very dangerous.

We must realize a balance. The important thing is to realize the greatest strength we have is to focus on God and what God has done. As we talk about demons today, as we talk about the spiritual world, I'm going to share five additional passages to the one we're looking at about the armor today. As far as I'm concerned, these are the key passages in the Bible. If you're going to know anything about the demonic world, you're going to understand anything about the satanic realm, you want to know about these five verses or five passages of scripture. You might want to jot them down.

The first one reminds us of the importance of the way we protect ourselves is to be obedient to God and when we're not obedient to God we open ourselves to satanic attack. There's a story in the book of Samuel where Saul and Samuel are interacting. Saul was the first king of Israel and God sent Saul on a mission. Samuel told him, "I want you to go kill the Amalekites; kill them all, kill the animals, kill everything. That's your assignment."

Saul, like many of us, had his own ideas of what he should do. He didn't completely obey God in this respect. He tries to justify himself. So Samuel meets him on his way back from the battle and Saul says, "Hey, Samuel. I'm glad you're here. I did everything you told me to do."

Samuel says, "Well then what is that noise I hear, that sheep bleating, the cows mooing. What is that noise I hear?"

And Saul says, "Oh, we kept some of the best to offer as sacrifices to God."

Samuel's saying, "What did you do that for? You should have killed everybody!"

Saul continues to argue and say, "I did do what I was supposed to do!" He just talks himself out of obedience, he talks himself out of doing the right thing and God is going to remove him from being the king.

Here's the passage. I just want you to see it because at the very end of the passage we have the application that helps us understand the power of obedience in our lives that protects us from this satanic realm. Let me read this to you.

*When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord's instructions."*

*But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"*

*Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."*

*"Enough!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night."*

*"Tell me," Saul replied.*

*Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them*

*until you have wiped them out. Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?"*

*"But I did obey the Lord," Saul said. "I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king." This guy's talking himself into all kinds of problems. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal."*

Now comes their application. After you see this story and you see now what Samuel's going to say, it helps us understand how to protect ourselves and how God protects us from the enemy who's out there to destroy us.

Verse 22: *But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination (that's witchcraft), and arrogance like the evil of idolatry (setting up another foreign god in your life).*

Do you see what he's saying here? When you are disobedient to God you open yourself up to satanic attack. If you want to protect yourself from the evils of demonic activities in your life, the most important thing you can do is be obedient to God, doing what he says. Yielding your heart to Him, giving your heart to Him, obeying Him in every area. Because if you don't, you open yourself up and he gets a foothold in your life in one way or another and he can take what may appear to be a trivial foothold and turn it into something that's rather dangerous.

Passage number two about the dangers of Satan and satanic attack. Ephesians 4:26. *"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and the rest of the verse says and do not give the devil a foothold."*

You see, the devil can get a foothold in your life whenever you take on something in your life that is ungodly. If you're not handling your emotions properly, that can be a foothold in your life. If you're not handling your priorities correctly, that can be a foothold and Satan can get a foothold in your life.

Again, obedience is important and we need to be careful of the footholds because Satan wants to get in there. What is the solution? Obedience. One hundred percent commitment to the Lord, obeying Him so that there is no way for a foothold to come into your lives. That's what he's saying here in Ephesians as well as in this other passage. We're talking about the importance of being strong in the Lord so that we can put on the full armor of God as we fight the battle in our lives.

It's like a play. If we were to have a play here you would see out in front all the players of the play and behind the scenes you would have other people working. In our lives we must realize there's a play out in front where we're all doing our work, but there's a Level 3 kind of thinking which keeps us in touch with what's behind the curtain, that God is working in and around the situations in our lives.

For example, the fact that you're here today is no accident. God is working. He may be working in your life as you came here or maybe He has something He wants you to say to someone else. God is working. If we're continually having this Level 3 thinking, we're thinking about what God is doing in the situation, powerful things can happen. But we get stuck in Level 1 kind of thinking and we start looking at all the problems in our lives and we don't get to see what God is doing.

So verse 12 reminds us (this is back to Ephesians 6) – *For 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.*

I'm not sure whether he's speaking there of a chain of command among the evil forces. I don't know what he is exactly speaking of, but he has a lot of words to describe the spiritual forces of evil. He's describing the enemy in graphic terms and he's going to give us some ideas now about how we can protect ourselves every day as we face the challenges, recognizing that it could be something as simple as God giving us an instruction and us talking ourselves into another idea about what we think that should mean. We're having a problem with our emotions where Satan can get a foothold; we must be prepared and ready to face the spiritual battles of the day.

So he says in verse 13, *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

Satan is looking for ways to attack and destroy. Notice in the middle there *so when the day of evil comes*. For each one of us the day of evil looks different. For one person the day of evil might be tomorrow because they have to go to the doctor and they'll be tempted in a particular way. For somebody else it might be tomorrow. They'll be tempted at work to have a particular attitude or something. It might be somebody else has a particular bent toward their thinking going in the wrong direction. The day of evil looks different for each one of us.

It says, *put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

The word *stand* is mentioned four times in this passage. It's this military picture of the king of the hill. I remember when we were kids we would have a hill and someone would get on the top and others would try to come up and push us off. He's saying you will be able to stand. That's the idea. Stand and you want to have this armor of God all over you.

He's going to talk about six different parts of this armor as we're moving forward, but the idea is we want to be the king of the hill. Not in the sense of pride, but that we don't want something in our world to push us off center spiritually. Because when we get pushed off center spiritually then we're tempted to lie, tempted to yell at someone, tempted to be unkind, tempted to take matters in our own hands, tempted to be fleshly in our lives. We want to be spiritually centered and the armor of God that's given to us helps us to do this.

As Paul is writing the book of Ephesians he's in house arrest in Rome and he has the soldiers who are on duty that come in and take care of him or oversee him. Maybe he's even chained to

them. We don't know for sure since he's on house arrest, but maybe they're just in there guarding him. But they're coming in and then they're leaving. They're coming in and then another one will come in and they take turns doing that.

At some point he's thinking about the spiritual battle that we have and he says to the soldier, "Hey, would you just turn around there a minute so I can look at you because what you're wearing right there reminds me of the spiritual battle and how God wants to protect each one of us. So I want to look at you while I write these next words." So he's writing these words with soldiers around and he uses the armor to describe the armor of God that he wants for us.

The first piece – in verse 14 he says, *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.*

In those days they would wear a belt, a rather large one. All their garments were kind of hanging down robes, that kind of stuff. If they were going to run somewhere they would tuck in their garment to their belt so they could run. It would help them to be able to move around more easily. When he's talking about truth he's saying truth is going to be that thing that's going to gurge you up, it's going to be important. It's this integrity that you have in your life. Truth is like that.

We're talking about being a truthful person. We're going to talk about the sword of the Spirit, the word of God in a little bit, which is the truth, but he's talking about having this sense of truth in your life. How are you going to be a truthful person because that integrity is going to guard you, it's going to give you that belt around.

Some time ago I was watching these guys play basketball and you know how sometimes young people today wear their pants really low and their underwear is showing and it's embarrassing. You feel like taking a stapler and helping them a little bit. But this guy's trying to play basketball with pants that are falling down. It's so funny to watch because he keeps pulling them up while he's trying to play basketball and I'm thinking, "That guy needs a belt. That's what he needs."

I think that's what we're talking about here. We all need this belt of truth to keep us going in the right direction. It gives us this sense of integrity. Because when you don't have truth you start falling into error and Satan can get a foothold. Then we've got a problem.

That belt of truth I think is tied really well into the next piece of armor, *the breastplate of righteousness in place.*

Doing the right thing. Making a choice to do what's right. We all make choices everyday as to whether we're going to do what's right or we're not going to do what's right. You may be tempted to do something that's wrong and when you're tempted to do that wrong thing there is an arena inside your heart where a battle is about to take place, where temptation meets strategy.

Every one of us has a spiritual heart and there's an arena inside of that and the arena that you have in a particular area in your life may be different than the next person, but you'll know you're in the arena when the temptations start to spark inside. The temptation to go this direction

or that direction, to do this thing or say this thing, to do something you know is not right. But it happens to be a way that you've done it or it happens to be something you're attracted to. So you're in the arena when the temptation is present. The arena is where the battle takes place.

He's saying have the spiritual armor or have the strategy ready to go and when you do what's right, when you emphasize the truth there's this integrity that you have that protects you, that gives you a clear conscience, that you're doing the right thing. The weight of sin then would hinder your ability to move around, it hinders your joy. And so we want to be careful to do what's right. When we're not doing the right thing, when we're being hindered by sin in our lives it just damages who we are. It even wreaks havoc in us physically.

Here's what David said when he was in sin. He said, *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

See, when we have sin in our life, it weighs us down, it hinders us, then the enemy can come in and say, "You're not worthy. You can't be used by God. Don't even try to witness. Anybody who looks at your life sees that you're a hypocrite," and all of a sudden then you're weakened spiritually.

What are the two parts here? Truth and righteousness. It will help you maintain that integrity that God wants you to have inside your heart, allowing the Holy Spirit to provide that for you in your life. The armor of God.

Let's go on to the next one, verse 15: *and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.* You're ready. You're ready, you're looking, you're ready for the arenas that take place, you're ready to share the gospel.

Notice *with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.* When we say to a child sometimes, "Get your shoes on; we need to go." What we're saying is get ready. Get your shoes on, we need to go. I think we need every morning when we get up we need to hear the Holy Spirit saying, "Get your shoes on. Get ready for you. You need to be ready for today." Be ready with the gospel of peace. You don't know what's going to be out there and you don't know how you're going to be challenged. What are you going to do?

In those days they had sandals. Most of the people were in open-toed sandals, but when they went into a battle they had these coverings that went over them that were these shoes that protected their feet. That's what we're talking about here. Get your shoes on. They're important.

I said there were five passages of scripture that help us understand more about satanic attack and the evil world. One of those using John 10:10. This is the job description of Satan, the job description of the evil one. Jesus says, *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

So what Satan wants to do in your life is he wants to steal your joy, steal your peace, steal whatever in your life, and he wants to damage relationships, he wants to kill anything that you have that might be good and he wants to destroy. He wants to destroy you so you cannot move forward. That is his job description.

There is a contrast there though. Jesus says, *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full*. So when we have Jesus Christ in our life there's this amazing thing that comes into our hearts. The Holy Spirit comes to live inside of us, the power of the Spirit, we can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His Spirit. That's what he's talking about here.

We don't have to be susceptible or open to satanic attack. Satan just wants to destroy. As you look around you see all kinds of ways he does that. He destroys all kinds of things, he steals all kinds of things, he hurts all kinds of things. That's his job description. We want to be on guard about that.

He's going to talk about verse 16. *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

There were two kinds of shields that they had in those days. There was the round small shield that they would use when they fight close hand-to-hand combat. So they had a sword (in our case, the *sword of the Spirit*) and the shield (*shield of faith*) that they're using back and forth.

There was another kind of shield that's really interesting especially as you look at it in terms of the spiritual application. It was a big shield. It was about two and a half feet wide and then you could rest it on the ground. So it went all the way down to the ground and you could hold it up and wear it up on your shoulder. What they would do is they would lock them together so that you could have this person's shield locked to this person's shield. They would fasten them together and they could advance to attack the army. A beautiful picture of the church and what God wants to do in our lives that we don't stand alone. There's a shield that we have, certainly we want to have that shield of faith, but that we can share our shield with the next person's shield and so on and together we can advance in the army that we have.

But the shield of faith really protects us from what? Do you see what it says there? *Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

The evil one is throwing out these darts, things that bait us to do the wrong thing. Your mate gets angry with you – I'm not saying that your mate's Satan – but Satan might use that dart as a dart saying, "Now I'm really mad and I'm going to take..." and we're tempted to get angry back at that person. He's saying these darts are flying in. Someone else does something wrong to you or there's an attraction over here to do something else and they're flying in.

These big shields that they had were made out of wood with leather over them. That was what protected them as they were fighting the enemy. These darts, these flaming darts, they would take the arrows and they would dip them in a tar substance, light them on fire, and shoot them. And so when it hit the target the tar would splatter and burn the person. You can imagine these



big shields like porcupines with all these different arrows in them with steam coming out of there.

They would take their shield with leather on them and they would soak them in water before they went out to fight this to protect themselves from the flaming arrows. There's preparation that took place. You've got to realize the enemy's out there throwing arrows. If you open yourself up by putting yourself on the internet in a way that is not protected, those arrows are coming. What's going to happen to you? If you find yourself in a place where your temptation might be present in that place, you can be in trouble there. So those flaming arrows are coming. We need to be ready and we need to be prepared for them.

Verse 16: *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* And they would lock their shields together and they would be able to move forward. The enemy knows our weakness. He knows where we're weak and he wants to shoot those arrows out as darts to damage us and hurt us.

Verse 17: *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* The helmet of salvation protects the head and our thinking. So important. The salvation renews our minds. It gives us this ability because of God's grace to think differently about life. We do not think like the person who's not a Christian. We believe that we have faith in God. He has transformed us and He protects our thinking. He protects our heads. The enemy wants to get at us. He wants to challenge our thinking and mess us up. So we take the helmet of salvation.

I just want to suggest that today if you come here and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are unprotected. It's like going into battle without a helmet on. So he's saying take the helmet of salvation and put it on. What that means is you want to trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You want to accept Christ into your life because when you do that then you have that helmet, you have that protection. You learn how to think differently. You learn how to think more godly. God designed us, He set up this world the way He wants us to live and then we can function better. This helmet of salvation is strategic.

Then he talks about the sword of the Spirit which is the word. You see the word *word* there. There are two different kinds of word for 'word' in the Bible. There's the word *logos*, which refers to the truth, the word. It's the commonly used word for 'word.' But the word that's used here is not *logos*. The word that's used here is *rhema*.

The word *rhema* is the word for 'word' that has the idea of something that applies to me right now where I am. So if someone comes up to me and says, "I have a verse I want to share with you and I look at that and I go, 'Well I needed that today.'" That's a *rhema*. Or someone calls me up on the phone and encourages me or sends me a message on Facebook and encourages me and I needed that right at that moment. That's a *rhema* of God, an applicable word for that moment. That's the *rhema* of God. That's what we're talking about here.

That *rhema* is what he's speaking of here as *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* The *rhema* of God. When you go to God's word and you study it this week and you open it up to the book of Esther and you start reading it, you will learn things differently this week than you

will learn the last time you read the book of Esther last year or whenever. Because it's alive, it's living. God will do something in your life and it's that *rhema* word that comes to you.

This is the beautiful thing about the spirit of God and about the sword of the Spirit that God gives you what we need at that moment to fight the battle in our lives. That's why is so important for us to regularly be getting input from God's word. Sometimes it's listening to a worship song that's focused on the word of God. Sometimes it's studying God's word for ourselves or listening to a sermon. But when we do that, God speaks to us in a particular way.

I would expect that out of whatever we're doing here this morning in this teaching God will say something specific to you. It may not have been a major point that I made, but God is speaking to you and He shares with you the word of God, the *rhema* of God.

God's word is powerful and so as we study it, God takes it and applies it to our lives in a special way. I often say to children as I'm counseling with them and they tell me about a problem, I say, "You know, there's a verse in the Bible just for you." I say that because I am convinced that God's word is a very practical book for every person and there's a verse in the Bible just for you for today. Your job is to find that, to allow God to speak to you in the midst of the challenges. He'll encourage you and move you forward.

Well, I told you there were five passages. I've given you three so far. I'm going to give you a fourth one now that will help you understand the evil one and the satanic warfare that we go through and it's the one from Matthew 4:4.

Jesus says, "*It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God,'*" the living word of God that you'll receive today. When Jesus was fighting temptations in that particular story in Matthew 4, Jesus is out in the wilderness being tempted and Satan is giving Him ideas about He can do things in His own power instead of allowing God to control Him. So Jesus' response is, *Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*"

As we are looking at that, what God does in our lives through His word changes us. It gives us what we need. It's a food that we need every day. It's the power of God in our lives. It's not a static book, it's not an ancient book; it's a book that's living and active.

Hebrew 4:12: *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword (that's the small sword now that's two-sided so he can fight in the close battle), it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

You having an attitude problem? You want to look at the Bible. Because the Bible is living and active. It's so exciting that every time you open the Bible you never know what's going to happen. You really ought to pause before you open the Bible because you don't know. God might take your breath away. As soon as you open it up He might tell you to do something or He might affirm you in a way that you hadn't seen before and you go, "Wow. I needed that."

My dad used to take the Bible in his hands and it was like it was alive. He'd be moving it around. "Are you ready to open up the Bible today?" And we'd be laughing about that. But the point is, the Bible's living and active in each one of our lives and God wants to share the *rhema* word with us so that we can experience it in a powerful way.

Look at verse 18. Although verse 18 doesn't tell us about a particular part of the armor, it does quickly go into the importance of prayer in our lives because prayer gets us in touch with the spiritual realm in a positive way. *And 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.*

Notice it says, *pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.* That means there are different kinds of prayers. There's worship prayers, there's praise prayers, there's thank you prayers, there's asking prayers, there's confession prayers, there's dedication prayers. There are all kinds of prayers. So we don't just have one kind of prayer that we have before God. We're not just worshiping Him all the time; sometimes we're asking Him for things. But if we're always asking Him for things, maybe we need to use some of the other kinds of prayers and requests.

*With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.* We need to be praying for each other. We have a Facebook group, a prayer group, but if you'd like to get in it you can. It's an opportunity for us to be praying for each other in the group, so we're actually lifting up requests to the Lord in the Facebook group.

But it's not just *praying for all the Lord's people*. In verse 19 he makes it even more personal. In verse 19 he says, *Pray also for me.* Here's Paul and he's saying, *Pray for me.* Would you pray for me? Why? Because although Paul knows all about the spiritual battle, like all of us do, we know much more than we're putting into practice, we each need prayer. Lord, I just pray that you would protect Joe and Bill and Sam and I just pray that you would be working in their hearts. We need that in our lives.

Paul is praying, *Pray for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

The study of spiritual warfare reminds me of this fun story in the Old Testament about Elisha. This is really the last passage that I want to share with you about spiritual warfare. It's a very interesting story that I think we need today. It's the same thing that Paul is sharing with the Ephesians and talking to them about.

It's a story about Elisha. What's happening in Israel at that time is the King of Aram wants to fight with the Israelites. He wants to go into battle with them, so he goes and sets up camp in a certain area knowing that they're there because the scouts have told him that they're there. He goes, sets up for battle, and he goes to fight and they're not there. They're gone. The scouts go and find them in another area. So he goes over there, sets up for battle over there and they're not there. So the scouts say, "Well they're over there." He goes over to this other place and he sets up for battle and the Israelites are not there.

He kind of realizes there must be a traitor in the camp. So he says to his leaders, his commanders, “Who is telling the Israelites that we’re coming?” And the commanders say, “It’s nobody who’s a traitor among us. There’s a prophet in Israel whose name is Elisha and he tells the Israelites where we’re going and so they always go to another place.”

The king says, “Well we’ll take care of that. We’ll get Elisha.” So they go at night and they set up camp all around the city and all around this whole area where Elisha is. In the morning the servant gets up, he walks out, he gets some water, some fresh air. It doesn’t say what he’s doing, but he walks out of the house and he looks up and there are the armies. He goes back in to Elisha, “We have a problem,” he says. “The armies of Aram are out there.”

Elisha says, “You don’t have to worry about it.”

The servant says, “What are you talking about?”

Elisha says, “The people with us are greater than those who are with them. Lord, would you please open the eyes of this servant?”

The eyes of the servant were opened up interestingly enough and, I don’t know if this happened in any other place in the Bible, I can’t think of another time that this happened where someone’s eyes were opened and they were able to see the whole spiritual battle going on. It’s not just Level 1 thinking. We have a battle going on here. Let’s open the eyes and see this spiritual battle that’s taking place.

And so yes, his eyes were opened and he looked around and he saw chariots of fire all around protecting Elisha. How do you think that made him feel when he experienced him that? I’m sure it gave him a tremendous sense of relief because he stopped looking at just the Level 1 kind of thinking, the things that were going on around him and he moved up because God allowed him to see what was going on in the bigger picture.

That’s what we all need, I’m convinced. We need to move up and say, “God, open up my eyes. Help me to see what you’re doing today in this day. Help me to see what you’re doing in my home, in my workplace, wherever I am. Lord, show it to me.” It’s a beautiful thing when we get to see that. There are times when something very unusual happens and I’m going, “This is really odd,” and then I say, “God must be doing something here.” Or “This is really weird. God must be doing something here because this doesn’t seem to be normal. God is doing something. I don’t know what it is.” God is often doing some dramatic things in our lives. We want to be sensitive to that and thinking of it.

Let’s just read the final verse of Ephesians before we end today. It says, *Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing.* He’s the mail carrier taking the letter to the Ephesians. *I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.*

*Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.* And that grace is the grace that God gives us when we accept Him as our Lord and Savior. It is the grace that we receive that allows us to live everyday in our lives. It’s that grace that we need for today. It’s that

grace that we need for tomorrow. God is the one who dispenses that grace for us. Paul is reminding us of that.

It's a beautiful book, the book of Ephesians. I'd encourage you to take some time and just reflect on the things you've learned as we've studied the book of Ephesians just for your own reminding. So when somebody says Ephesians in the future you say, "Oh yeah, I like that book because," and you'll remember the various things we talked about throughout that book.

Let's pray.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word and recognize that it's not just an ancient book but it's really the word of God that speaks to us, teaches us, helps us to understand what we need for our lives. Lord, we love you. We thank you for what you're doing. Continue to grow us we ask. Lord, you are everything to us. The grace you give us just reminds us that we cannot live a day without you, that we need you in everything that we do. Be honored in our lives this morning. In Jesus' name, amen.