

“The Battle Against the Devil”

Ephesians 6:10–13

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by Senior Pastor Hong Poonghwa

Ephesians 6:10–13 (PowerPoint)

Preface

It has taken about four years, but at last, we have reached the concluding part of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The passage we have just read, from Ephesians 6:10 onward, may be said, in a sense, to represent the summit of the entire letter.

Why? Because to encounter Jesus Christ, to believe in God, and to know God means to realize that up to now you have been fighting the wrong opponents—to recognize that you have been living as if the things and people you should not fight, the ones who are not your true enemies, were in fact your opponents.

Those who appear before our eyes—the people, things, and circumstances that we can see—are *not* the ones we are to fight. Rather, the real enemies are those who may be almost invisible to us, yet truly exist: beings whose very occupation is to oppose God, who know that nothing grieves God more deeply than to attack human beings, created in the image of the one true God; the “god of this world” who seeks to imprison humanity in the darkness of not knowing the true God; the ones who cunningly manipulate the flow and atmosphere of this world, striving to keep people within an existence devoid of the true God. This struggle against the devil and evil spirits is precisely the battle of the believer in the Triune God.

It is one essential element that accompanies our following of Christ.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is written so that we may confirm who it is that has purposed our faith, what the God who purposed it has done for us, what He expects of us, and what we must fight, how, and with what.

Chapters 1 through 3 have taught us what we believe, what we have been given, and what noble status we have been granted through what we have received.

Then, from chapter 4 through 6:9, Paul has shown us how and where that faith ought to be made visible in our daily lives—the practice of faith, and its concrete arenas.

And now, beginning in 6:10, Paul teaches us this: “In the very places where you are to live out your faith, there will inevitably be battle. But do not mistake your opponent.

Stand firmly as one who can discern clearly who the true enemy is. For not mistaking your opponent is absolutely essential if you are to keep the faith. And put on rightly and securely the tools and armor necessary for that battle.”

In other words, this is a *spiritual battle*.

It is the true, substantial battle hidden behind the visible world, or beyond it—the highest and deepest kind of battle for a Christian—and Paul teaches us about the armor necessary for it.

Part One

As we have seen up to last week, our opponent is not *people*.

Yet this world seems to revolve as if it is built upon competition, conflict, and struggle *between people*:

studies, sports, economy, arts, science, music, politics, history, fashion, comedy, parenting, eating, playing, talking, driving, conversation itself, career and experience—indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that every area of human life is so. This is a world that seems to make us believe that tasting victory in such battles will lead us to happiness. But the Bible tells us sharply and clearly: “*That is not the battle for us Christians.*”

Before believing in Jesus, we were led to think that “that very thing is our battle.” But we come to realize that we were being driven in that direction by the devil—the being who opposes God. We come to know, acknowledge, understand, and discern his existence. And to fight against *him*—that is the essential, true battle of human beings. This is what it means to encounter the true Lord God and to believe in Jesus Christ. It is exactly as the Scriptures record.

1 John 3:8 (PowerPoint)

“The devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose—to destroy the works of the devil.”

Hebrews 2:14–15 (PowerPoint)

“(Jesus,) through death, destroyed the one who has the power of death—that is, the devil—and freed those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

The enemy of Jesus was not people.

It was the devil.

The devil was the one against whom the Lord Jesus fought.

Therefore, for example, when His disciple Peter sinned before Him, Jesus did not say, “Get behind Me, Peter,” but rather, seeing in Peter’s heart the presence of the very source of evil, the being who had taken hold of Peter’s heart and was turning him away from God, He said, “Get behind Me, Satan. You are not thinking of the things of God, but of the things of man.”

Of course, at the same time, the Lord was also exhorting Peter himself— “Peter, realize that your heart has been taken by Satan, that you are not facing toward God, yet you

are deceived into thinking you are. Wake up from that false sense of righteousness.” But more than that, Jesus was showing him who the true opponent is, teaching him with His own words that he must not mistake the one he should fight.

Therefore, the author of Ephesians, the Apostle Paul, felt deep sorrow that even those who believe in God and in Jesus Christ were still mistaking their opponents, still fighting against people — and even, at times, turning their fellow believers, brothers and sisters in the same faith, into enemies. And so, with this concern, he teaches us: “As the Church, the Body of Christ, you must not mistake your opponent.”

We who are Christians, whose spiritual eyes have been opened by the Holy Spirit, do not fight against people.

Our opponent is the devil.

Part Two

When we speak of “the devil,” there is one unforgettable experience that comes to mind.

When I became a Christian during my third year of university while studying in the United States, Pastor Paul Kim, who was the youth pastor at the church I was attending, invited me, saying, “Would you like to come with us on a one-month short-term mission trip to Russia and Kazakhstan?”

I felt unworthy that he would invite me—someone who had not even been baptized for six months yet. But I thought, “*If Pastor Paul is going, I’ll be okay,*” and in the end, I decided to join.

From about two months before departure, we began preparing through prayer and Bible study with Pastor Paul and the young people who would go on the trip.

One night, all of us who were going gathered at the church for an all-night prayer meeting. We brought our sleeping bags into the sanctuary and began praying together. Then, one of the young men felt as though someone was staring at him. When he opened his eyes and looked toward the pulpit, he saw—perched on the edge of the pulpit, hooking its long claws over the side—a figure cloaked in total darkness, with large wings and wide, white eyes that glared sharply with tiny black pupils like grains of rice. It was sitting there, glaring at us who were praying, with an expression that seemed to say, “*Shall I devour you all?*”

The young man instinctively realized, “*That is Satan. That’s a demon.*” And he immediately closed his eyes again and began to pray to God.

When everyone had finished praying, that young man told us about what he had seen—about that devil-like being that had been glaring at us as we prayed.

Then together we shared and prayed, saying, “Satan hates it when we, by the Holy Spirit, pray to God the Father and the Son Jesus. He tries to interfere. He detests the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is precisely such beings who are our true enemies as Christians.”

And so, we went to Kazakhstan.

There, on the streets or in praise meetings, we encountered situations where people suddenly fell into what seemed like demon-possession—people seized by unexplainable power, uttering a deep, guttural voice that seemed to come from nowhere, trying to shake others off violently. So, we all helped to restrain them, and together with Pastor Paul, we began to pray over them, calling upon the name and the blood of the Lord Jesus.

Both the ones being prayed for and those praying were drenched in sweat. But after about an hour of prayer, he began to calm down. Their expressions changed entirely—his face became clear and peaceful, and he seemed completely unaware of what had just happened to him.

Afterward, when we listened to their stories, they said things like,

“He had been struggling with family problems and was harboring complaints against God,” or “He used to come to worship every week, but lately he’s been drowning in alcohol and stopped coming.”

It was then that we realized—*“Ah, Satan attacks by exploiting people’s spiritual weaknesses!”*

Before even a year had passed since I came to faith, I had been shown, visibly and unmistakably, the existence of those forces that oppose God—the devil, Satan. From that moment on, I could no longer deny that Jesus Christ is truly God, nor that there exists a devil who seeks to obstruct and deny that truth head-on—a being that shapes the course of this world and continually sows disobedience toward God in human hearts.

Since that time, whenever I read in the Bible about demons or demoniacs, those stories came alive as if they were happening to me personally.

And I began to think, “If God would use me, I would rather live—not for the fleeting, perishing world that I can see—but as a pastor, proclaiming the invisible yet eternally certain kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, and live as one who truly lives.”

That was the conviction that came to me through the words of **2 Corinthians 4:18**

(PowerPoint): Those words pressed upon me with living reality, and with that conviction I returned to Japan—and that has led me to where I am today.

Now, looking back, I think perhaps God revealed the existence of the devil to me so vividly—in a way I could see with my eyes, hear with my ears, and perceive with my senses—because, by temperament, I have a weak and skeptical faith. I tend to think

only in ways that drift away from God, needing to see and touch before I believe. So perhaps God made it so that I could *never again deny* the divine revelations written in Scripture, the reality of His existence, and the person of Jesus Christ Himself.

Part Three

In a way, when evil spirits or Satan manifest themselves visibly like that, it is easy to understand. We may not even find it too difficult to deal with.

For we can simply command: *“In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan, depart! Your place is the burning Gehenna!”* and pray.

There is absolutely no need to fear.

But in most cases, as depicted in C.S. Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the devil hides in the shadow of human existence, revealing nothing of his presence, controlling the human heart unseen, acting cunningly behind the scenes—sometimes pretending to be wise, sometimes filled with humor, appearing as if possessing abundance, leisure, and success. He busily yet quietly works to shape the currents and atmosphere of this world, constructing a godless world like a paper façade. Thus, we human beings—sinful as we are—can never accurately grasp his existence through our own ability or intellect.

Unless the help of God, the illumination and intercession of the Holy Spirit, shines upon us, we cannot see who the real opponent is that we are to fight.

Right now, in our early morning prayer meetings, we are studying the book of Zechariah.

And in **Zechariah 4:6** (PowerPoint), the Lord says:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD.

Just as those words declare.

Because the enemy is unseen, hidden behind human forms, we sinners always end up turning our battles into struggles against people.

But under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul teaches us: “Stop fighting such futile battles. As those redeemed from such vain struggles, fix your eyes firmly upon the true opponent, and continue to fight rightly.”

And for that purpose, we need **armor**.

Because sin dwells in us—sin that so easily confuses us about who our true enemy is—we must be armed in order to discern clearly who to fight and to engage rightly in that battle.

Paul exhorts us to put on the armor that God has given, so that when attacked, we remain unshaken, maintaining our God-given spiritual vision; and when we attack, we may strike accurately at the true target.

In this world, wars never cease because people keep mistaking their enemies. That is why, even among us as individuals, conflict never disappears.

We will learn about the specific elements of this armor in the coming messages, but to put it simply, it is **the Word of God** and **prayer grounded in that Word**.

To pray through the Word of God, to be refined as a person by the Word of God, to hold a view of God formed by the Word, to discern the darkness and reality of this world through Scripture, to keep listening to the voice of God in His Word, to kneel, to have a broken heart, to repent—and from that repentance, to love with the humble boldness of a child of God; to forgive; to cover others rather than accuse—this is what it means to engage in a battle not against flesh and blood, but against the devil.

Conclusion

Finally, I would like to close by reading the words of our Lord Jesus, and the words of the Apostle Peter—the very Peter who once received from Jesus the loving rebuke, “Get behind me, Satan.”

John 13:34–35 (PowerPoint)

John 15:12, 17 (PowerPoint)

1 Peter 4:8 (PowerPoint)

John 20:23 (PowerPoint)

Through these words, the Lord seems to teach us not to mistake the reason why we live, why we are given life, and what God’s purpose and expectation for our lives truly are.

I want to stand against the devil—who with all his strength tries to keep us from living a life of love—by living not as one who fights people, but as one who loves people.

I want to be a servant and disciple of Christ who prays for the sake of love, feeds on the Word for the sake of love, and worships for the sake of love.

Let us pray.

Benediction:

Finally, I say to you—Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the devil and against all the powers of darkness.