Tread: **A Study in Ephesians – wk 12 – Are you ready to Fight?**

**Jesus resurrection sends shockwaves thru the world. Ground zero believers – generation 1 – the first followers… Jesus delegate Paul…**

**Writes to the church in Ephesus \* Chap 1-2 where we stand in Christ. \* Chap 3-4 how to walk it \* Chap 5-6 how to run strong!**

**As Paul ends the letter, he gives a challenge. If you’re going to live out what I wrote about, I need to ask you something - Are you ready fight?**

**Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.** **11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, (spirit realm authorities) against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

**I was going to end this series with this installment – but I think I will use it to kick start a new one – THE INVISIBLE WAR**

**Open Your Eyes - A few things to point about this passage right away**

1. **We are not alone (Paul pulls back the curtain on life…)**

**There is an invisible world around us - just as / and even more real than what you see. I am not talking aliens...**

**Spiritual forces, both good & evil at work in this world. Described it the OT and the NT – by apostles and Jesus.**

**We are going take a closer look at this in the coming weeks.**

1. **We are in a war - “our struggle” Christians call it Spiritual Warfare**

**It may seem confusing. It is not fought w/ guns & bombs, or num-chuks & slingshots - but with the most powerful weapon on earth.**

**There is another world we cannot see – invisible spirit world.**

**The tragedy is so many have no idea - living in a playground rather than a battleground**

**The war is real and going on right now - 2 Kingdoms - made up of spirit beings. Not ghosts - but spirits created to worship God - some are now at war with all that God loves.**

**We need to see things differently w/ spiritual eyes (check out 2 Kings 6:15-17) There is a whole other world, look around.**

1. **We have an enemy**

**The enemy is not people- This battle is not about a person, co-worker, your dad, boss, mother-law, bully at school, democrats, republicans, or a president - the war is not w/ Hollywood or TV personalities.**

**But the devil and his army of fallen angels.**

**V12 “against the powers of darkness & spiritual forces of evil”**

**The enemy is ferociously, fierce, and fearless - and severely vicious**

**Understand this - The devil is real, and he has a plan for you**

**He has a plan for your life – your family – your future – your eternity.**

**The Bible calls him - Satan, devil, serpent, great dragon, deceiver, murderer, accuser, adversary, the thief, lawless one, rebellious one, enemy of our soul**

**We are going to talk more about him next week.**

**\* Good news - God is almighty and Jesus has already won. Satan is a created being - with very limited power. He is in no way equal to God.**

**\* Bad news - The enemy is not giving up quietly. And if you are a follower of Jesus - he has you in his sights.**

**1 Peter 5:8 - Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (He is invisible, he is evil, he hates you - and he is on the attack.)**

**What it does not mean**

**- It does not mean that the devil is in everything that's bad**

**The Bible tells us evil comes from: The Flesh (our evil desires) / The World (living in a fallen world) / and The Devil**

**- It does not mean the devil is in every sickness or disease**

**Mental disorders and diseases are not necessarily the devil / we live in a broken and fallen world. We are all in decay.**

**What this does mean**

**KNOW YOUR ENEMY - How does the enemy attack? His Schemes**

**Eph 6:11 …take your stand against the devil’s schemes.**

* **Blind you - Spiritual Blindness**

**The enemy works overtime to bring opposition to anyone coming closer to Jesus Christ - using distractions, denial, and pride**

**Some of you are struggling now to follow - the enemy wants you to check out - he does not want you free - pride sets in**

**2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age (Satan the so-called god – the false idol of this age - he is not a god at all) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

**Ever try to talk to someone about Jesus and no matter what you say - you feel like you're hitting a brick wall? = blind.**

* **Accuse you**

**Condemnation - disapproval - The enemy works to accuse and condemn a person. To think you are the worst person ever.**

**Satan's name in OT is the accuser and adversary. In NT we see the same thing.**

**He says - You can't tell anyone - nobody will love you - you are a loser - God has given up on you. You’ve gone too far. Some of you have listened to the accuser so long you think it’s true.**

* **Deceive you**

**False teaching - deceived into buying the bondage or religion - or to be led by our feeling - deceived into believing a lie - deceived into believe that sin is not sin, that evil is good, God's not real, this is a waste…**

**Deception - Whenever there is lying and deceit - the enemy is at work**

**John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

**Lie to your wife, boss, teacher... when you lie and deceive you are being used by Satan - and will reap his fruit in your life.**

* **Divide you - Division**

**When you don’t like something and decide to check out – when we nurse the wound and carry the pain - we give the devil a foothold.**

**Ephesians 4:26 “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.**

**The enemy wants to destroy the body of Christ by tearing us apart - to use hard and unforgiving hearts to keep us divided.**

**2 Corinthians 2:10 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, (why?) 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.**

**Bulk of the NT is written as a warning of the enemy's schemes to divide the church through unforgiveness & false teaching**

* **Trick you - into doubting God's goodness**

**Genesis - The original sin was - God is not good, He is lying to you - God is holding out and does not want you to have fun or power. He is giving you slip.**

**The enemy is still attacking us with doubt of God's goodness - Why me God? Why my dad? Why my life – why my marriage... God, maybe you're not that good. Maybe you don't care...**

**Matthew 13:19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. (the hard ground)**

**The enemy works to snatch the truth from your heart - to rob what God is doing in you - to doubt his word and goodness**

**Arrogance, pride – I don’t need God!**

* **Ensnare you –**

**He sets a trap - lures you - to catch you and hold you captive to a dangerous lifestyle of denial or to sin. It’s a trap!**

**2 Timothy 2:26 (pray) ...** **that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.**

**The time I trapped a possum in a tub... the enemy sets a trap for you... He temps us in an area of weakness to hold us captive to addiction, sin, depression, fear, loneliness, laziness, apathy**

* **Stop you**

**1 Thessalonians 2:18 - For we wanted to come to you-certainly I, Paul, did, again and again-but Satan stopped us.**

**Specifically, to stop the work of God thru your life – to put the brakes on what God is doing with you – to get you off course - stop you from growing – and get to think about your wants**

* **Destroy you**

**John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**

**Kill you - your dreams - your family - your future - your kids - to lay you wasted - and in some cases possess & control you.**

**There is a fight - right now for you and your family.**

**Eph6 tells us a few things to know about Spiritual warfare: KNOW THIS**

**Paul talking about the invisible war says - Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. (those areas we just looked at)**

**\*\* You cannot win this on your won.**

**Not your power, your strength, abilities, positive thinking, determination. Everything Paul has said hangs on this – it is only through the strength and power of God.**

**Scary movies - evil usually wins or is sometimes defeated by bravery, by love, or goodness... but guess what those things cannot beat the enemy (not Allah, Buddha, meditation, no amount of positive thoughts)**

**You cannot win over the enemy without Jesus**

**You may feel weak or unqualified to engage… that’s a good thing, because you are more likely to trust in and lean on God’s power.**

**Weakness is an advantage! In Christ we are strong!**

**Only Jesus can defeat the enemy. If you are not a Christian, you should be very concerned... You need his power - more on this next week**

**Again, he says - Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God,**

**\*\*\* This is an all-in fight - (v11, 13 – full armor)**

**Following Jesus is an all-in situation – no half in efforts.**

**The enemy does not mess around, he’s not something you kinda fight!**

**D-day - One mission take the beach. 132,000 Allied troops in one day. 4,413 men died that day – some 2000 died in the first 15 min. Without taking that beach and and standing ground - it is believe that we would be under German rule today. They were all in – they did not show up on that day in a bathing suit, suntan lotion and a beach towel.**

**Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, (listen – it is coming. Will you be ready? When he attacks!) you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then…**

**After you have done everything to stand – stand firm then!**

**I tried – stand. I’m beat – stand. Feel defeated – stand! Keep standing and then stand some more – and hold each other up!**

**The enemy keeps coming – stand firm! Keep standing! All in!**

**Ephesians 6:14-17 talks about the spiritual Amor of God – the uniform & weapons of our warfare. They each represent a part of the battle. All given by God. Don’t fight naked! More on this in a couple weeks.**

**Ephesians 6:18 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. (more in the coming weeks – but hang onto this today)**

**\*\* Prayer is our weapon of war**

**Your prayers are far more powerful than you realize.**

**2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish (spiritual) strongholds.**

**Through your prayers God is working and moving to accomplish His will.**

**When the enemy hits hard, and the attack in on, when you are beat & bloody, when you’re starring down temptation, when that habit is looking you square in the eyes, when sickness grabs your ankles…**

**If you are a Christian - What you think just hits the ceiling, are in reality reaching the very throne of God.**

**If you feel like you are under attack - that might be God giving you spiritual eyes. To Pray - get on your knees - call out to God.**

**“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions… be alert and always keep praying”**

**Be ready – be quick to prayer – not as a last ditch but first on list.**

**Lead by the Spirit, I pray when I am out driving, eating, errands**

**Ephesians 6:19 Pray also for me, (don’t forget to pray of your church leaders) that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (Fearless! Paul knew…)**

**\*\* You do not fight for victory – you fight from victory**

**If you are a follower of Jesus, you have no need to be afraid of the demonic realm. You can with boldness know - Jesus has won!**

**Without him you will lose. But, with him you have already won.**

**We are not fighting to win - we are enforcing the victory Jesus secured on the cross! If you are a Christian - you are not losing - you have already won - Jesus is victor and Satan is defeated.**

**Like a rabid dog that will be put down, but not without a fight**

**now this - 1 John 4:4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**

**Are you ready to fight!**

**Romans 16:19 ...I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. 20The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. - Are you ready to fight!**

**2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. - Are you ready to fight!**

**(Rev 12:11, Ja 4:7, 1 John 5:4-5**

**Follower of Jesus be fearless... Jesus has won, you have won!**

**Paul ends his letter with this - Ephesians 6:21 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. 22 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. 23 Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love. (This reflects relationships in God and the work of God that is growing.)**

**\*\*\*This battle has real results in real life**

**This letter is written to real people about real issues – covered in real prayer. The results are real life change. God’s hand moving.**

**Over the next few weeks we are going to take a look at the invisible war that wages against us by the enemy - and the victory we have in Jesus.**

**We are going to see what God says about demons, angels, the supernatural, and prayer.**