The Invisible War - **wk 3 – Don’t Fight Naked**

**We are in a series about the unseen world, spiritual war, and prayer.**

**Ephesians 6:12 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. There is an unseen war.**

**CS Lewis “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils (demons). One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”**

**From the opening to the closing pages of Scripture – the devil is real and at war with you and your family.**

**1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. (aware / prepared) Your enemy the devil prowls around (sneaky/ ready) like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**

**We are to know his tactics and schemes. 2 Co 2:11, Ep 6**

**The acts of Satan - demonic activity**

**We spent time unpacking Satan’s schemes and works - last 2 wks**

**1. Extraordinary demonic - What most think, strange manifestations**

**2. Ordinary demonic - daily activity to deceive, distract, derail & divide.**

**We often ignore the invisible war he wages most often waged**

**He is the deceiver (2 Pe 2:1, 2 Co 11:13, Gal 2:4) - False teaching, religions, hope, security, miracles, false perception of what is good (sexual sin is a specialty), rage, hatred / He loves fear. He wants you to live in fear, anxiety, worry, depression, obsessing over death.**

**All these inspired by Satan = Demonic. Why manifest himself if he can just deceive, distract, derail, and hold you down in fear.**

**Ephesians 6 = Principles of - How to combat the enemy:**

**The first three are were we have been the last couple weeks.**

**Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.**

1. **To combat the enemy – you must be born-again.**

**John 3:3 Jesus replied, “I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” / John 1:12 - … to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. / 1 John 5:18 - God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son (Jesus) holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them.**

**It all starts here – you become his child through faith in Jesus**

**Ephesians 6:11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.**

1. **To combat the enemy – you must know your enemy**

**If you don’t know your enemy, you’re already defeated**

**Your enemy is not that person – they are only a vehicle Satan is using.**

**As the great theologian G.I Joe says – “...knowing is half the battle.”**

**Eph 6:12 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.**

1. **To combat the enemy – you must recognize the battle**

**If you don’t know you’re in a battle, you’ve already lost**

**Eph 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God…**

1. **To combat the enemy – you must be familiar with your weapons**

**These are the tools of your authority in Christ.**

**We have a unique set of tools because we fight a unique enemy, angels**

**\*\*\* These are the tools you need to fix whatever is broken in your lif**

**Ephesians 6:13** …**so that when the day of evil comes, (it is coming – the devil does not quit) you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then… (some trl. – “stand your ground”)**

**3X STAND, STAND, STAND - It does not say storm the enemy camp and attack. No, 2 words - STAND FIRM. We want to fight. Why just stand? Because Jesus has already won at Calvary!**

**You are in the battle to occupy ground already won! (Col 2:14-15)**

**Like a football game 72-0 with 3 min left – you don’t need to score - all you gotta do is stand firm! You’ve won - No matter what happens! Even when it looks like we’re losing!**

**Satan is working overtime to rob us from the spiritual tools & blessing we already have. Did you know you don’t need to ask God to bless you?**

**Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**

**It is already yours – if you are in Christ. All you need!**

**You don’t need to go and borrow money if you have a mil. in the bank. Some of you are begging for a dollar – when you are already credited by Jesus with all the riches of the heavenly.**

**Because we don’t understand our victory - we walk around as victims.**

**These weapons / tools are yours already to help stand firm! (1 Cor 16:13)**

**What are they? - Ephesian 6:14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 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. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**First learned about the armor with flannelgraphs & toys.**

**Let’s look at each. These are not magic amulets or a mystical formula for triumph - We either fly thru or over analyze.**

**7 pieces / 7 ways the gospel of Jesus covers and fortifies you. Pictures of God’s victory. When walk in them, the enemy has no power over you**

**Don't fight naked! (Believers are already assigned and equipped…)**

**1. The truth belt – 14 …with the belt of truth buckled around your waist…**

**Holds up everything and is connected to everything for ability & mobility- this is fundamental. Like batman’s utility belt**

**Jesus is the truth / standard (John 14:6) – gird yourself w/ Jesus, his truth, his perspective, his word. He holds it all together! Ask yourself:**

* **Is Jesus your identity, the core and center of your life?**
* **Do you care more about what others think than Jesus?**
* **Is your view of your sexuality, marriage, purpose, compassion, justice, and generosity based on the truth of God’s word?**

**Gen 3 - Satan’s first attack was, “Did God really say that?”**

* **Do you believe this (the bible) is true? That it’s absolutely true!**

**The belt reads – I’m wrong and God is right**

**Well that is narrow - Truth is narrow: surgeon / pharmacist / pilot. Broad is the way that leads to destruction - narrow is the way to life (Ma 7:13-14)**

* **You’ve got to get to where no matter what - this (bible) is right!**
* **Do you know the word of God? This is not data this is survival! Satan’s attacks of lies are foiled by the truth of Jesus!**

**2. The righteousness breastplate – 14 …breastplate of righteousness…**

**This protects my chest, vital organs, heart - what’s inside me. This is a position piece – it says where you are.**

**2 Cor 5:21 – says - Jesus took our sin, so we could be his righteousness.**

**We are righteous in Jesus alone. We are covered in Christ’s righteousness purchased by his blood; this piece is blood covered**

**That sin, weakness, past, former relationship – the enemy will accuse you and attack – Stop! I am covered by the blood of Jesus!**

**Devil – I am forgiven, redeemed, set free – I am righteous in Jesus.**

**3. Gospel shoes – 15 …feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace.**

**\*Roman Cleats – surefooted. Designed to not only to keep you steady, but also to keep you moving. Jesus takes you places!**

**This is saying - when you walk thru the valley, thru tough times, thru pain – where ever you walk - you will have surefooted peace.**

**The storm is bad, but the ship is sea worthy - go to bed, the captain is staying up! What are you worried about?**

**Also - When I pray this I am also saying, “Jesus my feet are ready to go wherever you lead me to give hope. I do not need to be afraid”**

**Isaiah 52:7 - How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who proclaim salvation…!” (Romans 10:15)**

**(GOD = go / SATAN = sat) As the enemy seeks to disrupt and attack those around you, are you ready to respond with the hope and peace of Jesus? I will go! This is when living for Jesus is an adventure!**

**4. The faith shield – 16 …take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

**Satan’s primary attacks are lies - like fiery arrows coming right at you (Examples of lies… not today – BOOM - the shield)**

**Ancient shields were created to link w/ other solders - body too body – (not like this one) to form a giant barrier – like a wall. We are meant to link together, be part of the church.**

**You need us – we need you. We need each other. We are a team - building our faith - sharpening each other. You can’t do this alone! We are stronger together!**

**5. The salvation helmet – 17 Take the helmet of salvation…**

**The spiritual battle is often fought in our mind, as we play over and ponder the arrows of the enemy. The helmet protects the mind!**

**This is about putting on the perspective of Christ over our circumstances. \* The poor me Christian… put on your helmet.**

**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 strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (Philippians 4:4-9)**

**The helmet absorbs the blow – I get hit, but I know who I am!**

**When the enemy attacks my mind – I say, thru Jesus I have salvation – I am born with purpose, I am chosen, redeemed, forgiven, child of God, designed w/ purpose, accepted, the righteousness of Christ, I am an heir - I am not poor, I am empowered! (Everything Paul wrote in Eph 1-2)**

**If you get hit in the head, it’s over, even zombies now that! Protect your head!**

**6. The Spirit Sword - 17 …the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**God’s word! Heb 4:12 Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword.**

**Many walk around with a sword – you just don’t ever use it. It’s in your pocket – have the sword app – sleep with next to you – display it in your home – but never use it. Listen Christian - You need to know this word and master this the best you can.**

**Your ability to overcome Satan is directly related to your use of God’s word!**

**Jesus responding to Satan – Have you read? SLICE - Do you know…? JAB - It is written… POW – Cut him in half! You need to know and use it.**

**Your kids’ ability to overcome Satan is directly related to their understanding and use of God’s word!**

**Not their knowledge of sports, GPA, or money skills Those can help in life, but only God’s word will save their soul for eternity**

**Know it, hear it, learn it, meditate on it, memorize it!**

**Use it w/ Love, caringly, skillfully, like a surgeon – not attacker**

**Tony Evans - What kind of Christian are you with God’s word? Are you a butterfly (bounce around) or are you a botanist (take notes – all info.) or are you a bee (you dive in, draw out what is sweet, and make honey)**

**The last tool - Eph 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.**

**7. Prayer!**

**Notice this is not about just preparing for you day or at meals, but on – “all occasions” Developing a life of prayer - quick to pray!**

**The enemy is not omniscient - Pray out loud.**

**We are going to focus on this one exclusively next week!**

**I want to end with something to think about – Matthew 12:43-45 - “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. (fallen spirits are in a constant state of unrest) 44 Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. (spiritual attack – the enemy is having a party at your expense) So, shall it also be with this wicked generation.”**

**Satan’s Playgrounds - Demon Friendly Environments**

**1. Dry places – “…he goes through dry places…”**

**If you are going thru a dry season, not hearing God, struggling with your faith, hurting, confused, feeling alone, apathy, laziness. Lack of motivation. You’re not reading, praying, serving in church.**

**If you are drying up - you are an environment the enemy likes.**

**2. Empty places – “…he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.”**

**This refers to both empty inside as a result of being dry – but primary refers to those who are not made new in Christ. Filled with the HS.**

**You will be led by and influenced by something – if not the HS.**

**Jesus washes us clean and then fills us with His Spirit / possesses us - the power of God in us. (Ro 8:9-11, 1 Cor 3:16, 6:19) His dwelling place.**

**A truly born-again person is filled w/ the HS - the enemy cannot inhabit a true Christians life – but will try to oppress.**

**44 “…he (an unclean spirit) finds it empty, swept, and put in order.”**

**You may have the appearance of order in your life – but you’re still empty. This is about those who reject Jesus. You look great, but a life without Jesus is an open house for the enemy**

**3. The religious places - 44 Then he (a fallen spirit) says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came… So, shall it also be with this wicked generation.”**

**This is about the pharisees, the religious folks – they know about God (maybe even set free) but were never truly followers of Jesus.**

**They experience God, a touch at church, at camp, conference, counseling – but the place is still empty - they never replaced their life w/ the HS - eventually it only gets worse.**

**Who are you? The dry, the empty, the religious – or the one filled!**

**Where the Spirit of God is – the enemy runs!**

**Stand Strong, stand Firm - you have been assigned powerful gear!**

**Put it on – walk in Truth, Righteousness, Readiness, Faith, Salvation, God’s Word, Prayer. All given by Christ to combat the enemy!**

**Don't fight naked!**

**Prayer is faith in words – Our life lived out, is faith in action.**

**Do you Feel attacked? Come clean - clean house – take inventory!**

**God will never deal with us seriously until we deal w/ our sin seriously**

**Sin is ugly… it hates – destroys – maims - Because of our sin - Jesus Christ was mutilated – nailed to a cross - his resurrection was victory over sin and death!**

**James 4:6b - God opposes the proud (is at battle with) but gives grace to the humble. (7-9 - talk about turning broken to God, resisting the devil and watching Satan run) 10 - Humble yourselves (to make low – lit. to lower your rank) before the Lord, and He will lift you up. (How low can you go?)**

**The problem is we love weight lifting - We want to lift ourselves up We struggle and strain to lift ourselves up – guess what God does? He stands to the side and says you want to lift it yourself… go ahead. But, you might break your back doing it… We were not created to power lift our lives… God is more than a spotter.**

**We cannot fight in our power - But with God's authority**

**Fighting in our own power we lose - Acts 19:13-16 – a funny story**