

Where's the Battle?
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Eph 6:10-12
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Synopsis:

We all know that there are battles going on around the world. There have been battles ever since the first humans, Cain and Abel for example, began to argue. We all know there are battles; but we have lost, in our so-called modern or postmodern culture, the ability to see where the real battle lies. The next two weeks we are going to talk about where the battle is and how we are to fight it.

I.

Finding the Battle

Eph 6:12a "For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh"

Can't fight a disease until you know *what* and *where* it is:

What's the enemy and *where* is it?

E.g. Mom's battle with pancreatic cancer

My fear of the same (Cedars Sinai suspicion)

*Diagnosis is primary:

have to know *what* and *where* we're fighting

II.

Battle as a Metaphor

Eph 6:11 "Put on the whole armor of God"

OPEN Bible to p. 238

Battles are real in disease, in world, and in larger sense

Warfare is a reality of our world:

E.g USA:

Iraq, Vietnam, Korea, WWII, WWI, Spanish American, Civil War, Mexican War, War of 1812, Revolutionary War

*People don't get along, and thus fight

Paul uses this reality to make his point in Eph 6:

Holy War in Exodus
Isaiah 11 and 59 (Messiah's armor)
Wisdom of Solomon 5
Romans 8, Col 2, Gal 3
Full metaphor in Eph 6

E.g. My brother and I when growing up

Here's what we think:

- Set people free and we'll be OK
- Democracy and we'll be OK
- But there's more isn't there?

*Here's the problem

We don't understand the larger issue because of our culture: Results of Enlightenment of 18th century
Arrogant period of modern world that assumed everything culminated in Western Europe as the elite enlightened

2 Major Tenets:

1. Emphasis on Individual

"I think, therefore I am"

- lost community, society
- individual rights, private ethics

2. Emphasis on Reason

rational, objective, scientific method

- ancients and rest of world stupid
- more

- to life than we can think, measure, put in test-tube, submit to microscope, analyze
- to life than 18th cent European culture

*What's the problem?

Individuals aren't the only reality

Reason is more than it appears

Ancients and rest of world aren't stupid

We dismiss texts such as Eph 6 as outworn mythology, because we individuals with our objective reason know better.

*Enlightenment has resulted in darkness (ironic)

III.

Where's the Battle?

Eph 6:12b “But against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness”

READ Eph 6:10-12 again (p. 238)

READ:

Col 2:8-15 (p. 245)

Gal 4:1-3 (p. 231)

Rom 8:38-39 (p. 192)

What are these things? Where are these things?

More to life than individuals gone awry (my brother and I)
Intangible spiritual entities and tangible structural entities

Analysis of Paul's language:

Elemental Spirits = *stoicheia* = air, water, earth, fire

Elemental structures that make life possible

Rulers, authorities, powers, spiritual forces =

Elemental structures that make life possible

Ordered structures of power

Something behind, within, more than individuals yet not apart from them:

King and Kingship

President and Presidency

Pope and Papacy

Students and School (Harry Potter and Hogwarts)

Parishioners and Geneva

These structures of power can go awry

Examples:

State (good) Nazi (bad)

Institutional church (good) RCath coverup (bad)

School (good) Hogwarts in *Deathly Hollows* (bad)
Family (good) Abusive family (bad)
Tates versus McCrorys
Wonder Years (good)
Other: Race, Money, Chance, Number, Law

There is something more than individuals, societal structures that just like individuals can go awry, become demonic. This is a reality. We feel these, know these. We ignore these to our peril.

*These are the realities Paul points to in Eph 6

IV.

Jesus Christ Has Won the Battle

Eph 6:10 “Be strong in the strength of the Lord”

Here’s the good news:

READ Col 2:15 (p. 245)

Christ has disarmed the powers:

1. Disarmed
2. Under his feet to obey him
3. Still present

I want to leave you today knowing that you can rest in the strength of a Lord who has defeated sin and death, disarmed the powers which threaten but can’t defeat us.

Illustration: Harry Potter in *Order of the Phoenix*

Fought the Dark Lord
Dark Lord leaves
Dumbledore holds him