

## How to Fight the Battle

July 29, 2007

Eph 6:10-20

Dr. Jeff H. McCrory Jr.

### Synopsis:

Last week I pointed out to you that structures and institutions as well as individuals can become destructive. This is what Paul means when he says “our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against rulers, authorities . . . cosmic powers of this present darkness.” Institutions such as states and churches can become destructive and demonic. We have a problem seeing the structural spirituality because we Westerners overemphasize individuals and reason. There is something greater than the individual, and there is more to the world than reductionist reasoning.

### Last week we learned:

We are up against structural evil, principalities and powers, elemental spirits of the universe. But we’re nearsighted!

### This week we ask:

How do we stand against such evil? What’s the strategy?

## I.

### A Missional Strategy

**6:19 “To make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel**

READ 6:19 = mission is the purpose

Missional = we don’t have a missions program, we are a mission, sent by Jesus into a conflicted world.

E.g. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

-we know who wins

-they/we still have to fight

\*What’s the mission strategy for a nearsighted church, if we know we win but still have to fight?

## II.

## **Put on the Armor**

**6:13 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God”**

### **Metaphor is Armor: 6 pieces and 1 instruction (COUNT THESE)**

Where did Paul get this?

- Roman Soldiers in Ephesus and in Rome
- Holy War imagery from the Bible: Exod 15:3-4
- Isaiah 11 and 59 (Messiah)
- Wisdom of Solomon (1st cen BC) same words
- Qumran war scroll
- Paul’s other letters: Rom 13, 2Cor 6, 1Thess 5

### **Why Metaphor? To remember (Bill Entwistle)**

Girded *not* with a belt but with *truth*

Clothed *not* with a breastplate but *righteousness*

Shod *not* with shoes but with the *gospel of peace*

Picking up *not* a shield but the shield of *faith*

Putting on *not* a helmet but the helmet of *salvation*

Brandishing *not* a sword but the sword of *God’s Word*

## **A Metaphor for a Missional Strategy**

### **1. Fasten the belt of truth**

#### **How do we uphold truth?**

Culture = Truth is stranger than it used to be  
propaganda/ power move

E.g. Truth about ourselves is distorted:

I tend to live in a story = not good enough, failure

Bible = Truth is faithfulness, firmness

Jeff: 2Cor 5 “if anyone is in Christ, he is part of a new creation”

Which do I believe?

Geneva: We don’t do change well . . . until now

Which do we believe?

### **2. Put on the breastplate of righteousness**

#### **How do we establish right relationships?**

Culture = Speaks of rights (individual)  
-cannot have relationships when I emphasize my rights

Bible = Righteousness is right relationships (communal)  
Bible speaks of responsibilities (communal) not rights (individual)

E.g. Mend my relation with Nancy, with son, daughter  
Honest conversations (not hard, harder to avoid)  
With session member this week

Where do you need to have honest conversations?  
Where does Geneva need to have honest conversations?

### **3. Shoe your feet with the gospel of peace**

#### **How do we spread the gospel message?**

Culture: Bang on door, coerce people, propaganda  
Proclamation evangelism doesn't work

Bible = Go out of here (missional) with story of Jesus

People need to see the story of Jesus in action  
-Jeff: Dale House and healing  
-Geneva (Via Iglesia, Alzheimers)

### **4. Take the shield of faith**

#### **How do we encourage faith?**

Culture = Faith is a leap into darkness, believing propositions  
Bible = Faith is trusting a person, God in Jesus Christ

Take away = Be there in dependence on God  
-Jeff: I am there with wife and kids, my Dad wasn't  
-Geneva: Be there in our neighborhoods

## **5. Take the helmet of salvation**

### **How do we enable salvation?**

Culture = Salvation is ticket to heaven “I’m saved”  
-church falls victim to this  
-why doesn’t God take us away if saved = heaven?  
-where’s heaven?

Bible = Salvation is rescue and restoration here  
-Lord’s Prayer (on earth)  
-Life after life after death Ezek “Lord is there”  
Rev “home of God is with us”

Rescue and restore the creation here  
Barb’s work with autistic kids  
Going across the street to restore

## **6. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.**

### **How do we address issues with the word of God?**

Culture = Bible is one among many rules  
-multiculturalism, multireligions, pluralism  
Lesslie Newbigin *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*  
-congregation as hermeneutic of the gospel

Bible = *Sola Scriptura* (Reformation), primary rule

Take away = Read, meditate, live the gospel story

E.g. EV Hill’s at Promise Keepers:  
“How did Jesus talk to the Devil?  
He hit him with the Scriptures. ”  
-Comment “But what if I don’t know any Scriptures?”

## **7. One Instruction: Pray in the Spirit**

Culture = Fight against each other to win

-New Atheism:

Dawkins (God Delusion)

Hitchens (God is Not Great)

-argue against one another

Bible = Fight not with each other (flesh and blood)

-Jeff: pray daily for needs, concerns

-Geneva: pray for the church (7x in vv18-20)