

gospel,²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

Today, there's a lot of questions and bloviating about the effectiveness of prayer. But while man might do so continually, the Bible never questions the value of prayer. Paul urged the people to continue *praying at all times in the Spirit*. And the prayers he called for them to continue in weren't just for **"things"**, but specifically, **keeping alert** for opportunities to pray **for others**, and especially, **for him**—that he may be able to be bold and effective in his declaration of *the mystery of the gospel*. Ultimately, what we see in these three verses is that prayer isn't just something we say before we eat or go to sleep at night. Our prayers are **the energy that powers the church**.

PH 4.6-7 ~ *do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

CONCLUSION

We stand today, **"set apart"**—different from the world around us. And as a result, we will always and often find ourselves at odds with it. Most often, this difference will provide smaller conflicts—but from time to time, that difference and **"separation"** will boil over and create great acts of evil, sadly sometimes against the most innocent of victims.

In those moments, God calls us to remember the truth of our **"separation"**. That we have **an enemy that opposes the church**—and that enemy is not in the liar or in the sinner, but in the father of lies, himself: the devil. And while this enemy may seem too powerful for us to overcome, we have **the equipment that arms the church: truth, righteousness, readiness, the faith, salvation, and the word of God**—**powered** not by our knowledge, understanding, or strength, but by the power of prayer. And only as we remember that power and make use of that power are we able to have the success that comes through utter reliance upon the Father of Heaven.

Like Hetty Green before us, we often find ourselves forgetting and misunderstanding the blessings we have from God. We question the effectiveness of prayer, of His Word, and of the faith, itself. But God reminds us that we already have won the war! We just need to **armor up!**

1JN 5.4 ~ *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

Thankfully, while we have a great enemy, we are not fighting this battle alone. We have His armor, His power, and our fellow warriors. It's for that very reason that Paul closed out the letter with the following words: *So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts. ²³ Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible. (EH 6.21-24)*

INVITATION

#662 [Exp-NTPE]
08/29/2025

Armor Up

PC ___ Pchd _____

EH 6.10-20

QUESTION: How do we continue in a horrid world?

TRN TO EH 6

INTRODUCTION

Every weekday, I do the same thing: I get up, go for a walk, make my breakfast, and start the day. Then, I head down to get the kids and take them to school. It's a nice little school—run out of a small portable in the lot of a local community church. Tucked away: safe.

When Erin and I chose to put the kids in a private school, we did it for a lot of reasons: for smaller classroom environment, for a Christian-based education—for safety. As I pull up to drop the kids off, I take comfort knowing that some of the things I had to face in my public school upbringing (ie: gangs, drugs, and general worldliness and violence) are something I don't have to worry about.

And then we have weeks like this one. Where the news, social media, and common conversations remind me of a simple fact: nothing is guaranteed. Nowhere is safe. It's easy to become comfortable in this broken and fallen world. And then, our comfort is broken, and we're left wondering—**how can we continue in such a horrid world?** In **EH 6**, the answer is made clear: we **armor up!**

BACKGROUND

MONEY/Stinginess/Hetty Green

Paul wrote *"To the saints who are in Ephesus"* (**EH 1.1b**). **But who were these "saints"?** The word **"saint"** could also mean **"sanctified one"**—or, **"the set apart"**. These people were the ones in Ephesus who were **"set apart"**—different from the people around them. There would have been thousands living in Ephesus—but Paul wasn't writing to them. He was writing to ones who were living on the outskirts of Ephesian society: the church.

But the church was struggling in their **"separation"**. While they were *faithful in Christ Jesus* (**EH 1.1c**), Paul sought to get them to understand how precious their Christian lives were—how wealthy they were in Christ, and how impoverished they'd been without Him. *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. (EH 2.1-3)*

EH 6.10 ~ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.*

As we come to the final chapter of the book, Paul returns to the theme of the book: the wealth and blessing of the Christian in an impoverished world. He seeks to encourage them for their journey—and to do so, he uses an illustration of Christian life as being that of a battle. An in this, he brings to light **the enemy that opposes the church, the equipment that arms the church, and the energy that powers the church**.

Like Hetty Green, we can sometimes feel impoverished in a world that so readily and continually attacks us—most often figuratively, but sadly, sometimes, literally. Like the Ephesian church, we can lose sight of our actual place in world around us:

“the saints who are in Murfreesboro”—set apart. **But set apart from what? And against whom?**

BD1: The Enemy That Opposes the Church (vs. 12)

I’ve heard the phrase, **“Know thy enemy”** for years. But I didn’t realize that it had its origin in the famous general, Sun Tzu.

PHILOSOPHY/Sun Tzu/Know the Enemy

The idea is that, it’s only in knowing our enemy that we are able to truly be victorious. **But who is our enemy?** This is a question constantly asked by our politicians and podcasters—by generals and soldiers, alike. We see the powerful, seeking to undermine Godly teachings. **Are they the enemy?** We see the wicked, tempting and dragging the unstable back into sin. **Are they the enemy?** We often think that they are—we often act as though they are. But Paul reveals that the enemy of the Christian is not the slave of sin, but rather, the one who would enslave them to that sin. In **vs 11-12**, we have revealed to us **the enemy that opposes the church**.

EH 6.11 ~ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.*

EX: He doesn’t say, **“So that you may stand against the atheists”, “the murders”, “the LGBTQ community”**, or that political party you vote against. Rather, we are *to stand against the schemes of the devil*. Many people have lost many hours investigating and pondering his origin. And I get it! But it ultimately doesn’t matter. What does matter is what we do know about this **“devil”**—known as *the tempter* in **MT 4.3**, *a murderer from the beginning* and *liar and the father of lies* in **JN 8.44**, and most shockingly—and contradictorily, understandably—as *the god of this world* in **2CR 4.4**. For it is against him that we battle—it is against his will and his schemes that we struggle. It is his influence we see in the millions of dead infants who were never allowed to take a breath. It is his influence we see in the prayers of children, silenced, at the pain of an assassin’s bullet. And it is his influence that urges us to remain silent when presented with the lost—seated when we’re tasked to serve. And Paul reveals he is not alone in this.

EH 6.12 ~ *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*

EX: Some have argued that these words are descriptors of specific levels and types of satanic angels. They make the case that the devil’s angels exist in ranks like a soldier: **“rulers”, “authorities”, and “cosmic powers”**. **And maybe?** But I think a more natural understanding of this is that Paul was pointing towards the enemy and describing him in militaristic terms: with battle plans, with soldiers, with captains—all aligned against **“the separated ones”** of Ephesus. All aligned against us, His **“separated ones”** in Murfreesboro.

AP: Brethren, Paul points the church to their true enemy. Not the false teachers or tempters (who needed to be exposed), or the sinner (who needed to be saved). But the true **enemy that opposed the church**—the devil with his wicked and wily schemes.

1PT 5.8 ~ *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

BD2: The Equipment That Arms the Church (vs. 13-17)

This would have made most any listener fearful. After all, what chance could we have when tasked against an enemy as powerful as **“the evil one”**. **How would Paul encourage His audience?**

BKGRND: Most commentators believe that Paul, in describing himself as *“an ambassador in chains”*, was making one of many veiled references to the soldier he was likely chained to. And if that is so, I imagine he was inspired by the equipment and armor of that soldier as he described **the equipment that arms the church**—the famous *“whole armor of God”*.

EH 6.13-17 ~ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*

Many a sermon series has been written on *“the whole armor of God”*. But as Paul looks at the soldier at his feat while he writes, he describes **the equipment that arms the church**. And it’s not in steel, leather, or the skill of the blacksmith’s hammer. Its in **truth** that rises against the lies of the world. It’s in **righteousness** that stands apart from the wickedness of their surrounded Ephesians and the devil’s servants. It’s in the **readiness** or preparation that helps us to fight against the readiness and preparation of the devil and his schemes. It’s in **the faith** we have and in our **salvation** that we have protection from Satan’s attacks, and in **the word of God**, which is our only true weapon in this war.

AP: The implication is that there will always and forever be attacks that come against us. Sometimes they are physical, often they are spiritual. But God has not left us without support: with **truth, righteousness, readiness, the faith, salvation, and the word of God** with us, *who can be against us?* (**RM 8.31b**) In many ways, it’s in Christ that we see the fulfillment of this armor. And Paul calls us to put that armor on:

RM 13.11-14 ~ *Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

BD3: The Energy that Powers the Church (vs. 18-20)

Most often, we stop our look at **EH 6** in **vs. 17**. Learning just who our **enemy** is and how to be properly **equipped against him**, it’s understandable that we might feel like we’ve gotten all we need to hear on the topic. But, in fact, there is more to the story. For as Paul concludes, he reveals **the energy that powers the church**.

I don’t know about you, but I don’t have training on armor, swords, or shields. You could give me the best armor and the best weapons, and I’m not going to stand a chance in an actual battle. **Why?** Because my instincts, understanding, and strength hasn’t been built up to be able to use them.

EH 6.18-20 ~ *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the*