

I. Introduction

- A. My message today is Part One in a new series. I am calling this series:
 - 1. The Christian in Complete Armor
- B. I am not sure how long the series will go... however long the Holy Spirit leads through the Word of God. So let's go, okay?
 - 1. *"Finally, my brothers and sisters, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."* (Ephesians 6:10-12)
- C. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, when we seek to live out the blessings that have been sent down to us from heaven, we find out very quickly that there is a host of evil powers clawing and jabbing and grasping at us... to keep us far away from the experience of the joys and contentments of God.
 - 1. **Lesson 1 | You are living every moment of your life in the atmosphere of an invisible and fierce SPIRITUAL WARFARE.**
- D. There is an unceasing war between God and the devil, heaven and hell, angels and demons, truth and lies.
- E. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life... even as the devil hates you and has a diabolical plan for your life.
- F. The devil's plan does not confine itself to religion. He is not fighting you on the religious plane only. He is attacking, tooth and nail, in your emotional health too. And in your love life and in your sense of confidence. He pummels your identity, ambushes your relationships, assaults your friendships, and tears into your morality. He fights your fulfillment, aggresses your gratitude, and harpoons your happiness... If he can, he'll poison your personality, sabotage your sexuality, and contaminate your money. You are in a war, and your enemy considers every aspect of life the battlefield, so you'd better do the same.
- G. Satan spews his acid onto absolutely everything you touch, and he doesn't play fair.
- H. So you need to be a Christian in *complete* armor, and this is what we will be working out from Scripture over the coming weeks and months.
- I. And I will just give you a heads up that the devil will do anything he can to keep you from all of these particular messages, so I lovingly say, please wake up and ask God to give you strength.
- J. Like I said, this is part one in the series. My title for the today is:
 - 1. **Able to Stand**
- K. I took this title from Ephesians 6:11, the words highlighted on the screen in today's verse.
- L. To set up this series, I want to mash up today's Scripture with two more places in the Bible. In this one, God is speaking to Joshua, the successor to Moses.

II. *"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan River, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.... Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them."* (Joshua 1:2,3,6)

- A. The land is the land of Canaan, and of all people, the Jews have the most ancient claim. Five hundred years before Joshua came to its border—the Jordan River—Abraham already possessed this land. God gave it to them.
 - 1. "Every place the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you."
 - 2. It is "the land which [God] swore to their fathers to give them."
- B. The land was theirs. Their name was on it. They had title and deed. It was bought. It was paid for. It was theirs. It had belonged to them for centuries.
- C. It is the Promised land, a place of blessing, and fulfillment, and purpose, and joy.
- D. They owned the land, but they did not possess the land. And now it was time for them to cross the Jordan River, and possess their possessions.
- E. When the Bible talks about spiritual warfare, when we are warned against Satan and hosts of demons, when we are told about a fierce and unceasing conflict, and about doctrines of demons, and deceiving spirits, and the devil transforming himself as an angel of light, when we read of workers of iniquity, and of the Antichrist, and of all of that dark and wicked domain... none of this is meant to scare us.
- F. You should not be afraid. Rather, you should be strong and of good courage.
- G. Why? Because of Lesson 2.
 - 1. **Lesson 2 | Your victory has already been won in Jesus Christ.**
- H. Twenty centuries ago, a man named Jesus walked this earth. He taught with astonishing authority. He loved us so much, he sacrificed his life, and he made claims unlike any other spiritual teacher of history.
- I. In his death, he went nose to nose with the monster called Sin — the plague that has captivated our race since the beginning. In his resurrection, he not only conquered sin, he also defeated death, the grave, hell, Satan, and evil, and he unwound all their consequences.
 - 1. It's as if Jesus went to a prison, found a race held captive, vaporized the guards, shattered the prison bars, and set the captives free.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the great liberator — not by violence or force or strength alone, but by death and resurrection. He did all this at great cost to himself. And he did this because he loves you.
- J. Think for a moment about Resurrection weekend.
 - 1. On Friday, Jesus met his death. The Blood of Christ flowed freely down the old, rugged cross. Disciples laid him in a tomb. Soldiers rolled a stone in front of it. Priests sealed it shut.
 - 2. On that gloomiest of days...
 - a) The whole cosmos quaked. Darkness celebrated. Demons cackled in glee. Sin triumphed. Hell opened wide.

- b) Death reigned supreme. Satan did his victory dance.
- 3. The Great Liberator Jesus was seen as captive, and with him, all hope of unfettered human potential was lost.
 - a) But... But that was Friday, and Sunday was coming.
- 4. There, in the ground, his body lay, all night Friday. All day Saturday. The cosmos was holding its breath. Then Sunday came.
- 5. Early on that Sunday morning, something happened. Something remarkable. Something unparalleled. Something the devil never saw coming. The ground started shaking, the guards started trembling, the seal started splitting the demons started screeching, The devil started raging, Christ's body started waking,
- 6. And when heaven's clock counted down to zero...
 - a) Up from the grave, he arose!
With a mighty triumph o'er his foes.
He arose a victor from the dark domain
And he lives forever with his saints to reign.
He arose!
He arose!
Hallelujah, Christ arose!
- 7. In that moment...
 - a) He conquered death. He shattered the gates of Hell. He broke the chains of sin. He unleashed a flood of forgiveness. He crushed the devil's head. He sealed the demons' doom. He shattered the powers of darkness. He crushed the devil's head. He demolished evil at its source. And he opened eternal salvation for all who will only believe.
- 8. Oh, Victory in Jesus, My Savior forever!
- 9. The war is over, the victory is won.
- 10. We still, however, need to be Christians in complete armor. Why? Because this whole life is a mopping up operation. The outcome is certain, but the battle still rages.
- K. Therefore...
- 1. **Lesson 3 | Therefore, as a Christian, you don't fight FOR victory, but FROM victory.**
- L. Because the blood of Christ is stronger than the acid spit of Satan, and his blood wipes away every stain.
- M. Do you see what this means?
- N. It means that the victory in every realm is already yours. Your name is on it. You have title and deed. The battle was fought. The victory was bought. It was paid for. It belongs to you. God gave it to you.
- O. Let's get specific:
 - 1. The victory is already won for you in your emotional health,
 - a) in your love life,
 - b) And in your sense of confidence.
 - 2. Christ has conquered Satan's lies about your identity and friendships and moral virtues.
 - 3. True fulfillment is your birthright.
 - 4. A heart of gratitude is your inheritance.
 - 5. A life of abundance is your heritage.
- P. I'm not telling you to go fight and scrap and labor for stuff that isn't yours by rights. I'm telling you to seize your birthright. I'm telling you to put on your armor, get it dirty, and muddied, and spiritually bloodied. Don't just leave it in the closet.
- Q. I'm telling you to acquire the knowledge and to muster the faith to possess your possessions in Christ.
 - 1. These gifts of grace are already yours.
 - 2. The wonderful God-blessed life is already yours.
 - 3. The armor of God is already yours.
 - 4. The invincible power and unconquerable might of God is already yours.
 - a) Your name is already written on all mountains and mountains of blessings.
 - b) It's time you let your mind believe that in Christ you are rich in blessings, and rich in everything that money can't buy.
 - c) God has given you the promised land before you ever set foot in it. Go get it, Christian. Enjoy!
- R. Putting on the armor of God is not how you create the victory. Putting on the armor is how you lay hold of the victory. It's how you make it your own.
- S. Putting on the armor is nothing other than declaring your faith in the presence, and power, and plan, and the sufficiency of God.... It is saying to the world and to angels and to demons and to the devil and to God—and even of saying to yourself—that God is on his throne, and he loves me, and even though I feel at my worst, I still believe God is at his best... and therefore, no matter how fierce the battle and difficult the way, God has made me ABLE TO STAND.
- T. I believe. I receive my promised land. But there is an obstacle to this actually happening.
- U. Just like the Jews in Joshua's day. God told Joshua...
- III. *"Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'" (Joshua 1:11)*
 - A. The Jews had to cross the boundary of the Jordan River. The experience of their victory was waiting for them on the other side.
 - B. But for forty years, they refused to cross it. For forty years, God's own people wandered in the wilderness. They missed out on the Promised Land. They missed out on their victory.
 - 1. Constant frustration. Chronic boredom. Continual attacks. Needless drama after needless drama. And a relentless spirit of complaint. The wilderness is not a nice place.
 - C. Oh, they were saved. They were freed from slavery in Egypt. They had crossed through the Red Sea.

- D. But they stopped short of the Promised Land. They got to the very border, and their faith faltered. They saw giants in the land. They saw fortified cities in the land.
- E. They had left slavery and arrived at the Jordan River in one year.
- F. But they got scared, turned around, and then wandered in the wilderness for forty years.
 - 1. Some of you are reliving this story right now. But you can change it.
- G. They could not step into their victory only because they would not. They would not experience their birthright. They refused. They hardened their hearts and told God to take a hike. And that whole generation went down as casualties in the spiritual warfare of the cosmos.
 - 1. **Lesson 4 | Even though the victory is already yours... your EXPERIENCE of that victory stands waiting on the other side of a spiritual barrier, a “stronghold,” inspired by the devil.**
- H. People are searching for peace. People are searching for inner wholeness and grace. And God is standing right where you feel stuck... and he’s saying, Don’t quit. Take hold of what is yours. Don’t get knocked down or knocked out.
- I. But you’ve got to get past this thing. You’ve got to cross your Jordan.
- J. Prepare provisions for yourselves. You’ve wandered long enough. It’s time for you right now, to breakthrough the barrier. It’s different for everybody.
 - 1. The Barrier of Despair, and hopelessness, and giving up.
 - 2. The Barrier of Bitterness or anger.
 - 3. The Barrier of a rough childhood, a painful story of rejection and loss.
- K. It’s time to cross your Jordan River... What is it for you?
 - 1. Maybe it’s the Spiritual Immaturity River, or
 - 2. The Ingratitude River, or
 - 3. The Apathy River.
- L. For some it’s the barrier of Addiction or Dysfunction... those internal snares that trap on the wrong side of your blessings.
- M. It might be...
 - 1. Stubbornness, Anger, or Bitterness.
 - 2. Resentment, Entitlement, or Self-pity.
- N. ...or any other stumbling block the devil throws in front of you trip you up before you claim your riches in Christ...
 - 1. You might just be tired.
 - 2. Or weary from the fight.
 - 3. You might even be in doubt about God himself.
 - 4. But if you supply the faith, and if you keep moving forward with determination and Holy Spirit Grit... then the God who parted the Red Sea, and the God who also parted the Jordan River — don’t you know that that same God is almighty still, and you will go over this Jordan and possess the love and fulness God is giving you to possess.
- O. Victory is one hundred percent guaranteed to the person who keeps the faith Jesus Christ.
- IV. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”* (Ephesians 6:11)
 - A. It would be a very simple thing if the Adversary of our souls came to us straight up and said, “Hello. I’m going to eat you for lunch. I want to get you into a situation that will cause you a lot of misery, a rapidly fading happiness, a boatload of regrets, and a dishonoring of your Savior. If you will only listen to me, you can stay in this barren spiritual wilderness for your whole pathetic life.”
 - B. If only the devil were that clear, we could push him back much more easily.
 - C. But he does not come that way. He is transformed into an Angel of Light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and he is a Master Liar (John 8:44). In fact, the very first lesson in all of Scripture about him is that he is SUBTLE (Genesis 3:1).
 - 1. **Lesson 5 | We don’t just stand against the devil, but against the wiles of the devil.**
 - 2. This word *wiles* means cunning, deceit, trickery. It means to cast a spell so strong, and to weave a web of lies so convincing that even the sincerest Christian can be taken in.
 - 3. Let me mash Joshua back in right here.
 - D. God told Joshua to cross over the Jordan where he would find the Promised Land. He would also find seven nations of Canaan... interlopers. They were corrupt. They were violent and cruel. They were given to all kinds of perversion and idol worship. They were demonized cultures. And they were to be destroyed.
 - E. But one day a strange looking group of men came limping into Joshua’s camp, dressed in rags. They were sun-scorched and worn. They had ragged sandals on their feet. In their packs, they carried loaves of bread which had grown moldy and dry. Their goat-skin water bottles were cracked, and their lips were parched.
 - F. When the scouts met them, these men said, “We have come from a very far country. Our sandals were new when we set out. Our bread was fresh. Our water bottles were full and new. We have come such a long way because we have heard of you and how God is with you. Our rulers want to make an alliance with you.”
 - G. So they said to God’s people, “Let’s be friends.”
- V. *“Then the men of Israel took some of their [moldy] provisions [to investigate]; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD. So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.”* (Joshua 9:14-15)
 - A. Three days later, Joshua discovered it was all fake. The moldy bread, fake. The worn out sandals, fake. The cracked water bottles, fake. These men had come from a nearby tribe, one of the seven nations under God’s curse. And now, they had seduced God’s own people into an unholy alliance. A destructive, ungodly covenant — one that could not be broken. This bad decision would be a thorn in their side for centuries.
 - B. You see, we don’t just have to stand against the devil, but against *the wiles* of the devil.

1. If you're going to prevail, if you're going to be a Christian in Complete Armor, you need to wake up and stay awake.
- C. The devil has worked this scheming, deceptive, dishonest way all throughout the eons of history.
- D. He's still doing his dirty tricks today. He's doing them in our culture. In our country. In our worlds. In society. In social media. In government, arts, entertainment, education. In your life. And in mine.
- E. He makes his offers so good in so many ways, but every single time there's a very sharp hook in it.
- F. There is nothing the devil will offer you that doesn't look good, feel right, or seem like a better option than what God says.
- G. And when a people or a nation or a child of God does not consult the Lord, they fall into the trap set by Satan.
- H. Armor up.

VI. Able to Stand

- A. *"Finally, my brothers and sisters, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:10-12)*
- B. Above everything else, I want you to know this today:
 1. **Lesson 6 | If you will put on the armor of God, you WILL be able to stand.**
- C. No question about it.
 1. You won't get taken in by the wiles of the devil. You won't take the bait. You won't be shaken, knocked down, or knocked out.
- D. You will stand. You will stand strong and mighty, a loyal warrior in the army of grace and truth.
- E. But you say Bill, it's too hard. I am not able to stand.
 1. That little voice in your head says, I'm too weak.
 - a) But God says, My strength is made perfect in weakness.
 2. The little voice says, Even if I try, I'll fail.
 - a) But God says, If I declare you are able to stand, then you are able to stand.
 3. The little voice says, You'll never get across that Jordan.
 - a) But God says, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you" (Isaiah 43:2).
 4. The little voice says, There are giants in the land.
 - a) But God says, There's a bigger giant, and I'm on your side. Christian, you are able to stand.
 5. The little voice says, But God has let me down.
 - a) But God says, Look at my son, bleeding on that Cross, and then look at that empty grave... then look if you can upward, and find a gaze that penetrates into the heavenly realm, and see if you can see Jesus, sitting there, representing you, and making intercession for you, and making a mansion for you, and being your mediator, and your surety, and your ever-present help, and your friend, and your guardian, and your guide, and your deliverer, and your advocate, and your provider, and your victory, and your all-sufficiency, and your sacrifice, and your Savior, and your Supporter, and your soon and coming King... "Oh," God says, "look at HIM and tell me again how I've let you down."
 6. The little voice says, I am undependable... But God says, I am dependable.
 7. The voice says, I am unfaithful... But God says, I am faithful enough for us bot. And if you follow me, you will be able to stand.
 8. The little voice in your head says, Life is hard... But God says, These momentary and light afflictions.
 9. The little voice says, Life is really hard... But God says, There is more to this life than just this world.
 10. The little voice says, Life is really really hard... But God says, It will be worth it all when you see Jesus. Until then... You will be able to stand.
 11. The voice says, I don't have it in me... But God says, I have it in me, and I'll put it in you. So that you will be able to stand.
- F. Never underestimate what God will keep on doing in you when you keep on believing.
 1. If you put on the armor, God will put in the strength.
 2. If you put on the armor, God will put in the joy.
 3. If you put on the armor, God will put in the purpose.
 4. If you put on the armor, God will put in the love.
 5. If you put on the armor, God will put in the peace.
 6. If you put on the armor, God will put in the power.
 7. If you put on the armor, God will put in the contentment.
 8. If you put on the armor, God will put in the character.
 - a) Oh victory in Jesus, my Savior forever.
 9. If you put on the armor, God will put in the provision.
 10. If you put on the armor, God will put in the wisdom.
 11. If you put on the armor, God will put in the God-blessed life.
 12. If you put on the armor, God will put in the reward.
 13. If you put on the armor, God will put in the victory.
 14. If you put on the armor, God will make the demons flee, and the devil weep, and the angels cheer, and the way straight, and the rewards more glorious, and your eternity more grand.
 - a) Oh put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ... you will find yourself in him, and you, the real you, will be able to stand.