

I. Introduction

- A. You are hearing today part two of a series of messages. The series is called THE CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOR.
- B. We are talking about spiritual warfare.
 - 1. *"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 6:12)
- C. There is a kingdom of darkness, and in that kingdom there are evil spirits, fallen angels. These are called demons, and they march in ranks under their commander the devil. They are not symbolic. They are no metaphors for or personifications of evil. The devil is a literal person with a personality and a name. So are the demons.
- D. Their ranks are listed here in Ephesians chapter six. They are mentioned throughout all of Scripture.
 - 1. Demons in the Bible are named fifty-five times. Unclean spirits are named twenty-two times. Familiar spirits, sixteen times. Spirits referring to demons, fifteen times. Evil spirits, fourteen times. Principalities and powers, twelve times. A lying spirit, four times. A foul spirit, two times. A jealous spirit, two times. A spirit of divination, spirit of infirmity, and spirit of error, the angels who sinned, the devil's angels, one time each.
- E. God has revealed something the human eye cannot see, but the human heart knows all too well. This fallen world is a morally broken pain machine. And this is because there is a war going on. On one side there is a kingdom of light, and godliness, and goodness ruled over by Jesus our Lord. On the other side there is a vast domain of darkness and evil presided over by Satan, by fallen Lucifer and his fallen angels.
- F. And both of those realms are at war in this earth and in us.
- G. There is a ruthlessness win-at-any-costs mentality that galvanizes the side of evil that does not exist in the Christian mind.
 - 1. Evil plays to win, and to destroy the opposition. Christians generally play just not to lose.
- H. As Christians, we can never be malicious and mean. We are not called to any violence whatsoever against any individual or group.
- I. I am advocating and pleading and preaching that you first and foremost embrace the reality that you live in a spiritual world engaged in a spiritual war. And that you embrace the idea that the most cherished things in life are at stake. Your children are at stake. Your grandchildren are at stake. Your marriage. Your dating. Your finances and retirement. Your mission and purpose in life. Whether or not Christianity survives in our culture is at stake.
- J. You are at stake. Your identity. Your selfhood. The devil wants to take away your identity. He wants to define you his way, not God's way.
 - 1. Don't call yourself a Christian, call yourself a person of faith.
 - 2. Don't call your self woman or man, call yourself gender a, b, c, or x, y, or z.
 - 3. Don't call yourself a husband or wife, but a partner in a partnership of 2 or 3 or more.
 - 4. Don't call yourself mom or dad, call yourself parental unit 1 or parental unit 2 or parental unit 3.
 - 5. Don't call yourself part of a family, but part of a government-run collective.
 - 6. Don't even call yourself a sacred human created in the image of God. Call yourself a higher order machine, a complex animal, a molecular marvel.
 - a) Satan wants to strip your identity and eat your dignity. This is the battle we are in.
- K. The devil wants you to be a number, a cog in a machine.
 - 1. I stand here to say I am a Christian, I am a man, I am a husband, and I am a father, and I have a family, I am a sacred human being, the epitome of divine creation, imbued with miracle of life, made in the image of God and I possess eternal value no animal comes close to.
 - 2. And I will not let this decrepit satanic world system squeeze me into its dehumanizing and depressing mold.
- L. Life is a spiritual battle... And we need the power of God... And with the power of God, we will be able to stand.
 - 1. *"Finally, my brothers and sisters, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."* (Ephesians 6:10)
- M. I invite you to think with me today on the topic of
 - 1. **God's Power Inside God's Soldier**
- N. I'd like to ask and answer five questions about the power of God.

II. Five Questions

A. What is at stake?

We need the power of God or we will lose everything precious and good in this life and in the life to come.

- 1. God gave every human this fantastic gift called dominion.
- 2. Dominion is the power and God-given right to take charge of your life.
 - a) It means to rule your own passions. It means to rise above your outbursts. It means to feel love, joy, and peace. Dominion means freedom. It means liberty. Dominion means to cast off all that would shackle you, enslave you, and hold you back.
 - (1) God gave you the crown and the scepter and told you to reign in life (Romans 5:17).
- 3. But the devil hates human dominion. He's jealous of it.
- 4. He wants to be the Lord Most high. So, just as he stole the crown and the scepter from Adam and Eve, even today he is crafting and plotting and manipulating and scheming and cheating and strategizing and lying and anything else he can do — the devil is breaking a diabolical sweat to steal your dominion. That means...
 - a) To constrict your freedom. To vaporize your hope. To do evil against you and convince the world it's okay.
- 5. To take away your dominion, the devil will trap your heart in the snare of depression, or of addiction, or of dysfunction.
 - a) Every time you lose it, give up on life, or check out, you are falling short of your dominion.
 - b) The devil will divorce sex from marital love, thus subtracting the sacred from the physical reducing precious souls to the level of animals.
 - c) He will question obvious realities and make you feel like the crazy one.

- d) Satan wants you miserable and messed up... He wants you defeated. God makes you a VICTOR, but the devil makes you a VICTIM. All of that is Satan's plan for you. How's he doing?
- 6. God gave *you* the keys to the kingdom — you're the one who's been opening and shutting the doors. Who have you been allowing in? What have you been allowing in?
 - a) The thief comes to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. Christ comes that you may have life and have it more abundantly. (Paraphrased from John 10:10)
- 7. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.
- 8. You are in a war and your personal dominion is at stake. The personal stakes could not be higher.
- 9. But even more urgent than all of that, heaven and hell are at stake too. The devil is doing all he can to suffocate the gospel because his domain is filled with unbelievers. On whether or not you live a life that adorns the gospel, and communicates the gospel, and propagates the gospel... hinges the eternal destiny of everyone who know and love.
 - a) Will they meet Jesus?
 - b) Will they embrace him as the Savior?
 - c) Will they be saved, and by be saved, embrace the only refuge from the wrath of God?
- 10. Is there anyone you care about who has not received Jesus Christ? You are to be to them a living example of the power of grace. And if the devil can take that away from you, he can make it harder for people you love to be saved.
- 11. So the devil is doing all he can to suppress the gospel. He is blinding minds to the gospel.
 - a) But he cannot win.
- 12. Because the gospel, the message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen again, is the power of God, and not ten million devils can ever hold it down... even when it is spoken forth by the humblest, weakest, least qualified child of God.
- 13. You need the power of God. I need the power of God. Because everything that is precious in my life and relationships depends on it. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

B. What kind of power is it?

God gives you his own perfect power.

- 1. All throughout this country there are massive towers with thick power lines forming a grid that brings power to every corner of the land.
- 2. Now imagine another set of lines running from heaven to you. Those lines are unbreakable. They are all sufficient. They are always in operation. No blackouts. No brown outs. No outs.
- 3. God sends down power. It is the power of his might.
- 4. It is always perfect. Always enough and more than enough. Always right on time. It is the same power that created the universe. It is the same power that hung the galaxies in space. It is the same power that broke the back of the grave and raised Jesus from the dead.
- 5. It is resurrection power.
 - a) It's the kind of power you can't work up on your own. You can't go to school to find it. You can't say magic words to get it. You can't perform rituals to obtain it. You can't lobby government to bestow it. And you can't look within to discover it.
- 6. Look to heaven and look to the God who made it, and he will give you strength.
- 7. It's not your power. Not human power. Not carnal power. Not earthly power at all.
- 8. There's a prayer in the Bible...
 - a) *That you would know... "the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come."* (Ephesians 1:19-21)
- 9. That's the power coming down the lines. The same power that smacked the devil's dark domain upside the head can be known and experienced by you.
- 10. It is God's power. It is God's power inside God's soldier.
- 11. Because it is God himself inside of you. Christ in you. The Spirit in you. The hope of glory.
- 12. Won't you be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might?

C. What will his power do for you?

His power will do for you whatever you need whenever you need it.

- 1. It is the power to do the right thing when the wrong thing can make your life better, you think.
- 2. It is the power to say the kind word when the harsh word is what comes naturally.
- 3. It is the power to accept yourself as God accepts you.
 - a) To see yourself as God sees you.
 - b) To love yourself as God loves you.
- 4. It is the power to be kind to your spouse, and gentle with your children, and respectful of your parents.
- 5. To be a good dad, a good mom, a good kid, a good employee, boyfriend, girlfriend.
- 6. The power to work on your marriage.
 - a) Work on your dating. Work on your relationships... The power is there for you.
- 7. It's the power to heal your wounds.
 - a) To make an alcoholic dry, an addict sober, and a legalist humble. It's the power to stay cool under pressure. To be grateful when life is hard... And faithful when faith makes no sense.
- 8. It's the power to choose love, to choose joy, and to find peace.
- 9. It's the power to be holy. The power to be whole.

10. It's the power to do whatever you need wherever you need to do it and whenever it has to happen.
11. It's the power to be the person who stands tall and regal and isn't knocked down by the pain machine.
12. Do you think God's power has failed you?
13. Do you really think you're the broken branch that brought down the power lines?
14. Impossible.
 - a) *"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."* (2 Corinthians 9:8)
15. Paul is saying there is...
 - a) No time, no place, no situation, no circumstance, No problem, no illness, no loss, No heartbreak, heartache, addiction, or dysfunction, No bad news, perplexity, confusion, or doubt, No assignment, duty, calling, homework, or job, No relationship, conflict, failure, trial, temptation, or trouble, No chemical imbalance, No family of origin chaos, No locational limitation. No iron wall, bamboo curtain, or glass ceiling. No regret, no despair, no enemy, No economic downturn, no international conspiracy, no intergalactic Death Star... No demon, no devil, no demonic attack, no diabolical oppression, no satanic ruse, no devilish abuse... No wiles of the devil...
 - (1) But that God has already sent down the line all the power you need to rise above, to thrive, and be more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus.
 - (2) You have the power to be whole. You have the power to stand.
 - (a) Not just in good times but in bad times too. That's your testimony. That's your invincibility.
 - (b) It's what makes you a loyal warrior in the angelic conflict.
16. But you might say, Bill... if God is sending me power, I sure don't see it. I sure don't feel it. What's that about?

D. What does God's power feel like?

His power feels like whatever you're feeling when you receive it, because there is no official feeling of the power of God.

1. When God's power flows, you might feel invincible. Unconquerable. Unbeatable. You might see the answers to your prayers just the way you prayed them. You can see the victory. You can smell it.
 - a) And you can almost hear the devil run away.
2. So when Scripture says you are in a battle and exhorts you to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and to put on all the armor of God, sometimes that power God sends down will feel amazing.
3. But most of the times, it doesn't.
4. Listen to this testimony of one of the greatest heroes of the church.
 - a) *"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me."* (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)
5. Here is this great man Paul, with what he calls his "thorn in the flesh." Nobody knows exactly what that is. Commentators have speculated through the years. Some say bad eyesight. Some say he was hunched over. I'm glad the thorn in the flesh not clarified, because it can therefore apply to all of us.
6. He calls it a messenger of Satan.
 - a) Let's just say thorn in the flesh represents any trouble in your life that needs God's power, God's blessing, and God's intervention.
7. So he did exactly what he's supposed to do with such a trouble.
8. He prayed. And he prayed hard.
9. He pleaded with the Lord. He begged the Lord. Three times he held intense prayer sessions about it. It wanted it to depart from him. "Lord, make it go away!"
10. But God didn't answer even Paul's prayer the way he prayed it.
 - a) By the way, if you don't get answers to prayers the way you prayed them, you're in really good company.
 - b) And you need to deepen your concept of prayer.
11. When God answered that prayer, it wasn't the answer he wanted, but it was the answer he needed. Because most of the time, prayer is less about getting things from God and more about aligning yourself to God and seeking the Giver more than the gift.
 - a) *"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)
12. And this is the great paradox of Christianity, and one of the great lessons about God's power that so few Christians understand.
13. When I am weak, then I am strong.
 - a) When I am tired, then I am strong. When I am sad, then I am strong. When I am upset, then I am strong. When I am afraid, then I am strong
 - (1) What does the power of God feel like? Like anything. Like nothing. Like everything.
14. It doesn't always feel like power. It doesn't always feel like joy.
15. That's why you can't go by feelings.
16. You have to go by faith.

E. What activates God's power in our lives?

Victory isn't the victory in our lives as Christians, faith is the victory.

1. If you activate faith, God activates power.
2. This is me preaching for you to have faith. Please don't give up. Please don't bail on God. Please don't turn from him.
3. Anyone can have faith with everything's going great. But it's faith when faith makes no sense that makes the devil afraid.
4. Have faith. Keep faith with God.
5. You might feel the weakest, poorest, tireddest, biggest failure as a Christian the world has ever seen.
6. But when YOU are weak, then YOU are strong, if only you will just keep faith with God.
 - a) *"And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."* (1 John 5:4)
7. Victory isn't the victory. Faith is the victory.
8. The things Christians celebrate and the things God celebrates are different.
 - a) We celebrate the win. We celebrate the healing. We celebrate the perfect score and the notable achievement and the fame and the glory and the praise. We celebrate success. We make celebrities of winners.
9. But don't you know that none of those things is forever.
10. Heaven will make celebrities out of the man or woman who stayed faithful, and kept believing, and trusting, and praying, and giving, and serving, and obeying... even when their world caved in.
11. There's the faith and there's victory. There's the trembling of the demons. There's the smile of heaven. There's the angel's applause.
12. There's the greatest miracle of all: a flesh and blood mortal clinging to the naked promise of God when all the evidence and every other voice screams that you're a loser who will never make it.
13. The devil can't handle that. It scares him.
 - a) When you've prayed 100 times for something to come true, it is prayer 101 that makes heaven applaud, the demons screech, and the devil retreat.
 - b) That you would have unanswered prayer after unanswered pray and yet pray again, just because you believe in a God who loves you?
 - (1) That is a victory of the highest order.
14. And even if earth never knows your name... and there's no win, no healing, no perfect score, and notable achievement, no fame, no glory, no praise, no social media fame, and no success... as a person who keeps the faith, who is true to your self in Christ... and true to God's Word, even if you labor a lifetime in with struggles and questions and doubts... if you keep faith with God, and pray, and believe, and trust... then
15. IN HEAVEN YOU ARE A CELEBRITY... and the angels will line up out the pearly gates to get your autograph.
16. Because, in the spiritual realm, victory isn't the victory... faith is the victory.
17. Faith is NOT the prelude to victory... Faith IS the victory.
 - a) God sees your struggles and knows your fears. And he honors forever the faith you have in spite of them...
 - (1) This is God's power inside God's soldier.
 - b) God sees the money you saved and then lost and then saved again... and the faith you have to still be generous and brave and kind.
 - (1) God rewards that faith. The devil fears that faith.
 - c) God sees your mind, wrestling over his inscrutable ways, but still opening your Bible and seeking to hear his voice there, in the one place where he still speaks.
 - d) God sees your love of truth and of the people who need it.
 - e) God sees you slim wallet and the residue of dysfunction and your physical weaknesses, and your rejections, and the faith that keeps you moving forward anyway.
 - f) God sees your struggle with self-esteem, why it seemed stupid for you to every think you could be conquer addictions, or loneliness, or fear — you said — and sees the true you struggling to break free.
 - (1) He honors that faith. Stay with him till your victory breaks through.
18. Because God loves faith way more than you've ever dreamed.
19. Which means that whatever the EARTHLY outcomes of your faith may be... in heaven, God has a multiplier, and that faith is working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.
20. Because...
 - a) *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"* 2 Corinthians 4:17, NKJV.
21. I know you want to collect your inheritance on earth, but some of it is just going to have to wait till heaven, and on that day it will blow you away.
22. Let's all just be okay with that.
23. That doesn't mean to give up on our blessings now. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking on heaven's door.
24. But if you want to kick the devil in the teeth and have a testimony for Christ and stand strong in the unceasing conflict of the angels, there is no magic incantation, formula, ritual, or school for that.
25. It's just faith.
26. It is power of the Spirit of God plus the Word of God that puts muscle on your faith, and faith is the victory.
27. And we will be talking about how that happens in messages to come.
28. So, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).