

THE ARMOR OF GOD

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS WITH PASTOR JACK ABELEN

Knowing Our Adversary and the Armor of God Week 3: Eph.6:10-13 - Knowing Our Adversary (Part 3)

Introduction

- A. Review weeks 1 and 2 in our Knowing Our Adversary series.
- B. Tonight in our last installment of Knowing Our Adversary, before turning to the Armor of God, we want to focus on some of Satan's chief strategies against God's people, the church. We have placed them in 8 categories that cover most of his activities so we might know him and be aware of his devices.

Tempting Us To Sin

- A. Sin is basically defined as missing the mark God has set and turning instead to our own ways.
- B. We must be able to distinguish between sin and temptation (Jam.1:13-15). Though Satan cannot make us sin, he can and does seek to lure us through our flesh, our lusts, and the pride of life. He is the chief instigator to sin (1Jn.3:8).
- C. Sin appeals to our unredeemed flesh (Rom.8:11-13, 23), which is why we are constantly warned to put on the new man and put off the old (Rom.6:11-13)(Eph.4; Col.3).
- D. Temptation often begins in the thought realm and these fiery darts of the enemy come at the most peculiar times. In the weeks to come, we will be studying the shield of faith that God has given us to overcome these attacks.
- E. Even Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Lk.4:1-13) suggests these assaults were from within, not from without. As our Lord, Jesus knows what we face and can help us be more than conquerors (Heb.2:18; 4:15).

Creating Doubt

- A. Challenges and questions are often engendered by the enemy as he seeks to cast doubts and questions regarding our faith.
- B. Some questioning and searching for truth is healthy and needful for growth while others are the insidious work of the enemy, who would have us focus on how we feel and not on what we know.
- C. Remember doubting Thomas, who earned his name for his doubt that overwhelmed a common sense response (Jn.20:25), but he was by no means alone in his difficulties (Lk.24:36-41)(Mt.28:16-17).
- D. John the Baptist had his share of doubt as well (Mt.11:3), even though Jesus declared of him that there was not a greater prophet than he (Lk.7:28). So did Peter, as he attempted to walk to Jesus on the water (Mt.14), but his sinking upon seeing the circumstances he was in were characterized by Jesus as doubt and a lack of faith (Mt.14:30-31).
- E. All of the disciples participated in doubt and fear in waking Jesus up in a particularly bad storm on the sea of Galilee and were told the same thing as Peter (Mk.4:38-40).
- F. Doubt works against faith (Mk.11:23), and Jesus spoke of it in the Sermon on the Mount (Lk.12:28-31) as worrisome and worldly. Yet we all have to battle weakness in faith as evidenced in doubt (Rom.14:1, 23). Paul spoke of it (1Ti.2:8), as did James (Jam.1:6).
- G. We will be looking at the armor God provides for our minds, the helmet of salvation, in a few weeks.

Motivating Persecution Against You

- A. As you serve God, you can expect Satan to seek to stir up opposition against you. Jesus warned of this (Jn.16:1-3, 33) and spoke of it to the church at Smyrna (Rev.2:9-10). Paul told Timothy in no uncertain terms of its inevitability (2Ti.3:12).
- B. In light of Paul's words, what then would it mean when a Christian living in the world finds no persecution or difficulty in pursuing Jesus and sharing His love?
- C. Persecution is a tool of the enemy to oppose the church.

Hindering Our Service To God

- A. Along with persecution comes hindrance (1Th.2:18), especially as we make ourselves available to the Lord for service.
- B. The more effective you become, the greater the hindrances will be; however, his plan is to stop you before you begin! So the discouragement and opposition is found early on as you begin to serve, step up to teach, decide to spend more time in church, make yourself available, etc.
- C. Knowing Satan's plans will keep you from falling to them...forewarned is forearmed.

Tempting Us To Rely Upon Our Own Resources

- A. Another area of opposition from the enemy is encouraging us to rely upon ourselves, rather than upon the Lord's power. It is a temptation we all constantly face.
- B. One good example is found in the report of 1Chr.21 as David stumbles in his trust in the Lord and leans to his own strength and assumed power, only to find judgment as the enemy stands alongside encouraging him to go that route.
- C. One of the reasons God may have whittled down the potential fighting force of Gideon before sending him into battle with the Midianites was to keep him and his troops from trusting in themselves (Judg.6-7).
- D. The warnings from our Lord regarding this foolishness abound in the Scripture (Jer.17:5)(1Co.10:12), and Paul tells us where to keep our focus (Eph.6:10).

Bringing Division To The Body

- A. (Pro.6:16-19) Satan works to promote what God hates. Division is one of the devil's greatest tools. The consequences and fallout of falling for it are horrendous. Yet it is so prevalent that God speaks often of our being on guard against it.
- B. (1Co.3:1-3)(Eph.4:32-5:2) Jesus prayed about this very thing, that we would be one with each other (Jn.17:21-22).

Infiltrating The Church With False Teachers And False Believers

- A. Last week we saw that false doctrines are a work of the enemy to keep the world in the dark, so he also seeks to oppose the saints.
- B. One problem is the large number of those who call themselves the church but who do not know Jesus Christ (Mk.4:30-32). Jesus spoke of them in the parable of the wheat and tares (Mt.13:24-40).
- C. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, will help us stand fast and see clearly!

Tempting Us To Give Up

- A. Through discouraging circumstances (Lk.5:18-20)
- B. By unbelieving friends (Mk.5:35-43)
- C. By questioning divine delays (Jn.11:1-6)
- D. We must simply hang in there (Gal.6:9)(Zec.4:10)

Conclusion

- A. Next week we begin in Eph.6:14a with having girded your waist with truth!