

St Martins C3 – July 28, 2024

STRONG to have Authority in Identity – Chosen

Sermon Summary:

In this series, we have discovered that God chose each of us to know Him. All that we are in our relationship with God and everything we do for God ought to come from being a child of God.

Today we are looking at the climax of this letter and the whole armour of God.

Read Ephesians 6:10-19

We are called to be strong in the Lord. Our identity gives us authority.

What is clear from this passage is that something is happening in the unseen world that we need to be aware of. Paul had many encounters with evil spirits and other forces in Ephesus and these will have been what he was referring to in Ephesians 6:11-12.

We need to get the balance right, not all addiction or sin or sickness or mental health issues are demonic, but some are.

Paul says that living this life as a chosen child of God is going to be a battle. If there is an enemy, then he is going to do everything he can to make it difficult for us to live the life our commander has called us to live.

In this battle, God is calling us to stand. (Verse 13) Stand firm and after you have done everything keep on standing! The image here is of a group of people who have been given the task to “hold the hill” against all things that come against them to stand firm as the enemy charges.

This week, think about the way you can do these things. If it helps you to mimic putting on armour, then go for it. But don't miss the ways to fight that sit underneath it.

- See things God's way and put on the belt of truth
- Live obediently and put on the breastplate of righteousness
- Get close to God and hold the shield of faith
- Be part of the church and where the shoes of peace
- Knowing your identity and wearing the helmet of salvation
- Read the Bible and take the sword Holy Spirit
- And in all of these areas, we pray, and we pray, and we pray.

As we realise our identity and take hold of our authority, we see that faith is greater than fear, every single time.

Read 2 Kings 6:8-23

If you are going through something right now that you think might be spiritual, may you open your eyes and see that it may look like you are surrounded by enemies, but you are surrounded by the love and strength of God.

Connect Group Material:

Key Point

Be strong in the authority of your identity.

Questions

What stood out to you from this week's message?

What does this message tell you about God and humans?

What has stood out to you about this series?

Which extreme are you most likely to lean towards: nothing is demonic, or everything is demonic? Why?

In what situations do you notice the effect of evil powers?

Name a time when you have felt like living as a Christian has been a battle or you have gone through a time of evil.

How might we discern when something is demonic and something isn't? What can we do about it?

Look at the Armour of God and determine how what it looks like to fight the enemy using this armour.

Spend time asking God to help you fight for him. Ask him to help you where evil powers may be involved.

Monday Devotion: Demonic Limitations

Read Psalms 139:7-11

It can be scary to think about dark forces that are aligned against us. This week we are going to uncover the ways the enemy works so we may be aware of them and have the tools to stand firm and fight against them.

The first thing to realise is that there is no comparison between the spiritual forces of evil and God. We must recognise the limitations of spiritual forces. Here are some ways that demonic forces are limited.

Created Beings

The spiritual forces of evil are created and thus are not eternal. God by comparison is omnipotent.

Singular presence

Demonic forces are not omnipresent. They are limited by time and space just as we are. God, however, is omnipresent. He is in all places at once.

Observational proficiency

Demonic forces excel at observing human behaviour but cannot penetrate our thoughts. God, however, knows all our thoughts.

Limited power

Their power is given to them by God, and he can choose to limit what they can do. Let us choose faith over fear. Our God is greater and can help us overcome spiritual forces.

Tuesday Devotion: Bring Suffering

Read Matthew 4:23-24; Luke 13:10-16; 2 Corinthians 12:7

Biblical authors often attribute the things that degrade a person – sickness, death, mental instability, bodily malfunction—to spiritual forces of death and the grave. There are times when spiritual forces can bring a level of suffering to people.

This does not mean that every sickness and every difficulty is the result of spiritual forces. However, we should be aware that is one potential reason we are facing the difficulty and ask for God to give us wisdom to know whether to pray against the things of the enemy.

However, we must also see that in every circumstance the enemy is working, God is also working for our good.

John Piper points out the example of 2 Corinthians 12:7. We know that Satan did not aim at preventing Paul's pride. He wants Paul to be conceited. He wants to destroy his faith with pride. Saving Paul from conceit was *God's* purpose. God aimed to keep Paul humble and holy, and yet the instrument of God's sanctifying work is called a "messenger of Satan."

So what we learn is that even when Satan is bringing about some kind of thorn or suffering in the life of a Christian, he's not sovereign; he's not ultimate. He's under God's supervision. And while Satan's design is the destruction of Paul's faith, God's design is the strengthening of Paul's faith and the preservation of his holiness and his humility.

Wednesday Devotion: Tempt

Read Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Matthew 6:13; James 1:12-15

One of the works of the devil is to tempt us to turn away from God. The devil tempted Jesus in the desert and he is called the tempter in 1 Thessalonians. There are spiritual forces of evil that seek to lead us away from God.

The old image is of a little angel on one shoulder and a little devil on the other shoulder both leading us in one direction or another. The truth is a little bit more complex than that.

Often, we don't need much help being tempted, we manage to find our way into it all by ourselves. We can never say the devil made us do something.

Scripture tells us there is always a way out from the lures of sin. As we focus our attention on God and dig into His Word we can look for the way out that he has given us and begin to deal with the sinful urges we have inside of us.

We have the power through Christ to work on the things in our lives that are not of Him and see victory.

As Jesus prayed:

“Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.”

Thursday Devotion: Encourage Disobedience & Plant Thoughts

***Read Ephesians 2:2; Genesis 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2
Corinthians 11:3***

One of the main works of the enemy is to corrupt the thinking of people and to blind them to the work of God in their lives.

Have you ever had another person in your life who you can tell God is speaking to loud and clear, but they deny it? It feels like the signs are right in front of them, but they do not want to see them.

I have talked to non-Christians who have admitted that they are not interested in whether there is a God. They are happy to live their lives for themselves rather than submit to God who might require changes from them. At times this can be their selfishness, but we can pray that whatever might be blinding them from the truth about God be removed.

We should also be aware that we too can be deceived and corrupted by evil spiritual forces. The best way for us to avoid this kind of deception is to stay close to God in prayer, read His word, stay close to others in the church community and know our identity – all the things we talked about on Sunday.

If we are able to keep our focus on God then we will not be deceived and led away from God.

Friday Devotion: How to Fight

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3; Deuteronomy 3:22; Revelation 12:11; Acts 19:8-20; Ephesians 4:26-27; 1 Peter 5:6-8

We have a battle. Sometimes our battle is inside of ourselves, fighting our sinful propensities. Other times our battle is against the rulers and authorities of evil in the unseen world.

As we have gone through this week we have seen the ways these spiritual forces fight against us. We can now be aware of his schemes and stand against him.

The scriptures listed today show us some more ways that we can stand.

- 2 Thessalonians shows that we can pray and rely on the faithfulness of God.
- Deuteronomy 3 tells us that God fights for His people.
- Revelation 12 reminds us that we are saved and sealed by the blood of the Lamb and that is what overcomes the devil.
- Acts 19 shows how it is not our power that overcomes the evil one but the power of Christ in us.
- Ephesians 4 tells us not to be angry and give the devil a foothold.
- 1 Peter tells us to humbly submit to God and stand firm in our faith.

We have a great God and King who can overcome every power that is rallied against us. Let us continue to rely on Him and Him alone.