Who Are You Fighting?

*Ephesians 6:10-18 NASBS*

*[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. [11] Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. [12] For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. [14] Stand firm therefore, having GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING put ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, [15] and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; [16] in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [17] And take the HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. [18] With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,*

We are living in a world filled with strife on all levels (within families, neighborhoods, cities, between genders, between races, between economic class, between political parties...The list goes on. Division amongst people has gone on for millennia, and it is major tool that the enemy of mankind has used to rob mankind of the peace and joy that God desires for His people live in. The goal of tonight’s message is to reveal the true source of our trouble with people and to identify how to improve our ability to live peaceably with our family, neighbors and co-workers. First, we need to establish who our enemies are. Our three main enemies are: The World, The Flesh, and The Devil.

The Flesh- the flesh represents the natural urges and ways of thinking that oppose the Word of God

The World- the world represents the philosophies and beliefs of the cultures of this world apart from God

The Devil- the devil is the enemy of mankind and all that belongs to God

Each of these enemies presents a unique challenge to us so we are going to look at how to address each of our three enemies.

Point One: Follow The Leading of The Holy Spirit (Addressing the Flesh)

*Galatians 5:13-17 NLT*

*[13] For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love. [14] For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." [15] But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another. [16] So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. [17] The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.*

The key to living in victory over the flesh is being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Illustration: Using a paper map vs. GPS (Waze Apple Maps)

Point Two: Listen To The Right Voices (Addressing the World)

*Psalm 1:1-3 NASBS*

*[1] How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! [2] But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. [3] He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.*

*Romans 12:1-2 NLT*

*[1] And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice-the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. [2] Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

What we refer to as the world system can shape our belief system through various avenues (news, movies, school system, political system)

(Expound on the preceding verses)

Illustration: Language Immersion and learning connected with renewing our minds to the Word.

Point Three: Acknowledge Christ’s Victory (Addressing the Devil)

*1 Corinthians 15:55-58 NASBS*

*[55] O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" [56] The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; [57] but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [58] Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.*

Our last identified enemy is our oldest one, but the good news about this enemy is that he has already been defeated by our Lord Jesus. Therefore, all we have to do is enforce the victory that already belongs to us.

Illustration: WWE wrestling match (the winner has already been determined, all the winner has to show up, play their part and refuse to quit in order to ensure their victory)

*Romans 8:35-39 AMP*

*Who shall ever separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] Just as it is written and forever remains written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE REGARDED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER.” [37] Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for us]. [38] For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced—beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*