

Standing in The Day of Evil

by Don Currin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of believers putting on the whole armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil. It highlights the need for active duty, strength in weakness, non-optional obedience, praying in the Holy Spirit, and astute watchfulness. Through various examples and biblical references, the speaker urges listeners to be prepared for spiritual battles and to trust in God's promises amidst trials.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 2 Timothy 2:4, Psalms 9:10, Romans 12:21, John 16:33

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Divine Protection"

Description

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Transcript

It's a tremendous blessing to see all of you this morning. So grateful that He has called us together for this occasion to worship the Lamb. Do you not find it very significant that Satan and demons are rarely referred to in reform context? Martin Lloyd-Jones speaks of this quite often.

Conrad Murrell wrote a book, Biblical Demonology. Bill McLeod, who was a five-point Calvinist, who wrote an excellent book called Fellowship with the Fallen. But by and large, people don't speak of it.

Yet it exists. And I'm grateful this morning to say that Satan is a defeated foe. That Christ has triumphed over all principalities and powers, making a show of them openly in His death.

That we have authority to tread underfoot all the serpents and scorpions of the evil one. And it is a great consolation that flesh and blood is not our enemy. But principalities and powers.

And you and I are more than victors, more than conquerors in Christ, because of the Gospel. So with that said this morning, I want to speak on the subject of standing in the day of evil. Now understand, brothers and sisters, from the outset that there are legions of demons that are about us, but that should not be our primary focus.

I believe that this needs to be addressed more often than it does. But once again, it should not have a central place in our preaching. But understand also from the outset that I'm convinced more than ever that

my greatest enemy is not the one from without, the adversary, but rather the one from within my own self, my own flesh.

And certainly at times because of my own unbelief, I collaborate with the enemy, and he comes to oppress and to afflict and to confuse. Spurgeon on one occasion was teaching a group of young ministerial students they were given the assignment to deliver their discourse during the course of the semester. And a young man shows us his text, what I'm choosing this morning in Ephesians chapter 6. Speaking on the whole armor of God, he waxed eloquently.

There was a stream of conceit in his delivery. He was so proud of his preparation and his sermon. And so he comes to the end of his message, and he says, brothers, when we pull on the whole armor of God, we take upon ourselves the helmet of salvation.

We secure the breastplate of righteousness and the girdle of truth, and our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. And we have the shield of faith in one hand and the sword of the Spirit in the other. Where is the devil? And Spurgeon could not resist as he cupped his hands to his mouth and said, he's in the armor.

And that's the reality of it. The self-life is so much like the very person and nature of the evil one. And this is our great enemy.

But this morning, let's read the text and then we'll pray together. Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10 through 18. Ephesians 6, verses 10 through 18.

Once again, bear with me. I'm reading from the Old King James. Follow with me in your copy of the Word of God.

Finally, my brethren, 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 and against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Now, I hate in a sense that between my message last night, Brother Tim's message last night, and what I'm going to speak to you about in the next few moments, it seems to project a foreboding sense of negativity. Tim did a wonderful job exhorting us last night, speaking on the theme of distractions in the Christian life.

As I did. And then this morning, looking at the whole armor of God, it sort of casts sort of an oppressive feeling perhaps over some people. But listen, friend, we need to set the table.

We need to understand some things so we will appreciate grace and hope that's only dispensed through the wonders and the beauties of the cross even more. This is the driving force. Now, to properly

understand the book of Ephesians, we must understand what gospel indicatives are.

Very simply put, it's what Christ has done. What Christ has afforded us as Christians. Gospel indicatives encourage gospel incentive or motivation to fulfill gospel imperatives.

That's how you unpack the book of Ephesians. It's what Christ has done that motivates us to fulfill to the praise of God's glory the commandments and the directives of Christ. And so this morning, here we come to a gospel imperative to put on the whole armor of God.

Now, in pondering the passage, I was reminded of two things. First of all, Martin Luther's battle cry in the hymn, A Mighty Fortress is Our God. I'm going to take just excerpts of this and draw from it during the course of the message.

He begins, A Mighty Fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing, our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe. And that's for modern America.

It's still happening. The other thing I was reminded of was John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. And here in Bunyan's classic, you remember Pilgrim comes to a place one night.

He is seeking shelter as the night is fast approaching. And suddenly, he chances upon these two lions. And the porter of this castle beckons the pilgrim to stay on the straight and narrow.

And the lions will not prey upon him. And then he comforts him by telling him that they are chained. They're invisibly chained.

They cannot devour him. His responsibility is to continue straight on. And Pilgrim, it's interesting, said, I saw not the chains.

Every enemy of the adversary that he puts in our way is being held sway by the goodness and the kindness of a gracious God. But we must be obedient. Dear people, listen.

Don't ever expect your faith to move mountains if it doesn't move you to obedience. It's imperative. We must learn and cultivate an obedience that's impulsive to His love.

And so this morning before we look at the text at a glance, and then make application, let's look to the Lord in prayer. Father, it's a joy to be here. No fronts.

No exaggeration. I'm so grateful for Your people. Thank You for the precious life of Christ.

For the grace of God that I perceive in these brothers and sisters. Thank You for their hungry hearts. And for the feedback even last night, Lord, we heard.

We're grateful for what You did in people's lives. I'm most grateful for what You're doing in my life. But Lord, as we come to this text this morning, may in the process of being so obsessed with the enemy from within, and then this present evil world, may we not forget that we have an adversary called the devil that indeed walks about seeking whom he may devour.

And I would ask this morning in the strong name of Christ, that You, O God, through Your Son, would bind and rebuke the evil one. And keep him from taking any of the seed of what we're about to look at and stealing it away in his attempt to advance his own kingdom. Please bless Your people.

Give us a heightened awareness that it does matter how we live. Call us to radical obedience. For Your namesake, we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Well, just looking at the text at a glance here, understand from the outset, brothers and sisters, that the new birth thrust every saint into a spiritual battlefield whereby we are engaged with the devil. Once again, Lord Jones says that we give much ground to Satan by not being conscious of his wiles and methods. And sadly, there are some denominations and some groups today that the evil one is taking by storm because they're not cultivating this keen awareness of how Satan operates.

Paul says, we are not ignorant of his devices, and neither should we be. The conflict is no imaginary game. It is not a video game that we have the choice to entertain ourselves with.

It is a lifelong engagement that involves a salvation. Listen, it involves ultimately the salvation of our souls. And we must not take it lightly.

I became very, very aware that there was an evil one. There was a presence who was formidable years ago as I'm in a conference in Nashville, Tennessee. The pastor asked me if I would meet with this young girl, 19 years of age, who had been involved in over 25 different occultic practices.

And she'd been moved from home to home in the congregation. And finally, people just could not do anything else with her. She was on her last leg as far as someone accommodating her.

And so the pastor asked me if I would meet with her. And I said, I'll not meet with her alone, but I will with another brother. He said, fine.

So the two of us met in the pastor's study there that night during the conference. We closed the door. We talked to this girl.

She experienced a partial deliverance. And interestingly enough, during the course of this dialogue with this evil, this one spirit identified himself as unbelief. I said, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command you to tell me, how did you enter into this girl? He said, I entered into her when she prayed to receive Jesus.

I said, you're a liar. You're a deceiver. And you're trying to deceive me.

I command you to tell me the truth. He said, I am telling you the truth. I said, how could this be? And he says, when she prayed to ask Jesus in her heart, she prayed with her lips, but she did not believe in her heart.

Could it be that the sin is prayer? In many cases, it is the very medium by which Satan gains entrance in many people's lives. The house is swept and garnished for a season, but suddenly, over a period of time, seven demons worse than the one that seemingly exited re-enter this person's life. Many people come to the cross in their unrighteousness and leave in their self-righteousness.

But they're still damned. But I became aware of Satan's presence and his well-being that night as we dialogued with the demonic. Paul says, first of all, finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Now to be strong here, brothers and sisters, is not referring, obviously, to spiritual strength, but to something distinctly other. It refers to that which is spiritual or supernatural. Why? Because Paul goes on

to remind us that the conflict does not consist of flesh and blood.

We don't fight it with physical strength. Most of the time, this conflict with evil that we will all encounter will involve people. However, we must understand that there are unseen forces behind it all.

The gates of hell. The counsels of the unseen will not prevail against this church. Listen, therefore, this military engagement calls for a God-given protection and spiritual weaponry.

Hence, Paul says, notice the next phrase in verse 11, to put on the whole armor of God. It's almost as if he implies that we can compartmentalize it. We can take on part of it and not all of it.

He says in the original, it's emphatic, put on the whole armor of God. This is a command that is not optional. It is a direct order from our Commander-in-Chief that cannot be negotiated.

Listen, brothers, the reason it is because our well-being and particularly our eternal destiny depend upon it. Once again, as I said last night, we're not talking about losing reward. We're not talking about just merely losing some blessing.

We're talking about what's at stake here is the cost of your own soul. The evil day is coming. Yes, as the sparks fly upward, man is few days and full of troubles.

Yes, the Scripture says, Jesus speaking, offenses are going to come. But we're talking about a unique day here where literally we are engaged in aggressive, fiery assaults. And it's coming.

And the thing that Paul speaks under the inspiration of God warning us about is we must be prepared. We must be prepared. Next phrase, that you may be able to stand against the wiles, the methods, the strategies, that which is well laid.

It means denoting art, skill, craftiness of the devil. Our endurance in the warfare depends upon our diligence to keep the armor on, to maintain the armor. If we should neglect this suit of protection and become careless in clothing ourselves with it, we may well become a casualty of the conflict.

Furthermore, tragically, in our hour, Satan runs roughshod over many professing Christians because of their great neglect of the armor of God. Listen. Verse 12, For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Don't let that be a monotony reading there. It's significant again. Let it weigh down deep into your hearing.

It is significant to note that God gives us an idea of what we're up against. Even Satan does not assume that his power is invincible, for he devises ranks of demonic activity to destroy us. You see friend, each phrase here speaks of a different level of evil that is administered to prey upon humanity.

And once again, this must not be taken lightly. Therefore, note verse 13, Paul says, Therefore, take up the whole armor of God. It implies, by the way, that we have no alternative than to avail ourselves to this impregnable military suit of clothing because this is the only sure way that safeguards ourselves and our families from utter destruction.

This we see in the very next statement of the verse. Paul says, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day. Now this is significant.

Listen very carefully. The word withstand here meaning to resist. In the evil day, evil day refers to the day of intense temptation.

The day or season when you are violently assaulted. And having done all in the process to stand. The word stand means that every foe must be subdued or overcome no matter how formidable or constant they may be.

The idea is that no prisoner, are you with me? No prisoner is to be taken. Because any prisoner that is allowed to live is a provision for Satan to bring you down. He goes on to say, verse 14, stand.

It means aggressively resist. Therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and your feet shod with the preparation of the Lord, the preparation of the gospel of peace, and above all, taking the shield of faith with which you are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Listen to this.

Our standing, brothers and sisters, does not depend upon our abilities, our education, our theological astuteness, or our past successes, but solely upon whether we are clothed with God's armor. Some of the strongest men theologically in this hour are falling. And it's not just Armenians.

You think you're invincible because you've got a degree from a seminary? Each aspect of this suit of defense is strategically designed to protect believers from those spiritual weapons of mass spiritual destruction that possess the capability of bringing a man or a woman down morally and eternally. You see, to complete the introduction here, notice that while suiting up with the armor should be accompanied with in verse 18, notice this, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirits, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. Primarily the purpose of the whole armor of God is a twofold purpose.

To pray and to watch in prayer. Someone defined years ago intercession as a ballistic missile that can be launched from a launching pad no larger than a place to kneel, travel at the speed of thought, land precisely on target thousands of miles away, and there is no defense against it. But sadly, we know so very little of this ministry, this art of intercessory prayer.

And the only way you learn it is by delving into the great privilege of praying. You learn it experientially. So here's a synopsis statement before we move on with application this morning of the text.

To clarify the meaning of this text, Paul is encouraging Christians to prepare themselves for days of great spiritual assault when they will be soundly tested. The assaults may mean intense temptation, seasons when we will be assailed by every cleverly planned enticement to weaken and destroy our soul. Most of the time, listen, most of the time, these attacks will involve people.

But as Paul reminds us, we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Now listen to this. But evil days will not exclusively consist of the evil ones overt attack.

He will seek to beset our faith by tempting us to question the truth of God. How many times here lately have I heard from young, old, and even seasoned ministers of the Gospel how they've been blessed and bombarded by atheistic thoughts? And some have caved in. Do I need to call some of the Christian celebrities in our hour that have buckled and apostatized from the Gospel? Is this not a fulfillment of what will happen if we do not heed the warning of putting on the whole armor of God? If we are not armed

ourselves against Him in the evil hour, it can lead to the ultimate destruction of our own lives and souls.

So listen. Let us move on this morning, and I give you very quickly a few things to consider. There are just three basic points.

Number one, this call to put on the whole armor of God to resist is a call to active duty. Now that's simple, isn't it? But it's interesting, not only are the words that are translated from this passage from the original, but also the original itself, these are emphatic commands. They're underscored with urgency.

There is nothing in the passage here in Ephesians 6 that allows for passivity. Idleness tempts the devil to tempt. What emerges from the passage is a call to take up arms.

It is a trumpet of the Gospel sounding the certain sound of our diligence. You will notice that every admonition in the text is fired with imperative verbs. Each one cries for immediate action.

For example, look at them very quickly. Verse 11, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Verse 11, put on emphatically, put on the whole armor of God.

Verse 12, take up the whole armor of God. Verse 14, stand therefore. Verse 14, having girded your waist with truth.

Verse 14, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. Verse 15, having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Verse 16, taking the shield of faith.

Verse 17, take the helmet of salvation. Don't casually take it. I mean, take it by force.

Take it affirmatively. Praying always with all prayer. Verse 18, and being watchful.

Being watchful. Being alert to this end with all perseverance. Verse 18, listen brothers and sisters, very quickly, we are not simply enlisted for battle.

We are thrust into a battle of unimaginable risk and hazards. It is not an engagement for the weak, cowardly, or double-minded. It is always a duty that never permits a leave of absence.

In 2 Timothy 2, verse 4 tells us, no one engaged in this warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life that he may please Him who enlisted him as a soldier. We must persist. Either persevere, or perish.

Secondly, I want you to see the craftiness of the adversary. Once again, I draw from Luther's battle hymn, A Mighty Fortress is Our God. It is true.

It is true. It is not spiritually inspired, but it is true. It is resoundingly true.

He says his craft and power are great. And armed with cruel hate on earth is not his equal. When modern believers think of the work of the devil, some imagine a legion of orcs like they might see in Lord of the Rings.

I agree with Bob Jennings and Charles Leiter. Oftentimes we glean what we think demons look like and how they activate from some horror movie that perhaps we watch. Most always, they never manifest themselves in that way.

It's a slow, subtle, oppressive, insidious coming upon that oftentimes manifests itself in debilitating depression. But these are not normally the ways that the God of this world is displayed. Every expression in the text suggests subtlety or outright deception than an overt ploy.

You see, the unseen demonic hosts move in a way that is undiscernable to the physical eye. Note the words Paul uses to describe satanic maneuvers. The wiles of the devil.

What does this mean, the wiles of the devil? We assume that we know what it means, but what does it really mean here? The word wiles here speaks of a concealed ploy of the devil. It is interesting that flesh and blood is obvious to the human eye that we tend to battle with and conflict with, but whereas powers, principalities, and rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness are not. They're more subjective in nature.

Wiles suggest subtle or obscure methods. His ways are characterized by the subjective or the hidden. Furthermore, note the term evil day.

It refers to a day, once again, of intense assault. Listen carefully. It is intense assault that is out of the ordinary trials of life.

The word evil means harmful in effect or influence. It is a time, watch it now, it is a time or a season of severe adversity or fiery temptation or intense trial in which one's faith is sorely vexed. It speaks of a day of violent assault or intense enticement.

Friend, when this comes with all of its intensity, we must fight these legions of hopelessness and despair and aggression with faith. When John Piper was out ministering in a conference with John MacArthur at his church, he said, one day I was running late and I went up the steps up to MacArthur's office there. And as I come through the foyer, there is right there in the corner a statue.

And he said, I cast a glance at it. And it was a man that had his fist clenched and held above his head like this. And his head was tilted heavenward.

His eyes were open. His face etched with pain. And he said, I noticed there was an inscription at the bottom of that figurine there, but I didn't have time to read it.

I went into MacArthur's office. We had our meeting together. And when I came back out, I took the time, I paused to go over and look at this man, look at this figure, and then read the inscription.

He said, once again, he said, this man was in agony. There was such intensity that was etched on his face. And there at the bottom of the statue were these words, I will trust.

And that's what God's called us to do, my brothers and sisters. We put on the whole armor of God that we might trust. That's perseverance.

That's continuance. Fiery darts. Literally meaning inflamed missiles.

What Paul may have had in mind were these slender pieces of cane filled with combustible material that could be easily set on fire. They were launched from a bow. When they would hit the victim, they would burst into flame.

They could not easily be retrieved out of the flesh. So the victim would be inflamed. They were launched by this bow with the intent of being fastened to an object so as to set it on fire and ultimately consume it.

The word quench, though, denotes hope. It means extinguished by a shield that is provided not from the arm of our own flesh. But then thirdly, consider with me the character of the overcomer.

The character of the true believer. Once again, I take great comfort in Luther's lyrics. In a mighty fortress is our God.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing. Were not the right man on our side the man of God's own choosing? Doth ask who that may be? In this great Christ Jesus. It is He.

It is He. Lord Sabbath is His name from age to age the same. And He must win the battle.

You see, the character of that Christian who rivals the Prince of Darkness is comprised of four components. I might add a fifth one. First of all, this is the application.

Please don't miss it. Listen very carefully. Understand this morning, no matter what you're going through, the fiery assault may be great hurt and difficulty in your marriage.

I mean, it literally sucks the breath out of you. It may be a wayward child. It may be something that you've incurred in a relationship.

Perhaps you have been misrepresented. Or maybe what they've said about you is absolutely true, but yet you cannot handle it. It is literally just stifling you.

I don't know where the fiery assault is coming from, what it consists of. But listen, if you know Christ, believe that Jesus is for you. God is for you.

It is no waste of words. It is no casual exhortation when Paul says, stand strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Understand that God is for you.

When I spoke at a fellowship conference, on one occasion, a young man came to me. He told me immediately, he said, I believe I've been abandoned by God. And he was a pitiful picture, ravaged by the enemy.

He told me, he said, I can't really pray. I have no sense of God. There's no confidence toward God.

And so finally after listening to him for a few minutes, I said, young man, you're here at the conference, aren't you? He said, yes. I said, you paid your registration to come, didn't you? Yes. That was an act of faith.

You drove over here five hours to attend this conference. Didn't it cost you? Gasoline? Yes, sir. I said, you've sat here and I've watched you as I've preached.

You've exercised rapt attention to the truth of God's Word. That speaks. Do you realize that's an act of faith? Yeah.

I said, do you understand what the psalmist said in Psalm 9 and verse 10? That they that seek the Lord have not been abandoned by the Lord. Your very presence makes a statement. God is for you.

Countenance lifts. Yes. He's for me.

He's for me. You've got to understand, friend, that God is for you. This is how you're strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

He has not abandoned you. Secondly, another character aspect of the overcomer is he's strong in weakness. He's strong in weakness.

Listen, my whole Christian life and ministry, I mean, God has been trying to weaken me and I fight to be strong. I fight to be successful. I fight to be popular.

Here's my problem. Oftentimes, I measure my value by my performance. And God's trying to knock all the fleshly props out from underneath us so we will exclusively depend on Him.

We are made strong through weakness. Listen, to become strong in the power of His might requires a reduction of strength. It is the idea of an utter reliance that results from an intentional diminishing of strength.

It's what Paul meant in 2 Corinthians 12 when he said strength made perfect in weakness. And then in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 7, For we have this treasure in earth and vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of Him and not of us. Thirdly, consider with me that the character of the overcomer, his obedience is non-optional.

It's not partial obedience. He does not resort to carnal weaponry. He trusts in the Lord regardless of his feelings.

He trusts in the Lord regardless of the counsel of others. He fights to lay hold of the promises of God. He puts on the whole armor of God.

His obedience is non-optional. Every part of the armor of God must be put on. To neglect one piece is to be vulnerable to the enemy's suggestions and invasion in your life.

Listen, many trustworthy commentaries agree, and I'm not going to take time to go into this, all the aspects of the armor and how they are applied practically, but listen, many of them agree that the duty of putting on the whole armor entails both an objective and a practical significance. Are you with me? Watch this now. We're almost finished.

Take for instance the girdle of truth. The truth speaks of the written Word of God, but it also has implication as it speaks of sincerity or truthfulness. There is a theology that undergirds the foundation of the believer's life, but listen, there is also a sincerity it entails.

Both are necessary. Both are necessary in the evil day. Recently, I've had some very precious friends that have defaulted spiritually, and it's costing them their ministry.

And the other day, being that I work as the Eastern European Coordinator with HeartCry, I'm talking to Brother Paul Washer, and when I inform him about a brother who is really seemingly apostatizing from the gospel, he just grieves of the other end of the phone, and then he says to me, he said, that sobers me up, and he challenges me, and he says, Don, we must walk in sincerity without hypocrisy. We must be as consistent in private as we are on the platform. And then he says, even though the elders in our churches are much less in age in their 30s compared to us who are in our 60s, we must submit to them, keep ourselves under their authority for our protection.

Good word! Fourthly, you've got to learn how to pray in the Holy Spirit. Listen to me. That doesn't mean praying in tongues.

Let me tell you what he means. He says there in the phrase in verse 18, praying always, it denotes constancy, continuance, praying always. We pray until we can pray.

We pray when seemingly everything is hopeless. I continue to maintain a posture of prayer. Secondly, there is earnestness there.

He says praying always with all prayer. That word all prayer there denotes of an earnestness. It speaks of a disposition of great sincerity and urgency.

And furthermore, consciousness, it speaks of a consciousness of the Holy Spirit's help. This is what it means to pray in the Spirit. Praying in the Spirit, being sensitive to His promptings and His direction as we pray.

It's what many in church history refer to an enlargement in prayer. You say, well, what does that mean? An enlargement in prayer? Enlargement means a confident sense that the answer is on its way. God, regardless of the whisperings of the enemy, regardless of the thought insertions, regardless of the counseling of sympathetic friends, God, I'm believing You by faith that the answer is on its way.

It's a sense of assurance that God has heard and then finally one more exhortation, brothers and sisters, is astute. It's what I call astute watchfulness. Verse 18, being watchful to this end.

It means be vigilant. Be vigilant. Try every spirit.

What appears in the name of sound theology or Christian must be tested. It must be tested. Breaks my heart.

Young man that Brother Paul Washer and I mentored went to a very sound seminary and all of a sudden, the whole counsel of God consists of social injustice. And now he claims to be or he aspires to be the next Martin Luther King. He's created such havoc, such bitterness and confusion in the Christian world now.

And I said to him, I said, brother, I thought you were a minister of the gospel. He said, I am. I preach a comprehensive gospel.

I preach against social injustice. God has one word to social injustice for those of us that it provokes. Be not overcome with evil but overcome evil with good.

We must be persistent. We must believe. So I know I've taken longer, but let me wrap it up here.

Evil days are inevitable for all believers. It's coming friend. It's coming.

Some right here in the building this morning. Do you realize just at a glance last night, people told me how severely depressed they were and how they're battling depression right here among our group. So my challenge to you is walk slowly through the crowd.

Take the time to speak to people, to listen to people. People are hurting. Walk slowly through the crowd.

Every Christian will be besieged by an intense trial when their mind is beset with anti-God thoughts. Thoughts of atheism and bitterness and unbelief and hate and depression or despair. When they come,

they will enable one to... Listen, what will enable that one to stand is his preparation.

He's used to putting on the whole armor of God and maintaining his composure while he's clothed with such. When they come, they will enable one to stand is his preparation. The believer who is indifferent or unwilling to clothe himself with the armor will fall victim to the devil.

This may result in a hardening of the heart, a denial of the Lord, and even their eternal damnation. And it's interesting in church history, my wife and I were so blessed. Just finished the excellent biography of George Mueller by Pearson and then after that, Alexander Peden, the prophet of the covenant.

And now I'm engaged in John Owen's biography. Friend, they all encountered evil days, but they persevered in faith. Jesus said, Peter, he says to you, Kathy, Sam, Satan hath devired to sift you as wheat.

And did he do it? Did the evil day lie just around the corner for Peter? Yes. Lord, I'll never deny you. You'll deny me thrice before the cock crows.

He did. He scattered with the others. And what brought him back? Peter, I have prayed for thee that your faith fail not.

Your faith, when you're converted, when you're changed, strengthen the brethren. My wife and I, we have some wonderful times after breakfast in the morning, our devotional time, and oftentimes we'll read something very heavy duty theologically and sometimes something very simple, you know, very practical. And recently we read the Recollected Love, the relationship between John and Polly Newton.

And John Newton went through a crisis of faith as Polly is on her deathbed. Listen to these words. I close with them.

He said, I believe it was almost two or three months before her death when I was walking up and down the room offering disjointed prayers for my heart torn with distress that a thought suddenly struck me with unusual force to this effect. The promises of God must be true. Newton? I mean, man, listen.

Crowds just flocked to hear him. This guy is sound theologically. Look at the hymns he composed.

What are you doing taking a step back and asking yourself, I really believe the promises of God. The promises of God must be true. Surely the Lord will help me if I'm willing to be helped.

It occurred to me that we are often led from a vain compliance in what we call our sensibility to indulge that unprofitable grief which both our duty and our peace require us to resist to the utmost of our power. He said then, I instantly said aloud, Lord, I am helpless indeed in myself, but I hope I am willing without reserve that you should help me. And he did.

When Polly died, he did not share shed a tear. He did not stress. It did not suck the life out of him, but he continued on in faith, rejoicing that she was in the presence of her Savior.

Years ago, I was down in Bentley, Louisiana at a conference and whoever was speaking when they finished, I leaned up across the pew and there in front of me was Bethany Jennings, the oldest daughter of Bob Jennings. And God had just called Bob home through the rough door of pancreatic cancer. And I leaned up and I said, I said, what have you learned? What is your experience in this whole horrible, painstaking providence of God and seeing your dad, you know, suffer and weaken daily, you know, and

finally, he dies.

And she says to me, life is brief and Christ is precious. That's a girl as young as she was that had learned to put on the whole armor of God. Can you say that in faith? Life is brief.

Christ is precious. Let's pray together. Father, I pray that You might use my feeble efforts, Lord, to help people, to encourage them to put on the whole armor of God, to fight the good fight of faith.

Father, remind them that every promise of God is yes and amen in Christ Jesus. That yes, they have authority to tread underfoot all the serpents and scorpions of the enemy. That Satan is a defeated foe.

That greater is he that is in them than he that is in the world. Father, would You buoy those people up here this morning that are going through a season of great depression? Lord, those who presently are epistles of hopelessness, I pray that You would come and that You would show them that You're for them. Encourage their heart.

And I pray in the days ahead that God, You would enable us to persevere in holiness that we might lay hold of eternal life for Your glory, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/QWsMB8CZibU.mp4>
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