

## **Worship on April 19, 2020**

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### **Announcements:**

. This recording is for the worship of Sunday, April 19th, 2020 because of the closure of church building due to Coronavirus Pandemic.

. From today, I will begin a series sermon. It's called Armour of God series. This is from Ephesians 6. From today for 9 weeks, we will equip ourselves with the Armour of God so we can stand strong in this world.

Let us worship God by singing!

### **SONG – Our God**

## Verse

Water You turned into wine Opened the eyes of the blind

There's no one like you None like you

Into the darkness You shine Out of the ashes we rise

There's No one like you None like you

## Chorus

Our God is greater, our God is stronger God You are higher than any other

Our God is Healer, awesome in power Our God, Our God

## Bridge

And if Our God is for us, then who could ever stop us?

And if our God is with us, then what can stand against?

And if Our God is for us, then who could ever stop us?

And if our God is with us, then what can stand against?

Then what can stand against?

## **Prayer for worship**

God of mighty power and great strength, we praise you as we worship you today through this online worship. You are a great God. You are the most high and glorious God. You are an awesome God. We are grateful that you are holding us and you are taking care of us and you are for us. Heaven Father, as we worship you

today, help us experience you. Fill our hearts with your strength and make us strong, so we can stand strong in this difficult time. Especially, we are starting this series sermon, the Armour of God. Help us equip ourselves with your presence and power, so we live boldly as your beloved children.

Come into our hearts and help us worship you wholeheartedly. Be praised and be worshiped. In Jesus' precious and powerful name we pray. Amen.

### Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-18

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

14 Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness.

15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

16 With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

### Title: Spiritual Warfare

Today's title is Spiritual Warfare.

This passage is very famous and well-known among Christians. I am sure that you heard sermons on this passage many many times. Despite of the familiarity of the passage, I decided to do the sermon series on this passage over two months because I believe this is what we need to live through this chaotic world with faith in God, especially, in this coronavirus pandemic. I will introduce why it's important to put the Armour of God and the importance of knowing about the spiritual battle. And we will take a closer look at each piece of the Armour of God in the following weeks.

When we build a house, the first thing we do is to make a foundation. This is the basic and it's the firm ground the house can stand on. So, before talking about each piece of the armour of God, I will talk about why Paul has to give this message to Christians in Ephesians.

Ephesians is Paul's letter to the people in Ephesus. Paul wrote this letter to encourage them in faith. There were Gentile believers and Jewish believers together. Paul encouraged them to make harmony in faith. Furthermore, Paul considered the people making harmony in Christ as if they were the new humanity. They were no longer distinguished by their origins. There were no more Gentiles or Jews. Their new identity was the people of grace, people of God, followers of Jesus Christ. To this people of God, Paul taught them about the spiritual battle through this passage.

Many times, we see fights in churches, between believers. Pastors judge other pastors. Theology students criticize their professors, their pastors, and each

other. Believers judge pastors and each other. We all judge others. Imagine that you were in Ephesus. You can find Jewish believers or Gentile believers easily. And they judged each other because they thought they had better faith than others. But, through the letter, Paul makes sure that they are one in Christ. For example, **Ephesians 2:14 – “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.”** So, these two groups are not enemies anymore. Paul wanted them to make harmony and peace with each other. In today's passage, after spending some time on this issue of making harmony with each other, he changes the topic to the real enemy. He introduced the importance of the spiritual warfare.

**V10 – “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his power.**

**V12 – “for our struggle (or battle) is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in this heavenly places.”**

Clearly, Paul writes that the enemy is not against each other among different Christian groups, but evil forces.

When a church is divided into two or three, they hate each other, usually. Sometimes, they say that people in the other group are captured by the evil spirit. Now, Paul wants to shift their focus from each other to the one common enemy,

the true enemy. In doing so, Paul emphasizes few things we want to take a look at today.

First of all, as I briefly said just now, the struggle is not against each other. The struggle is against the evil power. That's why it's important to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. The evil force endlessly attack us in order to take away our victory. Have you experienced the stage of faith that "my faith is on the right track and I am doing so well"? It might be true for some people. But, it might be the sign of you are getting used to it. "No more amazement of the grace of God, I am doing so much for God and God's people. And I deserve the forgiveness of God, grace of God, and love of God. There are nothing to repent." "I am doing great in this world and I am doing my best at church." We don't have to be desperate always, but it's so easy for us to forget the worth of the grace and love we received from God! Because we experience it repeatedly, we become used to the grace and love of God. Because we are so used to it, the grace and love of God that we are receiving becomes our norm. The grace and love of God becomes our right. "It's too obvious that I deserve God's blessings!" We take God for granted. Our hearts are disguised and blinded and we create the hard-shell so that we can hide in from the presence of God and we are so satisfied in our shell. This is how we lose our desperation. How do we pray to God? Do we really long for God? Do we really expect anything when we pray to God? → This is my honest confession.

My faith journey becomes habitual sometimes and there is no amazement and no gratitude when coming to the presence of God. This stage comes back from time to time. When it comes, this is the best time for the evil power to come to us and take over our lives and use our lives for the evil purposes.

In v12, the English translation used “struggle.” In Greek, this means Wrestling. At that time, it’s not like the sports wrestling, but it was a death match. When two people wrestle together, the game doesn’t end until one person loses his life. There was no time limit, no rules, but surviving was the only rule. So, you can’t show any weakness when in fight. When it’s exposed, then the opponent would focus on the weakest point and try to take away your life to save his own. Paul emphasizes the importance and seriousness of the spiritual warfare. It’s death or life match. If we lose the game, then there’s no life. We have to have the desperation because if we don’t do our best, we will lose our lives. Moreover, the bigger problem is that our enemy, the evil force, is unseen, invisible. Many times, we are not desperate. But, we need to know that the evil forces try to make us fall down with its best effort. So, back **to v10 – be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power!”** **V11 – put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”**

We need to know that they are real and we need to know what they are. There is a list of the evil forces in v12. It’s against the rulers, the authorities, the

powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Let's take a look at each part in order to know how they influence upon us. The evil force penetrate the whole world from top to bottom.

1<sup>st</sup> – rulers and authorities → we need to know the true identity of the evil force. **Ephesians 2:2 says “the devil is the ruler of the air”** (Air is everywhere we live.) and **Revelation 12:9, “The great dragon was hurled down – that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who lead the whole world astray.”**

What does the evil force rule? Their own little world? No, the Bible says that the devil is the ruler of the air and he is the one who leads the whole world astray. This means, the evil force darkens our discernment. It darkens our eyes, so that we cannot see what we need to see. For example, we all know that every human is precious. But people interpreted the Bible to justify their slavery. Because of their immediate profit, they treated human as some goods. Because of the selfishness desires for more money, they didn't see the true value of human dignity. Also, when achieved a great success, wealth, OR higher position with authority, then, people want to earn more money, to get more respect, more power, and more control. Is it really natural? Why do we want more of these? If we fail to keep our own hearts, then we will fall down by the evil power.

2<sup>nd</sup> – powers of this dark world – Is power negative term or positive? There is no positivity or negativity on power itself. Then, what about money? Then, what



about knowledge? The evil power darkens our judgment and cause us use these neutral values negatively. For example, money. This can be good or bad. It's neutral in value. Some people use money with good purposes and the other use it with bad intentions. Satan makes us use money with negative ways, selfish ways. Evil force tries to take us down through distorting the usage of the neutral values. What about knowledge? We can use knowledge to criticize others and to overlook others. OR, we can use knowledge to give people lives and benefits. If we lose the discernment on how we use what we have, we might become the tools of the dark power. I hope and pray that we have wisdom to discern and be used as God's hands and feet.

3<sup>rd</sup> – spiritual forces of evil – this last one stimulate our inner desires. It arouses our lust, selfishness, and produces anger. This spiritual forces of evil attempts us to use our body in ungodly ways. It makes us to use our body for evil purposes. Some people cannot control their anger and burst out. Then, it benefits no one, but evil. Other people are heart broken and the person who gets angry destroys his soul. This spiritual forces of evil give us the lack of control. Because we are sinners, we have great potential to commit sins. We put ourselves on the cross with Jesus, but we are not completely dead yet. So, there is always possibility, our sinful desires can be released and commit horrible sins. So, we need to be alert!

**1 Peter 5:8 says this, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”** The devil is powerful and we are not. That is why, v11, we need to put on the full armour of God on us. V11 teaches us to guard ourselves. Don't give devil any space, not even a small crack. We need to stand strong with the full armour of God protecting ourselves.

This is the most tricky part. If we are taken over by the evil spirit, what will happen? Nothing,,, that we can notice. We won't be noticing anything, but very very small things. There won't be any drastic changes. But, we won't have any meaningful experiences with God any more. Our body and our spirit will be used for evil purposes, not God's. And the worst thing is that we won't notice it. This is what happens if we don't put on the full armour of God. We have to admit our weaknesses that we are not possible to fight against the evil forces with our own power. We have to have God inside and out, so that the evil should run away, not because of us, but because of God our Father in our hearts.

Do you know BOXING. There are two people locked on a square shaped stage and punching each other until one person gets knocked down. The big K.O. punch is very rare. But, it comes with numerous small punches. To knock down the opponent, giving small zap is very important. In this way, you need to make the opponent tired. This little small punches of the evil spirit make us fall down

eventually. So, everyday, we need to be equipped with the full armour of God. We need to be aware of the small punches of the evil power in our everyday life. I hope and pray that everyone knows the importance of having the full armour of God in our lives and in our hearts.

### **Let us pray**

Heavenly Father, we come to you with the confession that we are weak. We are not strong, but you are. We are strong because you are with us. We are able because you make us able. We are rich because you gave us. It is all about you, not us. Lord, thank you for opening our eyes for the dark powers around us. Help us be alert of these evil powers. Help us not give them any space or chance to come into our lives. Through this sermon series, Lord, help us be more active spiritually and aware in our everyday lives. Watch over us through the week from any evil powers and protect us with your righteous right hand. Prepare our hearts so that all of us can put the full armour of God through this series and live powerfully for you!

### **Continue to pray for the Prayer of the people**

Heavenly Father, we are praying for the people who are struggling with life's problems. Spiritual, physical, and mental problems. Although the dark power is in the air, we know that you are in control over everything. You are holding all of us and you are watching over all of us, in your arms. As we come to you with our

personal worship, meditation, or short prayers, help us experience your presence. Every moment, we need you. We need the assurance that you are with us.

This is a poem called Footprints. May this encourage your hearts.

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the LORD. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonged to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it. "LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me.

The LORD replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Heavenly Father, we all experience lowest times. Maybe this is one of the most difficult times for some of us. Help us remember you that you are carrying us when the most difficult and troublesome time comes to us.

Let the whole world know your love and grace and encouragement. Display your glory through our lives. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Our last song is **Still**. There are dark forces trying to make us fall. But, our Lord is carrying us. Let us be still and know that our God is with us.

**Still**

Verse 1: Hide me now Under your wings Cover me Within your mighty hand

Chorus:

When then oceans rise and thunders roar I will soar with you under the storm  
Father you are king over the flood I will be still and know you are God

Verse 2: Find rest my soul in Christ alone Know his power In quietness and trust

Be still and know that he is our God.

### **Benediction**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

And the Love of God,

And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

Be with us all, now and always.

Amen.

### Ponder Upon Questions

1. What influences my life? What has the greatest effect in my life?
2. How sensitive am I to the power upon my life?
3. How do I respond to the influence?