

Theme: Our enemies in spiritual warfare are Satan, the fallen world, and our sinful nature, and we must resist their attacks and overcome them.

I. Intro - Thermopylae

- A. Xerxes threatened Greece; they resisted
- B. Xerxes raised massive army of allies to attack
- C. Small force of Spartans & others stood at Thermopylae
- D. Greeks held out until traitor Ephialtes showed Persians a pass
- E. Threefold enemy - Xerxes, his allies, and traitors within - and Greeks had to fight all three
- F. We face the same thing - an enemy, and his allies without and within - and we must fight the good fight against all three

II. Our Threefold Enemy

- A. Our threefold enemy: Satan, world, and sinful nature
As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. Ephesians 2:1-3
 1. Paul is here speaking about unregenerate people
 2. He lists great threefold enemy - world, Satan, flesh
 3. At salvation God begins to deliver us from all three
 4. But the struggle continues throughout Christian life

5. This 'unholy trinity' often mentioned in Word, history
 - a. Parable of the sower (Matthew 13)
 - b. John of the Cross - threats to the perfection of soul
 - c. Book of common prayer
From all deceits of the the world, the flesh, and the devil, Good Lord, deliver us

B. Our enemy and his allies

1. Our ultimate enemy is Satan & demons (Eph 6:12)
2. World is Satan's ally to provide external pressure
3. Our sinful nature is the traitor within - betraying us to Satan, giving him access to further enslave us
4. The world and the sinful nature combine to produce strongholds used by Satan to prevent us from experiencing the freedom we have in Christ.
5. To experience the full salvation God intends for us, we must fight the good fight of faith against Satan, the world, and our sinful nature.
Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12

III. The Devil, the World and the Flesh

- A. The Devil is our external enemy trying to destroy us
Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:10-12

1. In salvation we were transferred out of Satan's kingdom and into the kingdom of God
2. But Satan still attacks us from the outside, trying to lure us into disobedience to God, so that we might be enslaved
3. In our spiritual warfare, Satan is like Xerxes - the great enemy attempting to come from without and conquer and enslave us
4. Fighting the good fight against the Devil

a. We draw near to God, finding strength in Him

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. James 4:7-8

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10

1. Both passages speak of drawing close to God or finding our strength in Him
2. The first step in fighting Satan is drawing near to God. Before we turn to face Satan, we must look to God.

b. We stand against Satan and resist him

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your **stand** against the devil's schemes...

¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand** your ground, and after you have done everything, to **stand**. ¹⁴ **Stand** firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, Ephesians 6:13-14

Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you. James 4:7

1. We are told to stand against Satan 4 times!

2. We fight against the Devil by standing and resisting his attack
3. We remember he is an external foe, and that we have renounced him and his kingdom, and he has no authority over us.
4. We remind him we have been bought by the blood of Christ, and so overcome him (Revelation 12:9)

B. The world is our external enemy allied with the Devil

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. John 17:14-16

1. 'World' used multiple ways in Scripture: created order; humanity as a whole; fallen system set against God and His people
2. Jesus is here using it in the final sense - fallen system set against God and His people
3. We are no longer of this world - we have been transferred into God's kingdom, and this fallen system is loyal to Satan
4. The fallen world is allied with Satan to prevent us from following God & to try to shape us into its own mold & pattern of thinking & acting
5. Fighting against the fallen world system
 - a. We separate from the world in our loyalty

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. James 1:27

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. James 4:4

1. We fight the world by refusing to be polluted by its values and gods
 2. We fight the world by forming an internal separation - we are not the friend of this world system
 3. This does not mean no contact with unbelievers - for we are sent into the world by Jesus (John 18).
 4. However, for Christians there is always a basic separation from the world that is set against God.
- b. We become vitally connected to a local church
1. The only we can be in the world but not of it is as we walk very closely with other believers in a local church
 2. Remember - the armor of our warfare only works if we stand as a group. There are no successful lone warrior Christians.
 3. The importance of the church is central in the whole book of Ephesians.
 4. I talked about this in previous teachings on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6 so I wont repeat it here

C. The sinful nature is an internal traitor allied with Satan

1. 'Flesh' does not refer to our physical body, but the nature of sin, the part of us that wants to rebel against God and follow Satan.
2. When we become Christians we are given a new heart, the Spirit comes to live in us
3. However, our old sin nature still remains - this is the message of Romans 7, and the honest experience of every Christian

4. Our sinful nature is the traitor within, looking for ways to entice us and to betray us to our enemy the Devil.

5. Fighting the sinful nature

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:22–24

- a. We put off our old sinful nature & its desires, refusing to give in to what we know is wrong and sinful
- b. We allow God's Word to renew us in the attitude of our minds, shaping and forming new desires within us
- c. We put on the new self - our new nature given to us by God, and we do the deeds it desires
- d. It is not enough to try and avoid evil desires and actions - we must actively replace them with holy desires and actions
- e. It is not enough to hope that our feelings will change - we resist wrong desires & actively do right actions until right desires arise

IV. Applying the Word

	Devil	World	Flesh
Description	External enemy	External ally of Devil	Internal traitor/ ally of Devil
Opposing resource	God	Church	New nature in Christ
How to overcome	Draw near to God Stand & resist	Separate Vital connection to local church	Put off old Renew mind Put on new

A. Look at the table summary of our enemies

1. Understand how each works
2. Understand they how collude together to form strongholds in us
3. You might want to re-listen to the two previous teachings on strongholds and how to overcome them

B. How is the enemy working to enslave me at present?

1. If I had to pick one main enemy right now - which would it be?
 - a. Am I fighting the good fight against that enemy?
 - b. Am I working to overcome it the right way?
2. Do I understand how all 3 enemies are colluding in my life to enslave me?
 - a. The primary way is not the only way

- b. Where the three collude together is where I often find strongholds in my life
- c. Do I know where these are?
- d. Am I using the right resources on each front of the war?

C. Closing prayer

Our Enemies: The World, The Flesh, and the Devil

Ephesians 2:1-3

August 27, 2017

Prayer

Jude 24-25

Teaching keywords: spiritual warfare; Satan and demons; sin; Christian life

Grace, mercy, and peace from him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — ²⁵ the only God our Savior to whom be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.
Jude 1:24–25 paraphrase

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
Ephesians 2:1–3

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6:12