



UPCOMING DATES ...

Men's Encounter – 24 to 26 March

Water Baptisms – 9 April

Easter Family Fun Day & Good Friday Service – 14 April

Steps of Hope – 29 April

Kids "Blast" (Kindy to Yr 6) – Sunday nights

Christian Character Course – register online

2017 – CG Notes #3

STRONGER

Title: Be Strong in the Lord

KEY VERSE:

Ephesians 6:10 NIV

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

These two words: "be strong" are repeated over and over again throughout the Old and New Testaments. "Be strong and of good courage... Say to those who are fearful-hearted,

Be strong, do not fear!’ Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong!’” (Deut. 31:6, Isa 35:4, 1 Cor. 16:13)

Literally hundreds of Scriptures refer to our need of strength and many verses, such as these, imperatively state: **be strong**. So, how does a person *be strong*? Is it something that you can just switch on? A choice that you make? A spiritual impartation of some sort?

It may be helpful to first identify in what ways we need to be strong. Physical strength aside, there are two main areas I believe the Bible is referring to. The first area is spiritual strength. That’s the most obvious to us. The second area that affects us is mental and emotional strength. Most of us have felt challenged in this area at some stage. Both areas of strength are intrinsically linked.

Ephesians 6:10 – 18 is a key portion of Scripture that gives us *the how* - how to be strong in the Lord. It will be helpful if everyone has these verses in front of him or her to search through.

Read out loud Ephesians 6:10-18.

Answer and discuss the following questions:

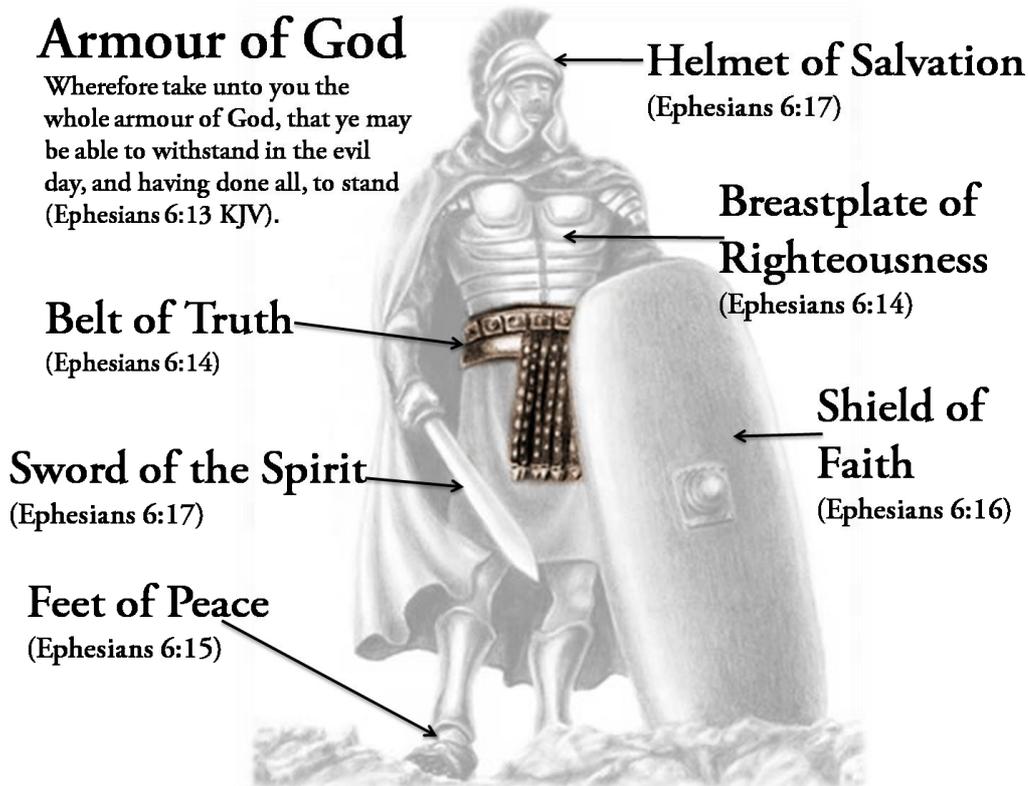
- What are the reasons Paul insists that we must be strong in the Lord? (V.11-13 There are several.)
- Why is this so important? What is at stake if we do not stand strong?
- Who is our stated enemy? Who and what else is our enemy?

The Christian *is involved* in a spiritual conflict, a war, a fight of faith but many live their lives hardly aware of what is really happening. (2 Cor 10:4-5, 1 Tim 1:18-19). The most important battle has already been fought and the victory secured by Jesus’ death upon the cross. (Col. 2:15) When Jesus rose from the dead, He triumphed over sin, death and Satan. Now we as believers enforce the victory He has won as Satan is always ready to oppose us.

The imagery Paul uses is of the Roman soldier dressed in his armour. The letter to the Ephesians was written from prison (3:1,4:1,6:20) and it is presumed Paul may have observed the guard on duty when he wrote these words. He noticed the soldier’s armour and realised that there is a spiritual correlation for every piece the man wore. Paul was the prisoner in chains, seemingly weak and captive but he knew by the power of the Holy Spirit he was more equipped for battle than the soldier and all his physical armaments.

Armour of God

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:13 KJV).



Verse 13 begins the instruction – the *how to* of becoming strong in the Lord. This is one of the important ways that we become strong in the Lord: we *put on* the strength that the Lord provides.

Ephesians 6:13 NIV

Therefore put on the full armour 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.

This we can do as an act of faith. We make a conscious decision that we will lay hold of every single thing God has provided for us through Jesus Christ.

When we appropriate, that is, make full use of what God has provided for us – we are able to stand strong. That's staying power. That's being able to withstand the attack of the enemy and when the dust settles, we're still standing!

Discuss:

Look again at Ephesians 6: 14-17 which lists the individual pieces of spiritual armour.

- How does each of the pieces address our areas of human weakness and need?
- How and what do they protect?
- How do they make us strong spiritually, mentally and emotionally?
- Paul said, "Put on the *full armour of God*..." Why is it important to implement ALL the pieces of the armour?
- What is our one weapon of offense in the armour?

There is another weapon not mentioned in the armour but noted in this passage (v. 18-20) and that is prayer.

- Why do you think Satan undermines, distracts and constantly opposes the Word of God and prayer in the life of the believer?

Verse 11 tells us that we must stand against ALL of the devil's schemes.

To do...

This week take a few moments every morning to "get dressed" – that is put on the full armour of God. Read through these Scriptures daily and by faith appropriate these armour pieces that will make you stronger. Share your experiences with the group next week.