



6. 'Giving your all'

Ephesians 6.¹⁻²⁴

Background

This final chapter in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus sees him changing the picture again. No longer Christ's 'troupe' of chapter 5, playing out on the stage of their daily lives the drama of God's glorious gospel: instead, now, the 'troops' whom Jesus who are called to do battle against the powers of darkness.

Almost invariably, and for very obvious reasons, the 'fields' on which the battle is fought are the two contexts in which the kingdom of God and the cause of the gospel is most often significantly advanced: namely, family life, on the one hand – as children are raised 'in the training and instruction of the Lord' – and the workplace, on the other, as colleagues are exposed, hour after hour and day after day, to the transformed living which the Spirit of God effects in His people.

No wonder, then, that they become the battlegrounds on which so often the strategies of the devil are concentrated!

The chapter begins, therefore, with a focus on those two contexts. Paul sets out the ways in which, as we conduct ourselves rightly in each context, our conduct serves to display the beauty of God's glory and the blessing of God's gospel (vv.1-9).

He then goes on in the next section (vv.10-20) to describe (a) the fact that it's a battlefield, (b) the nature of the enemy and (c) both the subtlety and intensity of the enemy's strategy, before explaining how as believers we counter those varied schemes and, indeed, ourselves take the battle to the enemy.

Wars are won by *armies*, not by individual soldiers, however brave and outstanding those individual soldiers may be. The letter thus closes with a few short verses which underline the fact that the battles are won on the ground, by troops who have learned to stand with one another. In the last analysis, believers are either 'rooted' like that, a disciplined army of committed troops who serve their king together – or they end up routed, put to flight by a maddened, ruthless enemy.

'Days' (1), (3) and (6) are the ones with which to start: and as ever there are additional questions on those 'days' which will hopefully stimulate good discussion in your Community Groups!

1) Monday 13th February – family

Read [Ephesians 6.1-4](#)

“.. so that it may go well with you ..” (Eph.6.3)

At the heart of the gospel is this great truth – Jesus brings you back to the Father and into a family: the security of the Father’s love, and the dignity of familial significance. Family relationships provide a daily opportunity to display this great gospel truth.

What’s the significance in the command to honour your father and mother being the first commandment with a promise?

To what extent and in what ways does the command to honour your father and mother apply when the ‘children’ are themselves adults?

How can parents today be helped to raise their children ‘in the training and instruction of the Lord’ when children are constantly exposed, through the media, their peers and at school, to that which is contrary to Scripture?

Prayer: *Thank You, Lord, for bringing me into a family that is forever! Grant me wisdom and grace in honouring all within my earthly family in a way that is honouring to You.*

2) Tuesday 14th February – service

Read [Ephesians 6.5-9](#)

“.. serve whole-heartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people ..” (Eph.6.7)

The ‘work-place’ is another stage on which we illustrate the grace of God in Jesus: we’re brought not only into the *family* of God, but also into the *service* of God. Believing employers and employees alike show the privilege and joys of that service.

What difference does it make when you see your daily work (whatever that may involve for you) as service being rendered to the Lord?

If you’re in a position of authority over others in the workplace how will your commitment to Jesus as Lord affect the way you exercise that authority?

Prayer: *My daily work is service that is gladly given to You, my Lord: may the hallmark of all I do be an excellence which declares the excellency of all that You are and do.*

3) Wednesday 15th February – battle

Read [Ephesians 6.10-12](#)

“.. our struggle is not against flesh and blood ..” (Eph.6.12)

Whatever our daily living involves, whether marriage (5.22-33), in the home (6.1-3), or the 'workplace' (6.4-9), the stage on which you live out your life for Christ's glory is always a battlefield! Recognise that the cause of Christ is contested by dark powers.

How have you experienced this '*spiritual*' battle?

What does it involve for believers (together) to 'put on the full armour of God' and how should we best go about that?

Think back over the last decades – what have been some of the ways in which this fellowship has been threatened and assailed by 'the powers of this dark world' and 'the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm'?

How has this church sought to 'take your stand' against these assaults?

What are some of the 'schemes' of the devil to which the Scriptures point and which you've encountered yourself?

Prayer: Your work, Lord, is often contested: and those who seek Your glory are targeted by Your foe. Train my hands for war, my fingers for battle ([Ps.144.1](#))

4) Thursday 16th February – standing

Read [Ephesians 6.13](#)

".. so that when the day of evil comes you may be able to stand .." (Eph.6.13)

By yourself, you don't have a leg to stand on before the holy God. Jesus puts you on your feet, though, and by His sustaining grace enables you to remain standing when (not if!) those 'evil days' come, and all hell gets thrown against you.

'Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,' write Paul ([2 Tim.3.12](#)): is that really so inevitable and if so why?

Read [2 Cor.1.3-11](#): what lessons can you learn from the way in which the apostle Paul himself was able, having 'done everything', to remain standing?

Prayer: You are my Rescuer, Lord. Sometimes I think I'm going to sink, not swim, such are the pressures I face: so it's on You that I set my hope – continue to deliver me!

5) Friday 17th February – armour

Read [Ephesians 6.14-17](#)

".. stand firm then .." (Eph.6.14)

Believers are in 'the front line' of the battle. As during the pandemic, personal protective equipment was required, so in 'the day of evil' you similarly require PPE. That armour has been given by God. Make sure that you're careful to wear it!

In what ways is faith like a 'shield' and how does it 'extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one'?

To what extent is the armour *protective*, and to what extent does it equip you to take the battle to the enemy?

Prayer: *We won't fear the battle, we won't fear the night: we will walk the valley with You by our side* *. Thank You for the armour and protection You have given me in Christ.

6) Saturday 18th February – prayer

Read [Ephesians 6.18-20](#)

".. be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people .." (Eph.6.18)

Prayer is a key part of the 'armour' given you by the Lord. Note the repeated 'all' – all occasions, all kinds of prayer, always, and all the Lord's people. It's to be particular, too, specific requests for specific people. Learn *what* to pray as well as *how* to pray.

'Prayer is evangelism shorn of all its carnal attractions' (George Philip): what did he mean by that and to what extent do you agree with that?

What does Paul mean by 'all kinds of prayers and requests'?

The letter is written to a church – believers, together, are to "keep on praying for all the Lord's people": how do we best maintain and encourage this prayerful 'alertness' on the part of all believers?

As you think ahead to the preaching of God's Word tomorrow, for whom might you pray in the terms Paul requests here?

Prayer: *Keep me faithful and constant in prayer. Help me to remember always that what I am on my knees before You, that I am and no more* *

7) Sunday 19th February – encouragement

Read [Ephesians 6.21-24](#)

".. grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love .." (Eph.6.24)

Tychicus was one of the unsung heroes of the early church. A good 'communicator', keeping people in touch, and ensuring the Lord's people were encouraged thereby – a channel of God's peace, a bearer of God's love, and a conduit of God's grace.

Are there people with whom you should be keeping in touch to tell them your news or the news of your church?

How might you encourage others today?

Prayer: *Make me a channel of Your peace, O Lord. May all I say and do today impart to others a knowledge of Your love and an experience of Your grace.*