

EPHESIANS

Chapter 6

Children and Parents

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

6:1 *the children.* τὰ τέκνα—In striking contrast to other ancient household orders that are chiefly concerned with free male adults, Paul directly addresses the subordinate figures of “children” (and later “slaves” in 6:5–8). (CC)

obey your parents – In the original the word means “to listen under,” carrying the clear idea of obedience to authority. This respect toward parents becomes a training ground for all the respect Christian children must give over the years of their lives. Learning reverence and honor is no small thing, and it begins in the home. If they are in later life to do what is difficult – to honor all men, by recognizing even in the degraded and the lost the worth that belongs to them who are created in the image of God – they must be carefully prepared for it in the home school of family life. (LL)

Gk *hypakouo*, emphasizes “listening.” (TLSB)

in the Lord – This obedience in the context of one’s relationship with Christ. Children who obey their parents find the strength and motivation to do so “in the Lord.” That is, they know it brings him pleasure. (LL)

“Children, obey your parents because you are Christians” (God’s Word). (PBC)

for this right – In a time when every expectation needs to be explained from every imaginable angle, obedience is commanded of children just because it is right. This identifies the obedience of children to their parents as a God-given absolute – the way God has designed families to be. Obedience, in other words, is the right thing to do. It is not a matter of obedience with certain ends in mind but obedience simply because God says it is right. (LL)

Pleasing to the Lord (Col 3:20). Note that Paul addresses children as Christians. (TLSB)

6:2 *honor* – Children are not merely to “obey” their parents, perhaps unwillingly and grudgingly. More is asked of Christian children. They are to “honor” their parents. Thus a proper attitude is required, one that involves both heart and mind. (PBC)

To honor includes two things: That children acknowledge and regard their parents as their superiors and that they accordingly submit themselves to the will of their parents. (Stoeckhardt)

first commandment with promise – God’s Law is not arbitrary, but describes a life in which the blessings of creation are best enjoyed (Ex. 20:6; 1 Tim. 4:8). “He does mean that obedience

to parents justifies us before God. But when obedience happens in those who have been justified, it merits other great rewards” (Ap V 76). (TLSB)

These words are commonly understood to mean that the Fourth Commandment was the first to which a promise was attached. The Fourth Commandment is a commandment of first rank, one of the foremost commandments. (Stoekhardt)

The promise attached to the commandment to honor parents originally promised long life in the Promised Land, highlighting the family and its solidarity as crucial to Israel’s future. In our time one wonders if life is not actually prolonged by the reverence and honor taught here. Isn’t it true that the more we live within the structures of God, the less we’ll know stress? And if we know less stress, might not a longer life follow?

6:3 *go well...may life long in the land* – The original promise referred to the land of Israel (Dt. 5:16). For Christians, the whole earth is included. However, because of sin, we do not always fully enjoy it. (TLSB)

in the land. In Dt 5:16 (see Ex 20:12), where this commandment occurs, the “promise” (v. 2) was expressed in terms of the anticipated occupation of the “land,” i.e., Palestine. That specific application was, of course, not appropriate to the Ephesians, so the more general application is made here. (CSB)

That doesn’t mean every child who obeys his or her parents will necessarily live to be a hundred. But the converse is true; disobedience to parents has bad consequences. Since the family is the basis of society and thus also of the nation, woe to the people and the land that disregard this fundamental relationship between parents and children. (PBC)

That this exhortation was directly applied to children shows that Christian children also attended the Christian gatherings in which the apostolic letters were read, that parents with their children, entire families belonged to the congregation, also that then already the baptism of children, through which the children of Christians were added to the Church, was generally exercised. (Stoekhardt)

6:4 *Fathers* – He is speaking to them in their role as the head of the household. Mothers, of course, are by no means excluded or assumed to be less active in bringing up the children. (PBC)

do not provoke. Fathers must surrender any right they may feel they have to act unreasonably toward their children. (CSB)

καὶ οἱ πατέρες, μὴ παροργίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν—Paul turns his attention from children to “fathers.” Certainly, in light of his use of “parents” (6:1) and “your father and mother” (6:2), this admonition could be understood to include also mothers. (CC)

Temperamental outbursts and undue harshness on the part of parents can do major harm to tender souls. (PBC)

Roman fathers had absolute power over their children. Paul urges restraint in imitation of God. They are not to anger or despair (Col. 3:21; cf. Rom. 10:19). (TLSB)

Embittering them. (Stoekhardt)

The verb παροργίζω (παρά, “beyond,” + ὀργή, “anger”) means to “make intensely angry, provoke to anger.” (CC)

In ancient times a child had no rights whatsoever. A father literally had the right of life and death over his child. Here God holds fathers (in our day, parents) responsible for their side of the relationship. They are told first not to exasperate their children. The word translated in the original means “to provoke to anger.” Unresolved anger can lead to resentment that lasts decades, even a lifetime. Psychologists have discovered that troubled adults most often return to their families of origin to face and overcome anger provoked by parents. Parents can provoke their children to anger in many ways. Among these are inappropriate methods of discipline; angry outbursts, lack of encouragement, praise, or affirmation; physical or verbal abuse, unreasonable expectations; comparing to other children; nagging; and making love contingent on meeting certain standards. (LL)

A father should handle his children in the manner in which we observe God handling us. God at times afflicts and chastises us, but He does not kill us; and in the midst of the affliction He consoles, strengthens, confirms, nourishes, and favors us. And when we have committed any sin against Him, He does not punish us according to the rigor of the Law but tempers the punishments. Moreover, when we have repented, He instantly remits the sins as well as the punishments. In the same manner parents ought to handle their children. (Luther)

in the discipline and instruction – Instilling sound principles of life, training to good habits, cautioning and protecting against moral dangers, encouraging prayer, Bible reading, church going; taking pains to let them have good associates; and especially dealing with them prayerfully and earnestly. (PC)

The father works with his children through Law and Gospel. The Gospel is the chief teaching of God’s Word. “We must hold the commandment before them, and constantly teach it, so that we bring them up not only with punishment, but also in reverence and fear of God” (LC I 61). God uses punishment for our good (Prov. 3:11-12; Heb. 12:5-11). (TLSB)

Nurture and admonition differ from each other as do leading forward and correcting. (Stoekhardt)

Training emphasizes the fact that children will learn from us by what they see. As Robert Fulgham has written, “Don’t worry that your children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you. They also learn by outright instruction. The OT mandate of Deut. 6:4-9 presents the serious responsibility of parents to pass on to their children the truths of God. What a tragedy that today so many parents defer completely to teacher in the church for such instruction. There is no substitute in a child’s life for parents who both model and teach the Christian faith. (LL)

Bondservants and Masters

5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. 9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

6:5 Three moral demands are made, each successive one placing the moral demand higher. The first requires an obedience whereby the servant trembles before the thought of failing in one way or another to perform his duty. The second requires obedience where-by he is simply and properly, without mental reservation, concerned about fulfilling his duty. The third, because of which the masters are called masters according to the flesh, requires an obedience whereby he is led by the conviction that it is to be done in the service of Christ, as fulfillment of His will. (Stoekhardt)

bondservants. Both the OT and the NT included regulations for societal situations such as slavery and divorce (see Dt 24:1–4), which were the results of the hardness of hearts (Mt 19:8). Such regulations did not encourage or condone such situations but were divinely-given, practical ways of dealing with the realities of the day. (CSB)

The same word is translated “servants” in v. 6. (TLSB)

Slaves require a major section in Paul’s Table of Duties – second only to husbands. That may be because numerically slaves comprised a significant portion of the Ephesian congregation. Certainly in the Graeco-Roman world, permeated as it was with slavery, slaves were an important sociological and economic factor. (PBC)

It’s important to note that Paul does not make it his or the church’s platform to abolish slavery. That does not mean Paul put his stamp of approval on it. In Philemon, a letter that may have accompanied our letter to the Ephesians, Paul also addressed the slavery question. There, you may recall, Paul put in a good word for the runaway slave Onesimus, who was returning to his master. Paul not only strongly urged kind treatment for Onesimus but also hinted that his owner, Philemon, might consider releasing him (Philemon 21). Abolishing slavery, however, is not part of Paul’s agenda. Far from it. Paul urges Christian slaves to be good slaves. (PBC)

Slavery is a temporary situation, only for this world. Furthermore, it is not an indication of a slave’s personal value, worth, or status before God. It makes no difference to God whether a person is “slave or free” (v. 8; Gal. 3:28). The unity in the church that has been able to bring together Jew and Gentile also equalizes slave and free. (PBC)

masters – Greek *kyrios*, “lord.” Paul uses this wordplay to teach them to honor the Lord through their master. (TLSB)

fear and trembling – Paul is not saying it is going to be easy or comfortable. In urging the Ephesian slaves to obey their masters, Paul acknowledges that they may well be doing it “with respect and fear” (literally, with fear and trembling), so it is safe to say some anxiety may be involved. Hence Paul views slavery as a cross, but one to be borne with Christian fortitude and ready acceptance. (PBC)

6:6 *not by the way of eye-service* – This is seeking attention or only working when the master is looking. (TLSB)

bondservants of Christ – Often used by Paul to describe any Christian redemption from the slavery to sin into Christ’s service (cf. Col. 7:22). True freedom is not independence from God, but independence from sin, death, and the devil. (TLSB)

That would be totally self-serving and unacceptable. Rather, they are to let their new man respond and obey their masters. (PBC)

They are to render to their masters, seek to fulfill the will of God, whose eyes behold their actions even where they evade the eyes of men. (Stoekhardt)

6:7 *render service with a good will as to the Christ* – This designates the inner attitude of him who serves to his duty and “with good will” the attitude to his master. A servant who regards his service as one rendered unto the Lord and not unto men does his menial work willingly, from the heart and in a friendly benevolent disposition towards his master in that he looks out for his best interests. (Stoekhardt)

6:8 *will receive back from the Lord* – Both as encouragement and warning, Paul points to God’s judgment (Rom. 2:6-10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:24). (TLSB)

It is absolutely essential to keep in mind that Paul is writing these words to Christian slaves. These words are not directed to unregenerate people, suggesting that they can improve their status before God by good service to masters or that they can put themselves into a position where God owes them a reward. No, Paul is talking about their conscientious service as a fruit of faith. (PBC)

Paul’s way of expressing that truth is nothing other than what our Savior Himself said when He described Judgment Day as a division between the sheep and goats (Matthew 25:31-40). The basis for that division will be the presence or absence of saving faith, as demonstrated by the presence of good deeds or the lack of them. In effect Paul is saying, “everything will be properly sorted out on Judgment Day.” That is an encouragement to slaves, just as it serves as a warning to masters who may be inclined to mistreat their slaves. (PBC)

bondservant or free – A hint of Paul’s teaching that such earthly institutions have no bearing on one’s relationship to God (1 Cor. 12:13). (TLSB)

6:9 *masters*. Once again Paul stresses reciprocal attitudes (cf. 5:21–6:4). (CSB)

Paul is addressing Ephesian slave owners who are Christian. His intent is not to indict them for having slaves but rather to encourage Christian conduct toward slaves. (PBC)

Again, it’s amazing to see this verse written at a time when masters could do as they pleased with their slaves. This verse also reminds those who supervise the work of others that, if we are Christians, there is another Master who holds sway over us all. (LL)

do the same to them – Act likewise as servants of Christ (v. 6). (TLSB)

stop threatening them – Heartfelt obedience (v. 5) cannot be achieved by threats of punishment. (TLSB)

Masters should give up the traditional custom of keeping servants in obedience through fear. (Stoekhardt)

He says in effect: Be careful in your conduct. Even though you are a master over your slaves, don’t forget that there is in heaven someone who is your Master as well as theirs – and he doesn’t play favorites. (PBC)

no partiality – God will not lessen His judgment because of the master’s social status on earth (Rom. 2:9-13; 1 Peter 1:17). (TLSB)

Masters should well consider that they and their servants have the same Lord. This Lord is in heaven. In heaven He sees and hears what happens here below. In His judgment He does not inquire about their rank. Without respect of persons He will judge everyone according to his works. (Stoeckhardt)

6:1–9 Paul’s description of the Christian life is not exhaustive, but gives common examples of vocations, or callings, in life. Today, God calls us to serve Him and other people selflessly, lovingly, and conscious of our relationship to Christ. We should examine our lives and our callings. The Lord will forgive our shortcomings and strengthen us to be Christlike. • Lord, no matter how I serve in my family or society, I am Your child and servant through Your Holy Child, Jesus. Grant that I fulfill my calling before You. Amen. (TLSB)

The Whole Armor of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 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 firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

6:10–20 Paul’s scope in Ephesians has been cosmic. From the very beginning he has drawn attention to the unseen world, and now he describes the spiritual battle that takes place against evil “in the heavenly realms” (v. 12). (CSB)

After stressing God’s grace in providing our salvation in our Savior in chapters 1–3, the apostle lays out a blueprint for good works in chapters 4–6. He now summarizes and concludes that discussion, as indicated by *Touloipou*, “As for the rest,” or “Finally.” He gathers the do’s and don’ts of the sanctified life under an umbrella. He vividly depicts the formidable forces of evil, and the protection and power Christ provides for the redeemed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

6:10-17 This famous picture sums up the Letter. The armor represents both a promise of divine protection and an exhortation to battle. Like a general encouraging his troops, Paul tells us that the victory is certain because Christ has already won the war, and He has made us well-prepared to stand with Him to face any last-ditch assaults. In ancient legends, the weapons and armor of a hero could give certain victory to anyone who wore them (cf 1 Sam. 17:38). The armor Paul describes is not simply from God; it is God’s own armor, what He Himself wore in battle.

Dressed in Christ's armor, we look remarkably like Christ (Is. 49:2; 59:17; Rev. 1:13-16), for through Baptism we are clothed with Him (Eph. 4:24; Rom. 13:12-14; Gal. 3:27). (TLSB)

6:10 *finally* – The apostle has now reached his last message, and by this word quickens the attention of his readers and prepares them for a counsel eminently weighty in itself, and gathering up the pith and marrow, as it were, of what goes before. (PC)

"Finally" introduces the final admonition. (Buls)

Kretzmann: This closing admonition of the letter has rightly been called the Lord's great call to arms. (Buls)

Paul often alerts us that he is coming to the close of a letter by introducing his concluding section with the adverb "finally." We have that signal here. (PBC)

my brethren – KJV – The Majority text reads "my brothers" at this point and thus KJV and NKJV translate. The other versions do not read these words here. (Buls)

Bengel: He addresses them thus in this passage of the epistle alone. Nowhere do soldiers call each other 'brethren' more than in battle. (Buls)

strong. Implies that human effort is inadequate but God's power is invincible. (CSB)

Do not rely on your own strength (cf 1:19; Joshua 1:9; Ps. 7; Col. 1:11). (TLSB)

The verb is better taken as a passive: "be made powerful." The means of this strengthening are to be found in the vital energy which comes from union with Christ. (IB)

We consider "be strong" middle voice, "strengthen yourselves." How? "In communion with the Lord and in communion with the power of His might." On these two nouns look at Ephesians 1:19. (Buls)

As Luther sang: "With might of ours can naught be done, Soon were our loss effected; But for us fights the Valiant One, etc." *The Lutheran Hymnal* 262. (LSB – 656) The power of the Lord's might comes to us only through the means of grace. The preacher must preach the Gospel. The hearer must listen to it. (Buls)

The might is Christ's but by faith it becomes our strength. (PC)

Such growing strong occurs in the Lord, in the life of fellowship with the Lord Christ, and in the power of His might. A convert, it is true, possesses new life, new spiritual powers. Nevertheless, the new man lives and moves only in the Lord and only has power and stability through the Lord's power. Were the new man left to himself he would immediately perish. The apostle's exhortation implies that the Christian should remain close to the Lord. He should continually request strength and power from Him. He should diligently use Christ's Word, which continually supplies him with new powers. (Stoekhardt)

Notes from Matthew 6:33 The reign is already present in Jesus himself. This means that "one should make it his first concern to belong to it in the here and now, to come into its sphere of working. (CC)

Barnes (*Notes on the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949] p. 124) comments that Paul knew the Ephesians “had great and mighty foes, and that to meet them they needed to be clothed in the panoply of the Christian soldier. He closes, therefore, by exhorting them to put on all the strength which they could to meet the enemies . . . he reminds them that it was only by the strength of the Lord that they could hope for victory.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

The Christian life will always be a struggle. Attacks on the faith will take the form of temptations and moral lapses. There will be temptations to yield on points of doctrine. There will be temptations to formalize religion and reduce it to an external thing, a mere shell. There will be temptations of lovelessness toward fellow believers and hatred toward those who are not believers. The list could go on, but the point is clear: we need to be strong against temptations. (PBC)

Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Romans 6:3-4, “³Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

6:11 *put on* – Baptismal language (4:24). (TLSB)

put on full armor – The complete outfit of a heavily armed soldier. The image may have occurred to Paul in prison by looking at his Roman guard, though the details are closer to OT models (the typical shin armor and spear of a Roman soldier do not appear in the list). (TLSB)

"Full armor," the metaphor is that of the Greek hoplite, the heavy-armed soldier who puts on his full armor. This consisted of shield, sword, lance, helmet, greaves (leg armor worn below the knee) and breastplate. (Buls)

Kretzmann: A Christian must be encased in the armor of God from his head to his feet. (Buls)

The picture of warfare is familiar with the apostle: (Stoeckhardt)

2 Corinthians 10:4: The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

1 Timothy 6:12: 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.

Romans 6:13: 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 Thessalonians 5:8: But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

Reinecker (*A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980] p.195) identifies *tou Theou* as the “genitive of source or origin, indicating that God provides the

armor.” He says *palē* “refers particularly to a hand-to-hand fight . . . Wrestling was a fight characterized by trickery, cunningness and strategy.” *The Expositors Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951) notes that *panoplia*, the “full armor,” is the emphatic thing . . . the idea being that we need not only a divine equipment, but that equipment in its completeness, without the lack of any single part . . . we need to take to ourselves all that God provides.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

stand against – The picture is defensive; Christ defends us against the devil on our behalf. (TLSB)

schemes of the devil – Particularly false doctrine, designed to lead us away from God. (TLSB)

The final four words mean: "The tricky methods of the devil." We are reminded of Luther's words: "Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal." *The Lutheran Hymnal* 262. (Buls)

Our chief enemy does not engage us in open warfare, but deals in wile (cleverness and subtlety) and stratagems. (PC)

This is, or is almost the last hour. The enemy is making a particular severe attack. (Kretzmann)

Methodeias refers to Satan’s wiles. Cf. Eph 4:14 and Luther’s “Deep guile and great might are his best arms in fight. On earth is not his equal!” Barnes (p. 124): “Satan does not carry on an open warfare . . . He approaches us not in repulsive forms, but comes to recommend some plausible doctrine, to lay before us some temptation that shall not immediately repel us . . . invites us to pleasures that seem to be harmless, and leads us in indulgences until we have gone so far that we cannot retreat.” Luther says furthermore, “The wickedness of the devil is so great that no man can grasp it . . . to be so wicked as to find one’s . . . delight only in the misfortune of other people . . . this is the hellish and insatiable rage and fury of the wretched devil” (Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1959] p. 394). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

6:12 *wrestle* – To wrestle. For the Christian this warfare has an eschatological dimension. His wrestling is part of the great final battle which has already begun and is intensifying. (Kretzmann)

Struggle" come from a wrestling match. It was a fight characterized by trickery, cunningness and strategy. This struggle is no mere sport. (Buls)

not against flesh and blood. A caution against lashing out against human opponents as though they were the real enemy and also against assuming that the battle can be fought using merely human resources. (CSB)

rulers ... authorities. Cf. Paul’s earlier allusions to powerful beings in the unseen world. (CSB)

darkness – Darkness more closely characterizes these hostile powers. The realm in which the demons rule and exercise lordship over the world, is the darkness that surrounds us, the world of sin steeled against God. (Stoeckhardt)

"Our struggle." It is "our" match, but first we are told what it is not. "Flesh and blood" denote that which is human. Our match is not with mere humans. It may look like it but the real enemy lurks behind the human opponents. (Buls)

heavenly places. Behind the Church's earthly opponents stand demonic forces; therefore, the Church should not try to fight with worldly tools (2 Cor. 10:3-4). "All our shelter and protections rest in prayer alone" (LC III 30). (TLSB)

Paul is not giving us different ranks of Satanic forces. He gives us a number of nouns which describe the formidable nature of our real enemies. They stand in apposition to each other. "Rulers, authorities, cosmic tyrants." (Buls)

"Darkness" means "of this darkness which opposes Jesus, the Light." (Buls)

Finally, they are described as "spiritual, wicked, transcendental beings." (Buls)

"Against," meaning "face to face" occurs four times. (Buls)

Stoekhardt: These demons are spirit, spirits only, without flesh and blood, conscious beings, endowed with reason and will, but spirits of wickedness, whose entire thought, effort and seeking is pure wickedness, whose sole purpose is to destroy the works of God. And because they are spirits, they are members of a supernatural, super sensible, transcendental world. (Buls)

They are actively evil. Think of what Satan did to our first parents, King Saul, Solomon, Judas, Peter and countless others who began so well but who were trapped so miserably. Never say: "It won't happen to me." We are reminded of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:12. (Buls)

6:13 therefore – "There." Because Satan is so powerful and we are so weak. Christians have a sinful flesh. This constantly tempts them to think that they can stand in their own strength. They cannot. And so they must be reminded again and again as in verses 11 and 13 to take up the "whole armor of God." (Buls)

the evil day – There are days that are especially full of difficulty and temptation, for which full concentration of the battle and the use of armor are especially necessary. To be sure, as long as the Christian lives in this evil world, there are for him many such days. The Christian's life goes from battle to victory, from victory to new, and ever more furious battle. (Stoekhardt)

Next we have "on the day, the evil one." Satan and his forces were described with "evil power" in verse 12. Here Paul speaks of the evil day. In what sense is a day evil? It denotes an occasion when Satan strikes with fury in his attempt to overcome us with evil. The "evil day" differs from Christian to Christian. Some have more, some less. For some the attack is more severe than for others. (Buls)

Think of Satan's attacks on Job. He used the weather, his wife, diseases, his friends, to make his life very miserable. Some people suffer from physical ills. Some from mental ills. Some from emotional problems. Some suffer innocently because of terrible diseases and calamities. (Buls)

The question is not whether these things will come. The question is "Am I prepared to withstand the evil day?" The text stresses "having made all necessary preparation." (Buls)

And then we should not forget that at all times the Christian must fight his own sinful flesh, 4:22, though that is not stressed in our text. But, even when there might be relief from "the evil day" the Christian is never without a struggle with sin and evil. (Buls)

stand your ground . . . Stand firm. In this context the imagery is not that of a massive invasion of the domain of evil, but of individual soldiers withstanding assault. (CSB)

Fully equipped and defended by God, our mandate is to trust what He has given us for the battle (Ex. 14:13-14; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:15). (TLSB)

This is followed by a purpose clause. As in verse 11, here we have a form of "to stand." Note that in verses 11, 13 and 14 we have "to stand, to withstand, to stand, stand." How does a hoplite fight? He stands. He withstands. That takes constant effort. (Buls)

The believer must take full advantage of God's help. "Having done everything": i.e., not neglecting any available instrument or avenue of spiritual fortifying. The evil day is the day of temptation. The verb *antistēnai* carries the connotation of successful withstanding. God's Word to the Nations translates, "Resist when things are at their worst." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

To be sure, as long as the Christian lives in this evil world, there are for him many such evil days. The enemy who once conquered always raises himself again. The Christian life goes from battle to victory, from victory to new, ever more furious battle. However, also in the final battle Christians, who are equipped with the Lord's power will come out on top and hold the battlefield. (Stoekhardt)

Oratio – Meditatio – Tenatio – Luther

The military items Paul enumerates were the standard equipment of an infantryman in the Roman army. He mentions five pieces of defensive armor and one offensive weapon. The five defensive pieces combined make up the "full armor" that Paul uses as his picture of the spiritual protection God provides for the believer. (PBC)

6:14-17 This fascinating section describes the pieces of armor. To do justice to the whole text, however, the preacher should limit his discussion of the various pieces and what they symbolize. The girdle was a belt wrapped snugly around the loose flowing robes so they would not impede during battle. Reinecker (p. 19) says *thureon* "refers to the large door-shaped shield . . . the Roman *scutum* which had an iron frame and sometimes a metal boss in the center of the front. Often the several layers of leather were soaked in water before the battle in order to put out the incendiary missiles of the enemy." Barnes (p. 130) says "faith here is made to occupy a more important place than either of the other Christian graces. It protects all, and is indispensable to the security of all, as is the case with the shield. The shield . . . could be made to protect the head, or the heart, or thrown behind to meet an attack there. As long as the soldier had his shield, he felt secure; and as long as a Christian has faith, he is safe." Luther comments, "Do not think that the devil is in hell, or beyond Babylon, or only in Turkey, or at Rome . . . here among us he is struggling and striving to turn us out of the heaven in which we are through Christ" (Plass, p. 399). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

Kretzmann (*Popular Commentary of the Bible* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1922] NT vol. 2, p. 292) quotes Luther "Here it is not enough that we defend ourselves against the devil with faith and

hope as our shield and helmet, but we must also draw the sword and go for him with such insistence that he must fall back and flee, and we thus obtain the victory over him . . . the Word of God is this weapon.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

6:14 *stand therefore* – Here the description of the Christian's armor begins. Stoeckhardt points out that here in verse 14 "stand" has a different means than at the end of verse 13. There it meant that the Christian must fight in such a way that he is still standing when the battle is over. But here it means that he must stand up against the enemy. On this verse compare Isaiah 11:5 and 59:17. (Buls)

belt of truth. Cf. the symbolic clothing of the Messiah in Isa 11:5. Character, not brute force, wins the battle, just as in the case of the Messiah. (CSB)

A belt holds loose clothing in preparation for moving quickly (Ex. 12:11; cf. Heb. 12:1). God's truth alone can counter the devil's lies Eph. 4:14-15. (TLSB)

Truth, here is used in a comprehensive sense, denoting honesty; sincerity of profession in opposition to all sham, levity, hypocrisy; and likewise the element of "truth" in Jesus (5:21), the substance of the gospel revelation. We are to wrap it around us. (PC)

Just as the ancient soldier held his clothes together about his loins with a girdle, in order to prevent their hindering his free use of his limbs, so the Christian, the soldier of God, puts on the girdle of truth, of moral purity, of the righteousness of life. Only he that is a Christian in deed and in truth will engage in the battle with all seriousness; only he will gather matters of every-day life and hold them together without hypocrisy, lest he be hindered in the great battle. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 11:5, "Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist."

breastplate of righteousness. Here again, the warrior's character is his defense. God himself is symbolically described as putting on a breastplate of righteousness when he goes forth to bring about justice. (CSB)

The metal piece of protecting the chest's vital organs, here represents Christ's righteousness with which God clothes us. (TLSB)

This is the righteousness of Christ put on by faith. No righteousness of our own could be proof against Satan. The breastplate covers the vital organs, especially the heart. Righteousness is the central part of all saving truth. The heart of the Word makes our heart invulnerable against the devil. (Lenski)

Isaiah 59:17, "He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak."

6:15 *shoes for your feet...the readiness.* Whereas the description of the messenger's feet in Isa 52:7 reflects the custom of running barefooted, here the message of the gospel is picturesquely connected with the protective and supportive footwear of the Roman soldier. (CSB)

A Roman soldier wore half boots studded with nails, to help him stand firm. The preaching of the Gospel of peace has ironically, prepared us for battle. (TLSB)

The Roman sandal was furnished with nails that gripped the ground firmly; even when it was sloping or slippery; so the good news of peace keeps us upright and firm. (PC)

As the military sandal protected the feet of the soldier against the rough spots in the road and made it possible for him to move forward with a quick and certain step, so the Christians should always be ready and prepared to proclaim the Gospel of salvation in Christ. In the midst of the fierce battle in which he is engaged, the Christian has peace with God and is able to impart this peace to others as well. (Kretzmann)

The Gospel contains the peace of God. The Christian must be quick and ready to disseminate the peace of God in Christ. This is quite paradoxical. A soldier disseminates peace! This is a battle for the Lord against the devil. The Gospel is a very important weapon, in fact, the only one. (Buls)

By the way, in this passage Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann follow Luther who says that in this passage Paul is urging the Christian to strive for blameless living, a life which before all men is recognized as blameless. Stoeckhardt invokes Ephesians 2:20 which tells us that God has prepared good works that we should walk in them and Philippians 2:13 where we are told that God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Buls)

Both Stoeckhardt and Kretzmann see the words of Isaiah 52:7 alluded to here. (Buls)

Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

1 Peter 3:15, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

6:16 IN ADDITION – "In addition to all this" is also translated as "at all times, above all, in addition to everything else." (Buls)

shield of faith ... extinguish ... flaming arrows. Describes the large Roman shield covered with leather, which could be soaked in water and used to put out flame-tipped arrows. (CSB)

Arrow were dipped in pitch and set alight. In defense, Roman soldiers soaked their full-length, leather-covered wooden shield in water before battle – an allusion to our baptismal refuge. LC – V 82: "If you could see how many knives, darts, and arrows are every moment aimed at you (Eph. 6:16), you would be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as possible." (TLSB)

We agree with Kretzmann and Stoeckhardt. The Christian is in dire need of saving faith to quench the fiery darts of Satan. Paul is going beyond the point of comparison when he says that faith quenches Satan's fiery darts. A hoplite's shield did not extinguish fiery arrows. It kept them from harming the hoplite. But saving faith does more to counter Satan's arrows than a hoplite's shield did in battle. We think here of passage such as 1 Peter 5:9 and James 4:7. (Buls)

A Christian armed with faith, can overcome Satan. The fiery darts here represent the doubts, lusts, temptations, fears, etc. which Satan uses against us. Sooner or later every Christian

understands what is meant by these words of Paul. Fiery arrows are destructive, a frightening prospect. With Christian faith we can quench them. (Buls)

This shield is long and covers the entire body. When the apostle stresses that we with the shield of faith can and should extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one, he goes beyond the point of comparison. The warrior's shield serves only to intercept the darts of the enemy, so that they do not strike the body, but it cannot quench the fire. In spiritual battle the warrior is struck by the fiery darts. They would wound his heart. They burn the conscience. Nevertheless, faith has the power to extinguish the fire. Faith grasps and holds Christ, who offered himself up unto God for us. Christ's blood extinguishes the fiery darts. Christ's blood heals the wounded heart and conscience. (Stoeckhardt)

Ancients sometimes made use of arrows and small spears that were impregnated with pitch or some other inflammatory material, set on fire before they were discharged and inflicting ugly wounds. Thus the temptations of Satan will greatly harm the Christian in his faith and spiritual life, unless he meets them with the calm assurance of the forgiveness of sins through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. (Kretzmann)

1 John 3:19-20: ¹⁹This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

Psalm 91:4, "He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart."

6:17 *helmet of salvation*. Isa 59:17 has similar language, along with the breastplate imagery (see note on v. 14). The helmet both protected the soldier and provided a striking symbol of military victory. (CSB)

A Roman helmet was made of bronze, with cheek pieces; cf Is 59:17; 1Th 5:8. (TLSB)

For variety's sake Paul switches from the participles to an imperative. All we have to do is to take it. It is ready for us. (Buls)

The helmet is very important. Think of how important a helmet is for motorcycle riding in our day. Many die because they do not wear a helmet. Likewise the helmet was very important for the hoplite. Injuries to the head can be fatal. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The Christian has received from God the helmet of salvation, the certainty of final deliverance. (Buls)

Luther: The helmet of salvation is the hope and expectation of another life, the life in heaven above, for the sake of which we believe in Christ and suffer all things, and without which we could not endure all the blows with which Christians are attacked by those who seek their very body and life. (Buls)

Future perfect, salvation is meant is meant here. The Christian, wearing future salvation as his helmet, can and should hold his head aloft cheerfully and confidentially. He can and should be completely sure of his salvation. This certainly guards and protects him against the head blows with which the evil foe seeks to strike him. All the evils, plagues and terrors the devil stirs up

against us directly or through the wicked evil world we can well ward off and conquer because the final goal stands immovable, because we know in advance that we will eventually win out, retain the victory and receive the heavenly treasure and inheritance. (Stoeckhardt)

Isaiah 59:17, ““He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.”

sword of the spirit – We must also draw the sword and go for him with such insistence that he must fall back and flee and we thus obtain the victory over him. Since the Word of God is this weapon, it behooves us to make use of it at all times and to this end become acquainted with it both by means of worship, Bible study and personal study. (Kretzmann)

The term refers to the sharp, short sword for close combat. The Spirit gives the Gospel Word its effectiveness. Luther sang of the devil, “One little Word can fell him.” (TLSB)

Now comes the sword, the only offensive weapon in the list. The Holy Spirit owns and gives this sword to us. What is it? The Word of God. Paul is thinking of a variety of uses of the Word: preached, read, sung, spoken, meditated. The Christian meditates in the Word of God day and night. Where you have the Word, there you have God. Where you have God, there you have life and victory. (Buls)

God’s Word originates from the Spirit. The Spirit works through the Word. For that reason God’s Word is a victorious weapon. (Stoeckhardt)

Committing the Word of God to memory and having it ready for use places the Christian in an offensive mode. (LifeLight)

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

6:18 *praying at all times in the Spirit*. Reminders that the battle is spiritual and must be fought in God’s strength, depending on the word and on God through prayer. (CSB)

supplication. Gk *deesis*, from the term for “need”; a specific request. (TLSB)

In this verse Paul uses forms of the word "all" four times. Here he returns to the use of the participle, two of them. "General prayer" and "particular supplication." (Buls)

Prayer is not part of the armor (which is entirely God’s work), but a transition to Paul’s concluding words. The Letter ends as it began – with prayer. In our weakness, the Spirit leads our prayer (Rm. 8:15-16, 26-27). (TLSB)

What he is advocating is not some dramatic or showy charismatic praying. Rather he is indicating that only through Christ can anyone properly approach the triune God. An essential feature of prayer is that it comes from a heart filled with faith (James 1:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6). (PBC)

keep alert – In using prayer watching’s the word...Pay close attention to all circumstances so as not to let some occasion for prayer go by unnoticed. (Stoeckhardt)

Note the sweeping inclusiveness and four occurrences of *pas*: “all occasions with all kinds of prayers . . . always keep on praying for all the saints.” God’s people need to be in constant communication with their Commander-in-Chief! Barnes (p. 133): “To the Christian soldier . . . [prayer] is indispensable. No matter how complete the armor, no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war, no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

LSB – Hymn 660 – *Stand up, Stand up for Jesus* Verse 3, line 3 “Put on the Gospel armor; Each piece put on with prayer.”

for all the saints – Praying properly always leads finally to intercession. Christians should with all endurance, with all persistence pray and intercede for one another, for the entire congregation. (Stoeckhardt)

On every occasion the Christian is to use every kind of general and particular prayer, doing so in the Holy Spirit. And for this he must be alert with all kinds of perseverance and particular supplication for all Christians, not just some. (Buls)

This is prayer in the Biblical sense, answered prayer which brings to our aid the mighty help of God himself. This does not place prayer on a level with the Word, its righteousness and its salvation; the very wording with durative participles excludes such ideas. Prayer must be listed here because it brings our divine ally to our side in the battle on the wicked day. (Lenski)

Matthew 26:41, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”

6:19-20 Note Paul’s request for prayer on his behalf. No pastor should pass up this obvious opportunity to remind his parishioners of the value of their prayers for him. He should also, in turn, reiterate his commitment to pray faithfully for the flock God has entrusted to him! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 3)

6:19 *words may be given*. Christ promised that the Spirit would direct and strengthen the apostles’ testimony before kings and councils (Mt 10:17–20; cf Ac 9:15). (TLSB)

also for me...boldly proclaim the mystery of the gospel– Christ promised that the Spirit would direct and strengthen the apostles’ testimony before kings and councils (Mt. 10:17-20; cf Acts 9:15). (TLSB)

They may aid him in beseeching God to put the right words into his mouth so that he can reveal the mystery of the Gospel with all frankness, without fear and trembling, without any restraint. (Stoeckhardt)

ambassador in chains - Here it becomes clear that Paul's request was not merely a personal one. It was for the sake of the Gospel. For this Gospel Paul was an ambassador in chains, a paradox. He is God's ambassador, God's messenger. But Rome considered him a prisoner.

Usually ambassadors live in splendor and are treated royally. Not this ambassador. But it is all for the Lord and His Gospel. (Buls)

"In proclaiming it, in speaking of it, as I ought to speak," means that he wants to do it exactly to the Lord's will. Not only the substance but also the manner of speaking is very important. (Buls)

5:1-21 Like the Ephesians, we are confronted every day by a world rebelling against God's way. In our struggle against its temptations, we can rely on God's Word and Spirit to lead us. Lord strengthen me to speak and act as you desire. Replace all foul talk from my mouth with praise for you and encouragement for my brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen (TLSB)

Final Greetings

21 So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

23 Peace be to the brothers,^[d] and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

6:21–23 Paul concludes with greetings that lack personal references such as are usually found in his letters. This is understandable if Ephesians is a circular letter. (CSB)

The benediction here is in the third person and is spoken to the whole Christian fellowship.

6:21 *Tychicus*. An associate of Paul who traveled as his representative (cf. Col 4:7; 2Ti 4:12; Tit 3:12). (CSB)

Greek for "minister" (cf 3:7). He was from Asia Minor and closely associated with Ephesus. Paul commends him as his representative and letter-bearer. He accompanied Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4). He delivered the Letter to the Ephesians and acted as an emissary for Paul to other churches. (TLSB)

Paul was not a robot or an automation. He was very warm and personable and very interested and concerned about people. He realizes people are anxious about him as he awaits trial. He tries to alleviate that concern by sending Tychicus "for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you." (PBC)

Τυχικός ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος ἐν κυρίῳ—In addition to being named

6:22 *we* – Paul in prison and the co-workers who visited and supported him (see names in Col. 1:1; 4:9-14). (TLSB)

6:23 *brothers* – Natural way to refer to fellow adopted sons of God (1:5), i.e., Christians. (TLSB)

6:24 *all who love our Lord* – A common expression for God's people (cf Ex. 20:6). (TLSB)

love incorruptible – God's gifts are incorruptible, particularly eternal life (1 Cor. 15:42-53; 1 Peter 1:4). (TLSB)

6:21–24 “Maker of all things, all Thy creatures praise Thee; All for Thy worship were and are created; Now, as we also worship Thee devoutly, Hear Thou our voices. Lord God Almighty, unto Thee be glory, One in three persons, over all exalted! Glory we offer, praise Thee and adore Thee, Now and forever.” Amen. (*LSB* 504:3–4). (TLSB)