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Series: Wholly Armed, Part 2

Enemies Clearly Defined

Text: Ephesians 6:12

Since last we gathered in corporate worship, a wealthy accountant with a penchant for guns, rented a corner suite at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas, set up two tripods, hammer out the non-opening hotel windows and began spraying bullets on a crowd below him, at the Route 91 Harvest Festival. How shall we describe such a heinous act?

I call it a demonic act. It was the devil at work. It was pure evil. There were forces at work in that horrific event that were not human. They were satanic.

In the early 2000s, the Gallup organization asked Americans if the devil is something they believe in, something they're not sure about, or something they don't believe in. Sixty-eight percent said that they believe in the devil, 20% said they don't, and 12% said they aren't sure. The devil is delighted when people do not believe in him.

He is at work and would prefer that you not point him out.

Stop spending your best hours of any given week, arguing with people who have wronged you and who plucked your last nerve. Sometimes, those people are not the problem. Paul is *not* saying we have no human enemies. He *is* saying that humans are not our primary problem. No, the devil is at work.

Ephesians 6:12 in several versions:

**CEV:** We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world.

**Phillips:** For our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against organisations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil.

**The Message:** This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the devil and all his angels.

Paul first tells us who our enemy is *not*. Then, Paul describes the exact nature of the enemies we do face.

Note the way the engagement of evil is described. It is akin to a wrestling match. In the South, it would be pronounced, *rassling*. Thayer defines wrestling as:

*...a contest between two in which each endeavor to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to press and hold down his prostrate antagonist, namely, hold him down with his hand upon his neck.*

William Gurnall (*The Christian in Complete Armour* [Banner of Truth], 1:112) observes that there is a great difference between how God and Satan deal with their followers. God reveals to His followers the strength of the enemy, but Satan does not dare to reveal to his followers the strength of God.

The reason so much demonic activity is unrecognized as such is because that activity is invisible and subtle and takes place in the spirit realm. Satan uses institutions and individuals and circumstances to accomplish his purposes. He doesn't announce, "Satan at work here!". No, he gets into the mind and heart and behavior of a person and uses that person to wreak havoc in your life. Our enemy is not other people. Our enemy consists of the unseen strategies, wiles, schemes of the devil.

Paul uses four words or phrases, to describe our enemy. Look closely at the language of our text:

1. **Principalities**- Satan orders his kingdom after the way angels are ordered. There are ranks and levels.

Our wrestling is with the *principal* players. The main ones. The chieftains. The high-ranking minions.

2. **Powers**- Beings with authority.

3. **Rulers of the darkness of this age**-Any sphere in which the light of Jesus does not reign is a dark place. Satan's workers work the day places.

Albert Barnes, in his Notes on the Whole Bible:

*“Darkness” is an emblem of ignorance, misery, and sin; and no description could be more accurate than that of representing these malignant spirits as ruling over a dark world. The earth - dark, and wretched and ignorant, and sinful - is just such a dominion as they would choose, or as they would cause; and the degradation and woe of the pagan world are just such as foul and malignant spirits would delight in.*

#### 4. **Spiritual hosts of wickedness in the high places-**

These imps operate at a high level, in high places.

They have wide influence, authority and power.

Don't let these descriptions frighten you, beloved warriors. Christ is above them all. Ephesians 1:20-

21:

Comment [1]:

*20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

1 John 4:4b:

*...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

The following prayer reminds us that warfare is serious.

*Dear Lord,*

*So far I've done alright. I haven't gossiped, haven't lost my temper, haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish, or overindulgent. I'm glad about that. But in a few minutes, God, I'm going to get out of bed. And from then on, I'm going to need a lot more help.*

We are all victors before we get out of bed. Once

we're up, life gets harder. We have an enemy.

Hallelujah, we **also** have a Savior!!

Amen