

Pastor Caleb Duvick
Battle-Ready

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Series: The Church and the Home
Ephesians 6:10-20

My name is Caleb Duvick. I'm one of the pastors here. I can tell you, what I'm thankful for, as I look around this room, is I see a church of people who have been so generous with their time, their talents, and their treasure. This building is the fruit of all of those things. So, we want to say, "Thank you." We cannot wait to get in there to celebrate and see what the Lord is going to do.

Here's what I remember. When we first started the church seven years ago, we were back at Goler on Patterson Avenue. I remember moving to this new building five years ago, and here's what I saw: our ability to do more ministry, more mission, and more mercy was a reality.

I know that's going to be true when we move, as a church, into this new building as well. I cannot wait to see all of the ways God is going to grow our capacity to do more together as a church. So, pray for those things Kyle mentioned in the video. We're going to be there together very soon. We can't wait.

If you have your Bibles, open up to Ephesians, chapter 6, because we're going to be wrapping up that sermon series here today. If you don't know this about me, I'm a very fancy and cultured person, so we're going to start off our time by looking at a painting together with one another.

It's a very famous painting of a very famous battle. It's not a battle with bullets and bombs on some famous battlefield. What you're seeing on the screen is a battle that's happening over an ordinary game of chess in an ordinary moment of life. On the left, you have a figure who represents Satan. He's sitting there grinning. He's smug and confident.

Sitting across from him is a young man who looks perplexed and distressed by his situation. This painting, when it was created, was called simply *The Chess Players*, but after it was released, everybody called it *Checkmate*, because when they looked at it,

here's what they saw: a young man who is in an unwinnable battle against a spiritual enemy.

I wanted to show you this painting because where we're going in Ephesians 6... This is where, I believe, many of us feel like we are today. This is a picture of our reality. Maybe some of you came here today feeling like *this*. Maybe you feel like you're in an unwinnable battle, because as you look at your life, you're still fighting today against the same sins you've fought against for years or even decades.

When you look at your life, your relationship with your kids, it's like, "Man, I've tried to love them and lead them in all of the ways I know how, and they're not interested in Christ. They're not interested in us, as parents." Or maybe you're perplexed and distressed, like this young man, because it's like, "Man, everything in my life seems to be going well, so why am I so unhappy?" Or "Man, I love God. Why do I have such a hard time trying to spend time with him in his Word and prayer?"

Here's what Paul wants us to see today in Ephesians 6. First, you need to recognize that you are in a battle that is real against a vicious enemy. The second thing he wants us to see is that we can stand and fight in that battle. We need to know how to stand and fight, because the stakes are high if we don't. What we stand to lose in this battle is the death of relationships, the death of hope, and for some of us, it may even be the death of our eternal souls.

So, today, what we are looking at here is important. Turn with me and look at verse 10. The first thing we're going to see that Paul is inviting us into is that we need to know who our enemy is. It is hard to win a battle when you don't understand your enemy. Case in point. The greatest American movie of all time is *The Patriot* starring Mel Gibson. How does Mel Gibson win in his battle against the British?

Well, he steals the personal journals of General Cornwallis, and as he studies them, he gets to see his tactics, his weaknesses, his pride, and he's able to use those things against him to get the upper hand and see victory in the battle. What Paul is going to be doing, along with other parts of Scripture, is we get to see behind the curtain who our enemy is. So, look with me in verse 10.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 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."

Paul is telling us who our enemy is. It is the Devil. He has a name. His name is Satan, which literally means the adversary. He has been our enemy since the beginning. You

can go back to Genesis 3, and you can see, from the very beginning, he has been the enemy of God and his people. We also see here that he is not alone. He is at the front of an army of spiritual evil forces that are at work against God and us.

Here's what you need to know about this Enemy. First, he is real. If you cannot grasp that fact today, everything else I'm going to talk to you about today won't mean hardly anything. That's where most of us are today, if we're being honest. We struggle to consider the reality of our situation, the reality of this battle, the reality of this Enemy, because it's a battle not of flesh and blood but spiritual.

Satan loves to use that to his advantage. We have a hard time believing in things we can't see and touch, so we struggle. Some of us struggle on the opposite side. Sometimes we focus a little too much on Satan. You get upset because every time you stub your toe, you're blaming it on him. Every time the price of Chick-fil-A goes up, you're screaming out, "Satan, why?"

But I would imagine, for most of us, we're on the opposite end of the spectrum where we don't give enough attention or enough belief into the reality of our Enemy, whether intellectually or functionally. Do you know who's okay with that? The Enemy. In fact, I believe he prefers that, because that's the way he likes to operate in our Western world and post-Christian society.

Here's what's true: Satan is not after your recognition; he's after your destruction, which tells us another thing about him. He's a vicious enemy. Jesus describes him as the person who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. The apostle Peter describes him as a lion who is looking around for someone to devour.

For the non-Christians in the room, here's what that means: he is trying everything he can to take you to hell with him. For Christians, here's what he's trying to do to you. He can't take your salvation, by God's grace, but what he can do is make you doubt your salvation. He's going to try to do that through your sin and your suffering. He's also going to try to make you as ineffective as possible for the kingdom of God.

He's real. He's vicious. He's also strategic. You see, he has been our enemy for a long time, for thousands of years. He has studied us. I don't know if he's like what C.S. Lewis describes in *The Screwtape Letters*, where each of us has a personal demon assigned to us, but what I know is they have learned the tactics that work well against us, and they are constantly at work against us, tempting us, guiding us, influencing us.

Here's the sad reality: you and I are very predictable. It doesn't take much for him to get in our lives and do those things against us. You and I are predictable, but here's the good news: we have an enemy that is predictable as well. He tends to work in all of the same ways. As we look at Scripture, you're going to see there are four main

things he is going to try to do to influence you, to wage war against you. If we know these things, it is going to help us in our battle against him. So, listen up to this.

The first thing the Enemy is going to try to do against you is *deceive* you. The Enemy wants to deceive you. He wants us to believe lies about God, ourselves, and others. Jesus says in John 8 that he is a liar. Everything that comes out of his mouth is a lie. So, we're going to have to constantly be fighting against that.

How do we know when we're being lied to? How do we know when we're being deceived? The hard part is we don't unless the lie is completely over the top. Like, you wake up, and you have this strong feeling, like, "Man! Having a full-blown affair is a great life choice for me." It's like, okay, we can shoot those things down pretty easily.

Here's what the Enemy does: he deceives you subtly. Half-truths, these small breadcrumbs we can easily follow, things like, "My marriage is fine. My son is not struggling. Does the Bible really mean that?" He feeds us these lies, and we follow these breadcrumbs to destruction. That's ultimately where deception leads to: our destruction.

Here's another thing deception can lead to: doubt. Satan would love to fill you and me with doubt...doubt whether we really need God and God's people, doubt whether sin really is that bad, doubt whether God truly does love us and accept us. So, we need to be looking for the ways he's deceiving us.

Here's the second thing he tries to do: he *discourages* us. He wants to discourage us, and he can do this in so many different ways. I think one of the biggest ways the Enemy tries to discourage us is to make us believe that we can't change, that change is just not possible.

Think about this for you. Think about a sin you have been really working hard to fight against. Maybe, for some of you, that's looking at pornography. What happens when people who are fighting against that go back to that? What do they typically do? Is it just a "one and done" thing? No. Usually what happens when people go back to that is they will binge on it.

Or think about this. Maybe you are fighting against yelling at your husband. You've been working on that. Well, you get into a fight, and you just start yelling. It's like, "Well, I'm going all in. I'm committing. The seal is broken. I might as well." Why is that? Why do we do that? It's because deep inside of us, in those moments, we say, "I've been working hard against this, and right now I can see I can't change. It doesn't matter how hard I try. I can't change."

What that discouragement wants to lead us toward is despair. Satan wants us to despair. It's like, "Man, why even fight against this sin? You know you're never going to beat it. Why keep sharing the gospel with that person you love who is clearly not accepting it? They're never going to receive this." He wants to lead us to despair.

So, he's going to deceive us. He's going to discourage us. Here's another thing he's going to try to do to you: he's going to try to *distract* you. He's very good at this today. I think we live in the most distracted generation in the history of the world. Scientifically, we know now that the average person has an attention span of eight seconds, which is really working against me today.

You know this too. Think about why spiritual disciplines are so hard. Why do you struggle to read your Bible? It's because every eight seconds, you're thinking about Instagram. Or you're trying to pray, and all you can think about is how hungry you are. Or you're here today, and you're trying to worship and sit under the Word and sing, but all you can think about is the person behind you who is terrible at singing.

Satan wants to distract us from the things that are truly important, because that's what God is trying to do. Think about it this way. If Satan can't make you bad, he's going to try to make you busy. Man! How much of an epidemic is *that* in our culture today. When in the last week or last month has someone come up to you and asked, "How are you doing?" and you answered, "I've just been so busy"?

Do you see that? It's a demonic mindset, because here's what Satan doesn't want you to do. If God wants you to look over *here* and see the things that are important, the weighty and the eternal, Satan wants to draw your attention away from that over *here* and get you fixated on the things that are trivial and temporal.

Where God wants you to look over *here* and see someone in your life who is far from God but close to you and needs the good news of the gospel, Satan is going to draw your attention over *here* and make you think about their weird personality quirks or how they have a different financial lifestyle than you.

When God wants you to look over *here* and wrestle with the question about your need for a relationship with him, Satan is going to distract you with a thousand different forms of entertainment so you can push that question down and never have to struggle with that or grapple with that question.

He wants to distract us, because here's what that means for us as Christians. If he can distract you, he's going to make you deficient. If you're deficient, that means you are not living out the life God has called you and saved you to here on this earth. You have no meaningful part of the kingdom of God and what the Lord is trying to do through you. If he can make you deficient, the Enemy feels like he's winning.

Here's the last thing he's going to try to do: he's going to try to *divide* you, because where God loves peace and unity and reconciliation, Satan loves to bring division and discord. So, he's going to be working to divide you from God. He's going to be working to try to divide you from yourself. Sometimes it's not even other people you have to worry about being divided from. Sometimes it's just you.

Instead of having enemies out *there*, the greatest enemy you have is right *here*. Instead of having to deal with hate for other people, you deal with hate and self-loathing for yourself. That's the work of the Enemy trying to divide you from yourself. He's really good at doing that with other people too. He can do it with small, easy things. It can be weird personality things.

For me, it can be the fact that someone is a St. Louis Cardinals fan. It's like, I can't stand those people. Satan is using that. It can be big things. It can be identity stuff. It can be politics. What Satan is trying to do is if he can divide you, he creates distance...distance, hostility, bitterness in our homes, in our churches, in our neighborhoods. Distance is good for him.

The greatest distance of all is the distance he can create between us and God. When we feel like there is this insurmountable chasm between us and God, nothing brings the Enemy greater joy. So, let me ask you this: Where in your life do you see yourself being deceived, discouraged, distracted, or divided? If you're anything like me, you probably see all of those things.

What does that tell us? The battle is real, and it is very present in our lives, whether we recognized it until now or not. You are in the midst of it against a real, vicious, and strategic enemy. But there's a fourth thing you need to know about this Enemy as well. He's defeated. We are fighting against an enemy that is defeated.

Here's what the Scripture says. The Son of God came to defeat the Enemy and all of his works. When we look at Scripture, we see a divine King Jesus who has absolute authority over Satan and his army. He cast them out. He tells them what to do, and they have to obey. They look at him in fear.

Here's why that it is. Elsewhere in the Bible, it talks about God as a warrior. In places like Isaiah 11 and 59, it says God is gearing up in his battle armor. And do you know who the enemy is that he's going to go fight against? Our Enemy. That's why when they look at Christ, they look in fear, because they know what he has done, and they know what waits in store for them.

At the cross, on Calvary, the eternal fate of our Enemy was sealed. So, what does that do for us? That means we can go into this battle, knowing that our victory is sure. It changes everything when we look at our battle, knowing that we fight against a

defeated enemy. But here's what we also know about a defeated enemy: a defeated enemy does not give up. They do not surrender, especially this one.

Even though he is defeated, there is still a battle that has to be fought. When I was at the World War II museum earlier this year, that's one thing I saw very clearly. Even when World War II was basically decided, the Japanese continued to fight on. Some of those battles before the end, when everything was pretty clear it was over, were some of the bloodiest battles that still had to be fought. That's our reality today.

But here's the good news. Paul is telling us we do not have to take it lying down anymore. As followers of Jesus, as citizens of the kingdom, we can stand and we can fight. We are no longer defenseless targets. So, that's what I want to look at for the rest of our time. What would it look like for us to stand and fight against this Enemy? I'm going to try to make this as practical as possible for us, because I know we are all in this battle, and we need to start doing something.

So, here's what we do. Verse 10 shows us the first thing. We need something from God first. It's the most important thing we're going to need as we head into this battle. Verse 10 says, "**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.**" So many of us... One of the reasons we struggle so much in this battle is we are trying to fight it in our own strength. That is why we are failing.

Here the apostle Paul is telling us, "Stop." Stop trying to fight it in your own strength, because you need a strength that is outside of yourself to come into you. You need a strength that is imparted to you. Start seeing yourself like Captain America. We're going into this battle like Steve Rogers. We're scrawny, and we keep getting knocked down. Best of intentions, but he needed a strength that was imparted to him.

That is us in this spiritual battle. Our flesh and blood can do nothing against this spiritual Enemy. We can only fight this battle in a strength that is not our own. I know that sounds strange, because in the world today, in our society, they love telling you that you are good enough. I do workouts every day, and do you know what I hear every day from my trainers? "You are strong. You are confident. You are beautiful."

I'm like, "No, I'm not. That's why I'm doing these dumb workouts in the first place." It's like God is the only one who is willing to tell us the reality. "You aren't strong enough. You can't do this by yourself. You can only do this with the strength you can get from me. All you have to do is ask for it humbly, and I am so eager and willing to give it to you."

Let me ask you this: Where do you need that strength today? Where in your life do you feel weak? Is it in your marriage? Is it in your singleness? Is it in your parenting?

Is it in trying to stay faithful in school? Here's the good news: God already knows. He's ready to extend his strength to you if you would just ask.

Or maybe think about it this way. Where do you feel strongest right now? Maybe that's the place you need God's strength, because what that probably tells you is that's the area of your life that you are least likely to depend on God. That may just be the very area Satan is working to get a foothold on you.

So, where do you need to invite God's strength into your life? He's ready to give it to you. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he's going to be willing to give you that. Here's how we do it. Look with me at verse 11. Here's how we put on that strength. ***"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."***

The way we put on the strength of God is by putting on the armor of God. So, what is the armor of God? Well, here's what it's not. The armor of God is not some superstitious thing. It's not some good luck charm. It's not something you pray over yourself every morning. It's not something you put on once and never have to worry about again.

Here's the best way I'll try to describe the armor of God for you guys. It's the moment-by-moment practice of responding to the attacks of the Enemy by applying the gospel and all of its benefits to your whole life. It's the moment-by-moment practice. It's not something you can just do once and you're good. You have to do it constantly whenever you see the Enemy attacking you in your life with those four things.

It's saying, "I need to put something about the gospel, something that is true about it because of the gospel onto my life, and not just one area of my life." It's going to take your whole life being covered by it. It's going to take every piece of this armor we're going to look at. You have to apply that in your life.

Here's what that's going to allow you to do. Look with me at verse 11 again. It says, ***"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil."*** Verse 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."*** Look at verse 14. ***"Stand therefore..."*** It's like, "Okay. I got it." I get to stand.

Here's what that means. This armor is the thing that's going to be able to allow you to hold your ground. It's going to say, "I will not give up another inch to this enemy." This armor of God... You're going to see five things that are going to allow you to stand, but even more than that, you're going to get two more things that are going to

allow you to take ground. So, let's look at those. Again, we're going to try to be very practical with this.

The first one we see in verse 14. It says, "***Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth...***" The thing that's going to allow you to stand against the deception of the Enemy is using the opposite of deception, which is truth. Truth needs to be a foundation for believers. Here's what that means practically for you.

One of the things Christians need to do is stop lying to themselves. When we lie to ourselves, we are giving an invitation to the Enemy. Maybe, for you, that means telling yourself the truth that this sin you're hiding... You do not have it under control. You can't manage it. That's what it looks like telling yourself the truth of that. Maybe it's admitting to yourself that some ungodly relationship you're in does actually affect your walk with Christ.

We need to start telling ourselves the truth if we want to see some victory in this battle. Here's another way we put on truth: we look around and try to discern and fight against people putting their "truths" on us instead. Every day of our lives, dozens of hours a day, we have all kinds of people trying to put their truths on us.

Students, at your school, you have people who are trying to put on truth for you that does not align with God's Word. Employees, you have an HR department that is trying to put their truth on your life. We have Hollywood, every time we hop on Netflix or Disney+, that is trying to put their truth on us or our kids.

People who are putting on truth of God are able to discern and fight off the truth of the world and instead start putting on the truth of the Word. The best way we can do this, the primary way we do this, is by intentionally making time daily with God and his Word. There's no substitute for this. If you are going to live and put on truth, you have to spend time daily with his Word.

You wonder why you have such a hard time with it. Because Satan does not want us to do that. He knows if we are consistently doing that, that is going to take away so much of his ground in our lives. So, you fight for it so you can know truth, you can believe truth, and you can apply truth in your life.

Here's the second piece of armor we're given. Verse 14 ends with, "***...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...***" What is righteousness? Righteousness is everything that conforms to the standard of God. We know Satan wants to discourage us. He wants us to not believe it is possible to be righteous, but here's what God's truth says: you can be. You can look more like Christ.

It is possible to experience transformation, growth, and change. In Philippians, it says the work God started in you he's going to see through to completion. Do you believe that? So, here's what it looks like to apply righteousness to our lives. It's to say, "How can I align every area of my life to what I see when I look at Jesus?" Every area of my life. How can I align it to what I see when I look at Jesus?

Here's where you need to start today. If a year from now, you walked away from God, what would the one thing have been that Satan got you to do that with? A year from now, you're not walking with God. What is the one area in your life that Satan went after that made that possible? That's where you need to start today. What would it look like for you to bring that area of your life into alignment with Christ? What step do you need to take toward righteousness there, a practical righteousness?

Here's the third piece of armor we're told about. Verse 15: "**...and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.**" Again, we know one of the things Satan wants to do is divide us. How do we fight against that? One of the greatest things we have to arm ourselves with in the battle is peace. You have to speak peace into the division.

Here's what that looks like for you and God. Satan wants you to believe that God does not love you, that he's done with you, that he's not happy with you, and you need to arm yourself with peace. Here's what it looks like to speak peace into that.

When you believe those in the moment, you need to remind yourself that in spite of everything you've done, in spite of everything you've not done, you are far more loved and accepted in Christ than you could ever comprehend. That's speaking peace where the Enemy wants to divide us and create that distance.

Here's what it looks like to bring peace when we feel this division between us and others. Sometimes the greatest tool of peace is forgiveness. Think about a person who sinned against you. What it would look like to arm yourself with that is before they ever come to you and ask for forgiveness, you are actively already in your heart working forgiveness toward that person.

Think about a relationship that is in a cycle of conflict. Here's what it looks like to bring peace to that. It's to say, "I am going to break this cycle by going and asking for forgiveness for everything that I possibly can." With forgiveness, you are going to break that cycle in your marriage, in your parenting, with your parents, with a coworker. That's what it looks like to have shoes of peace. That breaks the power of the Enemy.

Here's the fourth thing we see. Verse 16: "**In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one...**" Do you

guys know the only thing worse than being shot with an arrow? It's being shot with an arrow that's going to burn you to a crisp later on. That's how much Satan hates you guys.

One thing I have learned by watching a lot of war movies (because I do that) is whenever you see a scene where people are being shot at with arrows... Do you know who the people are who survive? It's the people who lock shields with other people. Usually, the guy off on his own with a shield is getting brought down.

The people who make it through are the people who lock shields with those around them, because sometimes our individual shield of faith is not going to be enough. Sometimes we need other people's faith to come alongside us and help us in the midst of our battle. That's why we have Community Groups.

When we get together, sometimes we need help in our battle. We have other people who are coming alongside us, and with the power of their faith, they're helping us get through that time. We get to be that for other people as well, because we need a community of faith to overcome these flaming arrows that Satan and his enemies would love to use against us.

Here's the last piece of armor we're going to see that allows us to stand. Verse 17: **"...and take the helmet of salvation..."** Here's what that means. No matter what happens, we are putting our hope in the salvation we have in Christ. No matter how much this battle might go against us, no matter how much we lose, no matter how defeated we feel in the midst of it, one thing Satan can never take away from us is the fact that we are forgiven.

He can never take away the fact that we will one day be free from all of this. He can never take away the fact that there is a day coming when, forever, we will be with our Lord Jesus Christ. No matter what happens, we put our hope in that, and that can sustain us through everything the battle can bring our way.

Those things are the things that are going to allow us to stand, but here's the good news. Not only do you just have to stand in defense. God has given us everything we need to be able to take ground and advance his kingdom today as well. We can make movement on our enemies. He does that by giving us two things.

The first is in verse 17. **"...and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..."** The first thing God gives you and me today is *his Word*. Now, here's my challenge to you guys. So many of us treat the sword, our Scripture, God's Word, like the swords that are in museums.

Museums look at swords like some antiquated piece of weaponry that has no use in modern warfare. Too many of us functionally look at God's Word that way. That's why so many of our Bibles are sitting there collecting dust in our lives. We do not believe this weapon God has given us is enough.

But here's what you need to know: it is the way we take ground and advance the kingdom. We advance the kingdom by being a people who speak God's Word. Here in the Triad alone, there are 100,000-plus people who do not know Christ, hundreds of thousands of people who are prisoners of war, who are captives of this Enemy.

Do you know the one single thing that is going to be able to release them from that? It's the sword of the Spirit. It is the Word of God, because in it is the gospel, the good news, the one hope they have. The only way they can receive that is if you and I are speaking that to them.

Unbelievers need this, but believers, our brothers and sisters in Christ, need this as well. Hopefully, you're going to see today that you're in the midst of a battle, but every single person around you is as well. So, when we see people who are walking through their own battles with marriage or parenting or identity or anxiety, do you know what they need the most? They need the Word of God too.

So often, we feel like the thing we need to give is good advice. That is not it. What they need is the Word of God, because in the Word of God is life. There is hope of forgiveness. There's hope of freedom. That's what you need to speak over your brothers and sisters in Christ when you see yourselves in that moment with them, because that's how we take ground. Here's the second thing the Lord gives us: *prayer*. Verses 18-20 say,

"...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, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak."

John Piper, that famous pastor, says prayer, when we think about it in terms of warfare, is like the walkie-talkie. It's what allows us to call in the reinforcements. It's what allows us to call in the artillery of God, which I can promise you is far greater than any flaming arrow the Enemy can throw at us. When you find yourself in need of something bigger than yourself, go to prayer, because that's what is going to advance against the Enemy.

So, when you're experiencing that battle in your life, go to prayer. When you have brothers and sisters in Christ who are going through something and you don't know

what you can do to come alongside them, the one thing you can always do is call on the God who can do far more than we can ask or imagine, far more than we could ever do ourselves. Use it to advance the kingdom in their life.

And you need to pray for this. If you remember one thing, see prayer as an opportunity for us to pray boldly for mission to go forward. That's what Paul saw it as. He's like, "Pray for me, because I have a job to do, and I can only do it with your prayers." Just a couple of weeks ago, we came together for a prayer night here in this room, and we did that.

We prayed for our partners, locally, nationally, and globally, that they would be able to be bold in taking the gospel forward with the people God had placed around them. It was the most offensive movement this church has ever seen in its seven-year history. We are going to keep doing that, because we are committed to what Paul is saying here.

So, here's what you need to do with this reality. Arm yourself with this weapon. You need to pray for yourself and every member of this church, that we would be a people that speaks boldly to those who are far from God but close to us. You pray for our church planters. You pray for our missionaries, because when we do that, we are going to see prisoners set free. That's how God answers these prayers.

So, as we come to a close, I want us to look one last time at that painting we saw at the beginning of the sermon. The reason this painting is actually famous is because not too long after it was painted, a guy named Paul Morphy saw it. Paul Morphy was a grandmaster of chess from America, and when he saw this, he was mesmerized by it. He spent hours studying it.

Here's why it became so famous. After looking at it, he saw what nobody else saw. He famously exclaimed, "The king has one more move left! The king has one more move!" When people looked at that painting, they saw a scenario that was hopeless, but he was saying, "It is not hopeless." When people saw that painting, they saw a young man who, for everything, all was lost, but it was not, because the king had one more move that would ultimately lead to his victory.

In your life, in your fight against this Enemy, maybe you feel like everything is hopeless, like everything is lost, but your King has one more move left. That move was the cross. When people looked at that cross, they thought it looked like a checkmate, but what we know is that it ultimately led to our victory.

The fruits of the cross are still bearing in our lives today in our battle. So, no matter where you are in your battle today, remember your King has a move left. Victory is sure. That should fill us with hope for the battle ahead. Would you pray with me?

Father, we come to you, humbled, as we consider the battle. I pray for every single one of us that this becomes a more permanent reality in our minds, that the spiritual battle we are in is not just something we know about but something we keep in front of us, because I know if we do that, we are going to be a people who are more dependent on you than ever before, and that's where you want us, God.

You want us in a place where we're reminded that we are not able to do any of this in our own strength, but you're a God who wants to give that to us. God, I pray that this church, all of us, would be a people who step into that and, as we do that, Lord, more than ever, we would see ourselves in this battle being people who actually get to stand, who are no longer giving an inch to the Enemy.

And more than that, we are seeing the gospel go forward, your kingdom moving forward, as we believe in your Word and speak it, as we become a people of prayer, inviting you to do what we cannot. God, I pray that you would do all of those things and more in the life of this church. It's all for your glory. In Christ's name, amen.