MESSAGE: The Most Important Word

Text Scriptures
- Ephesians 6:10-14
- John 1:1
- John 10:10
- Revelation 2:4
- Mark 4:35-37

Illustrations
- Ancient practices of wrestling, boxing, and pankration.
- While preaching in Enid, Oklahoma, Rick met a husband and wife who had their hands utterly deformed by a spirit of affliction.
- Rick recounts a time when the ministry was attacked spiritually and he spent time thinking he had a money problem.

Greek Word Studies
- **Tou loipou** — “finally” (now for the rest of the matter)
- **Pale** — “wrestle” (combat or struggle)
- **Pankration** — *pan* (everything) and *kration* (power); *pankration* (those who have more power than anyone else)
- **Archai** — “principalities,” from the Greek word *arche* (describes those who have held the cheapest seats of power since ancient times; used in the military to describe the highest-ranking generals — those who held the highest seats of power)
- **Exousia** — “powers” (describes those which have received license from the ones above)
- **Kosmokrateros** — “rulers of the darkness of this world” (describes raw power that has been harnessed, disciplined, and focused; the word used by the Greeks for a boot camp or a training center)
- **Poneerías** — “wickedness” (depravity, malevolent)
- **Epouranios** — “high places” (the lower denser regions of the air that are thickly populated with unseen spirits marshaled against us for destruction)
- **Pros** — “against” (face to face; describes a very close encounter)
- **Dia touto** — “wherefore” (in light of what I have just said to you)
- **Analabete** — “take unto you” (to take up)
I. **Introduction**: (Main Text: Ephesians 6:10-14) When Paul was writing his epistles, he was writing to a Greek and Roman world, and Paul very frequently used words that they understood but we don’t totally comprehend. Therefore, we must step into history to understand the picture Paul had in his mind when he discussed spiritual warfare.

A. In Ephesians 6:10, the Apostle Paul is writing to the Church of Ephesus.
   1. **Tou loipou** — “finally” (now for the rest of the matter)
   2. Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”
   3. One way to translate: “I’ve saved the most important issue to the end of the text, so if you remember nothing else, this will stay in your mind. Now finally, to the most important matter at hand.”

B. Ephesians 6:12: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
   1. (v. 12) **pros** — “against” (face to face; describes a very close encounter)
      a. The word **pros** is repeated 5 times in verse 12.
      b. When the Holy Spirit repeats a phrase or word in Scripture, it is always for the sake of emphasis.
   2. **Pale** — “wrestle” (a huge palace of sports)
      a. In Greek society, professional athletes competed in three different brutal sports: boxing, wrestling, and pankration.
      b. Only the most committed athletes competed, and the fights lasted until one opponent died.
   3. Boxers wrapped their fists with leather strips that had long, serrated nails protruding at each knuckle.
   4. Wrestlers competed in the nude, and they often would try to snap their opponent’s hands and spine.
   5. Those who survived the boxing and wrestling matches were invited to fight in the pankration, which was the most brutal sport of all.
   6. **Pankration** — (those who are the most powerful)
      a. There were absolutely no limits in this sport.
b. By using this word, Paul intended to convey that spiritual warfare is a brutal, serious affair and that if you are not prepared, Satan will undo you.

C. Part two of Ephesians 6:12: Through divine revelation, Paul described the forces of darkness in specific military terms.

1. Looking into the realm of the Spirit, Paul saw exactly how Satan’s forces are aligned militarily.

2. **Archai** – “principalities” (*the generals in an army*)
   Those demons who have held the chief seats of power from the most ancient times.

3. **Exousia** – “powers” (*a colonel; a military leader who received authority and could act upon it*)
   Demons who have received license to wreak havoc in our world.

4. **Kosmokrateros** – “rulers of the darkness of this world” (*a mighty raw power that has been harnessed, disciple and focused*)
   a. The Greeks used this word to describe a military training camp.
   b. Satan established demonic “boot camps” here on earth where evil spirits are trained to attack humans in specific, specialized ways.
   c. **Illustration:** While preaching in Enid, Ok, Rick met a husband and wife who had their hands utterly deformed by a spirit of affliction

5. **Epouranios** – “high places” (*the lower atmosphere*)
   a. Some people have erroneously taught that strategic spiritual warfare must be conducted in a plane high above the earth.
   b. The Early Church leaders wrote that the lower, evil spirits densely populate regions of the air.

6. Once a demon has been trained, it is dispatched into our world to kill, steal, and destroy.
   a. Satan is not haphazard about what he is trying to do to the human race.
   b. These spirits which have been trained in various forms of sickness and perversion; then they are dispatched, and their motto is in John 10:10. They go forth to kill, steal, and destroy.

7. This is why we as children of God need spiritual armor. We have more power and authority than Satan and the combined forces of darkness.

II. **Application:** Ephesians 6, Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus, the most mature of all the churches in the First Century. It was the model church.
A. Yet Paul says to them (v. 13): *Dia touto* – “Wherefore” *(In light of what I have just said to you. Now that I have gotten your attention, I am going to tell you what you need to do.)*

1. This great, mature church was standing with all of its weaponry lying on the ground around their feet. Ephesus was a body of believers that knew it all, but they were not walking in what they knew.

2. Revelation 2:4 — Jesus tells them they had left their first love. The word “left” *(afeekes)* literally means *you’ve let it slip through your fingers.* Perhaps in the busyness of it all, you just fell into a Christian routine.
   a. The church of Ephesus had experienced a major revival just 30 years earlier. It takes only about 30 years for a move of God to die. By that time, the second generation of people can fall into a church habit and even stop talking as though they’re believers.
   b. Paul says to them, “Wherefore” — here’s the explanation for what’s going on in their church — “in light of the fact that devil is very serious about his victimization of you and you’re standing naked in front of the enemy, take unto you *(analabete)*; pick up your armor; put it on; and repeat what you once did. Put on the whole armor of God.”
   c. Paul used *armor as a picture of our spiritual equipment.* He had been chained to a Roman soldier for years. *God will speak to you through your environment.*

B. Ephesians 6 — God doesn’t give us some of the armor. He gives us all of the armor so we can be covered from head to toe.

1. Paul began Ephesians 6:10,11 with the subject of power. *You can’t even function in spiritual warfare unless you have received the power of God.* That’s why he began with the subject of power before he ever touched the subject of weaponry.

2. *Enduo* — “strong in the Lord” *(en (put something inside); duo (explosive power).* The word *enduo* describes power — but not a free-floating power that floats throughout the universe. This is a specific power designed to be placed *inside* a receptacle or a vessel of some kind.
   a. Speaking to the church, Paul said, “Be strong! You’ve been made for this! There is a *divine*
power that has been made to be placed inside you.”

b. The phrase be strong in the Lord is in the locative case. This power we’re talking about can only be found in the Lord. You can’t get it anywhere else outside of Christ.

c. The locative case is also found in Ephesians 1 where the Bible says we are in Christ, in Him, in whom, which means we are perpetually in Him. We are locked inside Him. That’s why Paul said in Him, we live and move and have our being.

3. Ephesians 6: 11 enduo — “put on” (power that is designed to be placed in us). (v. 12) pros — “against” (face to face; describes a very close encounter)

a. “Put on” comes from the word enduo or endowment. When you are endued with power, that is what puts the armor on you.

b. As long as you’re walking in the power of God, you are dressed in the whole armor of God. The day you break your fellowship with the Lord and step into sin, you have just stepped out of your defense.

c. Walking in that divine power means you will be clothed with this armor.

4. Your armor depends on your relationship with God. As long as you’re in relationship, in fellowship and participating with His power in you, you’re clothed in the whole armor of God.

5. Illustration: Rick recounts a time in the ministry where things had been going wonderfully. They were having 400 meetings a year, selling books and growing. The finances to follow God’s call were coming in. Then one day it all stopped. The money dried up, and weird things started happening. A pastor even stole their offering.

a. In prayer, the Lord told Rick three times, “You do not have a money problem.” Then He instructed Rick to turn to Mark 4:35-37.

b. A storm arose and took the disciples by surprise because it came from nowhere.

c. Verse 39 — Jesus never said, I rebuke you. “Rebuke” is derived from a Greek word that means to disparage; to intimidate, to insult. Jesus began speaking against the wind — to deride and to chide it — like it was an entity or a
personality. And when He was finished speaking to the wind, He looked downward to the waves and said, “Peace, be still.”

d. **“Peace be still”** in the Greek is almost impossible to translate. Literally it means that Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Shhhhh.”

e. Illustration Conclusion: I didn’t have a money problem; my problem was “the wind.” There was a disturbance in the atmosphere, a turbulence released against us, and the manifestation of the turbulence was the lack of finances. Like the disciples, it was the waves, but there was something behind the waves.

f. If all you do is deal with your symptoms, they will repeat again and again and again and again.

6. Ephesians 6:13 — “stand” (*having brought everything to an ultimate conclusion, you will stand*). The word “stand” is God’s vision of you at the end of the fight.

a. God has a snapshot of you that He carries in His pocket. He can flip it out and say, “See what I have! It’s a picture of what you look like at the end of the fight.”

b. God knows the end from the beginning, and He doesn’t see you at the end as a struggler lying slain on the ground. He sees you as one who stands and conquers!

III. **Conclusion:** Ephesians 6 — Why did Paul write this text? Was he trying to scare us? No, he was trying to arouse us. Life in God is serious, and we better embrace everything He’s given, because there are some powers out there that have been marshaled against us. But if we will surrender and take what God has provided, we’ll end up standing.