

“Clothing For The New Year”

December 30, 2018

Ephesians 6:10-19

Today I want you to think about light. Please open your Bible with me to the first chapter of Genesis.

When the world began, the entirety of the globe was dark; complete and total darkness. And the LORD simply said these words “Let there be light. And there was light.” Now, that was the first day of creation. Then, on the fourth day we find this; verse fourteen. Genesis 1:14 “*And God said, Let there be **lights** in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them [the lights] be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: (15) And let them be for **lights** in the firmament of the heaven to give **light** upon the earth: and it was so.*

*(16) And God made two great **lights; the greater light** to rule the day, and **the lesser light** to rule the night: he made the stars also. (17) And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give **light** upon the earth, (18) and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide **the light** from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. (19) And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”*

From the very first second of history until this exact moment in time, the earth has been divided between hours of darkness and hours of daylight. Every day of your life you live intermittently, back and forth between darkness and light.

Now, folks, that’s also true in the spiritual realm. There’s a domain of spiritual darkness and there’s a realm of spiritual light. With God; no darkness. With God, all is Light. He is Light and in Him is *no* darkness whatsoever; not a single shadow. He’s pure, perfect, brilliant light and He dwells in light.

And when Jesus became a man, in essence, Light took on flesh. Jesus said “*I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” In Him is

Life and His Life is the Light of men (John 1:4). John 12:46 “*I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*”

Now, please find with me the Gospel of Luke. Look with me at the eleventh chapter of Luke. What you know and understand about light is what will enable you to see what the Holy Spirit says here. Luke 11:13 “*And he [Jesus] was casting out a devil [demon], and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. (15) But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. (16) And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.*

(17) But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. (18) If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

(19) And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. (20) But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. (21) When a strong man armed keepeth his palace [his home and his courtyard], his goods are in peace: (22) But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”

Now, the context, as you can easily see, is demon possession. Jesus often cast out demons. And the Scribes and Pharisees were saying that Jesus did the work of casting out demons by Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24; Mark 3:22), which is simply another name for the devil.

Look at the twenty-second verse and see this. Luke 11:22 “*But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.*”

Have you ever thought of Satan wearing armor? The stronger, in the passage here, is definitely Jesus. Jesus was casting out demons. And how did He do it? He comes upon the devil. He overcomes the devil. He takes all of his armor away from him. And He divides his possessions. Have you ever thought of Satan having his armor stripped from him?

Think about it like this. Without his armor, Satan is defenseless. And, because Jesus is Who He is and because of what Jesus is able to do, Satan has been totally defeated by Jesus and today he is armor-less. Satan has no defense.

Now, look at the Christian in light of what you know about the devil being armor-less. What kind of armor does a Christian wear? Please turn with me to Ephesians chapter six. Now, as I read, look for the armor that a Christian needs to wear, what it is, why it's so important; and how does a Christian defeat Satan?

Ephesians 6:10 “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [the deceptions] of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world ...*”

Light; what the Bible says about it; the devil; what the Bible says about him; and now, being clothed with the whole armor of God. And here's how they all fit together today. The armor that a Christian puts on, as you are about to see, is the armor of light. Listen with me to the Holy Spirit in Paul. Romans 13:12 “*The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*”

I've titled today's message “What Will You Wear in 2019?” Shall we pray?

First, reality consists of two realms; spiritual darkness and spiritual light. I want to say something today about clothing; actually armor. But first, there are two kingdoms in this

world; a dark one and a light one. One dominated by spiritual darkness and the other by spiritual light.

In his first prayer for the Colossian Christians, here's what Paul prayed. Colossians 1:10 “*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (11) Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; (12) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet [fit] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [transferred] us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ...*”

So much happened at the Cross. On the day you repented; on the day you put your trust in Jesus and received the free gift of righteousness from Heaven, you were delivered *out* of the kingdom of darkness. And you were transferred *into* the kingdom of light. Here's Paul to the Ephesians. Ephesians 5:8 “*For ye were sometimes [formerly] darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk [live] as children of light: ...*”

Do you believe me that there's a region of spiritual darkness and a realm of spiritual light? Do you believe that you were once darkness but are now light in the LORD? Do you see how important it is to trust what the Bible says? Christians are people who are no longer in the spiritual darkness. You see, where Christ is, there is light. Why? Because He's The Light. But, just like there are two parts to the physical twenty-four realm in which you live, there are also two parts to the spiritual realm; one dark and one light. Will you agree with me that one realm, the kingdom of light has only Christians in it? The other realm, the kingdom of darkness is composed of unbelievers, Satan, and his emissaries?

Ye are not in the darkness. I Thessalonians 5:5 “*Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*”

So, first, reality consists of two realms; spiritual dark and spiritual light.

Second, Satan, your armor-less foe dwells in spiritual darkness. Look again at verse ten. Ephesians 6:10 “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. (11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world ...*”

Now, I realize that Ephesians six is about the devil. But I want you to think about light. And I want you to think about the armor. I want you to see that it's an armor made of light. A man came to me last week and said “*I think about the devil a lot. Do you think that that's OK?*”

My answer “*The LORD wants you to think about Him much, much more than He wants you to think about the devil.*”

So, yes, we need to consider the devil. But do not dwell on the devil. That's why when you read a passage like Ephesians six, you need to put the focus where God puts it; on the light.

Your enemies are not physical. They are not material. They are invisible. You cannot see them. But they are undeniably real. And they are rulers of the darkness of this age.

Why did Jesus come here? Here's why. I John 3:8 “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*”

And he destroys the devil's works through you and through me. Here's the truth. Here's the reality. One of your main purposes as a child of God is the calling right here in Ephesians six. You've been called by God to stand against an

enemy you can't see while wearing armor you can't feel in a battle against an enemy who lives in darkness.

Satan is the prince of darkness. Did you know that Satan is never called the prince of darkness in the Bible? Well, where did the name come from? It comes from a fourth century writer who wrote a book called the “Acts of Pontius Pilate” supposedly written by Nicodemus. In the very first chapter Pontius Pilate is in a conversation with the Jews who were claiming that Jesus was casting out demons by someone called “the prince of darkness,” a reference to Satan. [Found on <https://www.sacred-texts.com> “Acts of Pontius Pilate”]. That's where the phrase “prince of darkness” comes from.

But, folks, Satan really is the ruler over the realm of darkness.

First, reality consists of two realms; spiritual darkness and spiritual light.

Second, Satan, your armor-less foe dwells in spiritual darkness.

Third, a soldier that wrestles? Look at verse twelve. 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.*”

Now, normally you don't think of a soldier clothed in armor getting down on the floor to wrestle, do you? The word “wrestle” here isn't that at all. It's nothing like two men wrestling each other on a mat.

What the word actually means is “a conflict, a fight, a struggle; two people in a contest against each other.” “For we struggle not against flesh, not against the physical realm, but against satanic authorities, satanic forces. Principalities are territories. We are opposed by powers and rulers are spiritual authorities in the kingdom of darkness, territories and rulers who have lost their authority. But, they still exert an influence. You see, because sin still exists and because

Satan still exists, and because there is a spiritual realm of darkness, there is a spiritual war. And you're in it.

Wrestling simply implies that each Christian is in an invisible conflict with God's enemies; Satan and his emissaries; Satan, his territories and rulers in his kingdom.

First, spiritual darkness versus spiritual light.

Second, Satan, your armor-less foe dwells in spiritual darkness.

Third, a Christian is a soldier that wrestles, "is in conflict with" rulers who live in the darkness of this age.

Fourth, and very important, how much power does Satan have?

Please listen closely. The devil was completely defeated at the Cross on the day Jesus died. Turn with me to the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of John.

John 16:8 *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (9) of sin, because they believe not on me; (10) of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (11) of judgment, because **the prince of this world is judged.**"*

The Holy Spirit carries on His work in the hearts of people as they hear the Gospel. And here's what He does. He reproves, (which means convicts) the world of sin because they don't believe on Christ. He convicts the world of righteousness because Jesus is no longer here (He's in Heaven). And He convicts the world of judgment because Satan has been judged.

When you tell someone the Good News, the Holy Spirit takes that Good News and brings convictions to that heart. That's how you were saved and that's how anyone is saved. You see, because the prince of this world has been judged, people are being released from his kingdom; one by one every day of the year.

Now turn with me to second chapter of Colossians. And look with me at verse thirteen. Colossians 2:13 *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (15) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."*

"Spoiled" is a huge word in the Bible. Here's what it means; "disarmed;" "having been completely stripped of power."

The Cross, folks, was the place where the liar, Satan, thinking he could rid the world of Christ, was totally vanquished. It was at the Cross that Jesus completely turned the tables on Satan. The entire kingdom of darkness was decimated at the Cross.

Jesus not only paid the penalty for the sins of the world. He also, rose from the dead. So, Satan lost – big time.

Yet, the devil is still active. He has yet to be cast into the Abyss. He's still roaming the globe. He's still active in his spiritual darkness. He's still travels about, looking for people, to devour. He devours them by deception; by deceit; by lies.

Now, think with me about what Satan has. What do you think he's got? He's got power. And what power do you see Satan as having? Satan has really only one power available to him. Do you know what it is? It's lying. It's deceit. It's trickery. Folks, the more you see the truth from your Bible about everything in your life, the more you are set free. The Christians who are not putting the Bible into their hearts on a daily basis are the ones Satan is very interested in. And how does he work? He spreads lies. He speaks lies. He whispers lies. He puts lying thoughts out into the air.

Let me give you a simple, practical example. Who here believes the promises of God? Now, you read, and know,

and memorize one of His promises. Then, a thought enters your mind; a doubt. Folks, where did that doubt come from? Satan is the main proponent of doubt.

So, folks, how do you deal with the devil? Let me make this as practical as I possibly can so you can see how to deal with the devil. When was the last time you came up to a traffic light and stopped at that red light because that fixture hanging above your head had turned red? Today? Now, what happened this past week when you came to a red light and there was a policeman there directing traffic? Suppose you decided to obey the traffic light while the policeman was underneath that light directing you? Obviously it would cause huge problems.

Consider Satan, folks, as having the power to lie. And he lies all the time. And he persuades people all the time to believe lies. And then Christ comes into your life. And what does Christ do? He tells you exactly what you need to know. He tells you exactly what you need to do. His Word supersedes anything Satan says.

He's the Policeman in my illustration. And, Satan has no more authority over you than that traffic light with a policeman underneath it. Wherever Christ is present, He's the authority, not Satan. No matter how strong you think Satan is; no matter how much he influences the world; no matter how many lies he tells, no matter how much power he wants you to think he has; Someone Else is present Who supersedes anything he can say or do. [Found on <https://www.ministrybooks.org> "withstanding Satan by Faith" by Watchman Nee.]

How much power does Satan have? He only has power when you believe him. He only has power when you don't understand the truth. Can you see why I'm constantly encouraging you to read and study your Bible? Satan is a liar and a persistent liar.

Now, suppose you are feeling guilty over a particular sin you committed. So, you ask yourself this question. Is this guilt from the Holy Spirit or from the devil?

The answer is simple. The Holy Spirit will always direct you to the blood of Christ. He will definitely convict you and call you to confess that sin to God. He will always insist that you be cleansed and restored to fellowship with the LORD. On the other hand, the liar will always direct you to a feeling of condemnation. Folks, God has delivered you from all condemnation. And what does Satan do over and over and over to the Christian? He brings in the lie of condemnation. And every time God's Word gets pushed aside by your feelings or your thoughts, you get defeated. And ultimately that defeat has come from Satan himself.

Folks, Jesus is just like that policeman under the light. Stop listening to the voice of the deceiver. The devil never wants you to experience and enjoy your relationship with the LORD. Instead, he wants you to believe his lies.

So, Satan only power is the power of persuasion; something he has nearly perfected. He is a liar and the father of every lie.

First, spiritual darkness versus spiritual light.

Second, Satan, your armor-less foe dwells in spiritual darkness.

Third, a soldier that wrestles, "is in conflict with" the rulers of the darkness of this age.

Fourth, how much power does Satan have?

Fifth, and finally, have you put on the armor of light? Romans 13:12 says this. *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."*

And here in Ephesians, Paul reminds us that there are seven pieces of armor that you need to put on; daily. Notice with me all seven pieces. Ephesians 6:13 *"Wherefore take unto*

you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; (15) and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

(16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; ..."

Here they are: truth, righteousness, the Gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer. Each morning that you put on your armor of light, you are able, by God's grace to stand well-protected against the lying strategies of the devil.

Yours is an armor of light. And who here hates the light? Who here hates the light the most? Satan. And he not only hates the light; he is afraid of the light. Satan prefers to operate under the cover of darkness. Satan thought he was so shrewd that he found a way to deceive people into thinking they could destroy the Son of God by crucifying him. And when he discovered that Jesus' death paid for the sins of mankind; and when he discovered that Jesus completely defeated sin and death; when he discovered that Jesus rose from the dead; Satan doubled down on his lies. But, folks, that's all he has. He's a liar from the very beginning. And he hates the light.

Now, what does your armor look like; verse thirteen.

Here are the pieces of armor, the armor of light, the ones that enable you to stand against the prince of darkness and his emissaries. One, a mind and heart set on loving and living the truth. Two, a heart filled with and engaged in daily righteous living. Three, a readiness and a willingness to bring the

Gospel of peace to people around you. Four, a constant attitude of faith, trusting everything and every circumstance into the hands of your Father, Who perfectly cares for you and provides for you. Five, a heart that sure of its salvation. Six, a heart filled with and dwelling on the Word of God. And seven, a heart and a voice constantly lifting up prayers to your Heavenly Father. Those are the seven pieces of clothing that you need in this coming year. You need them every single day.

And did you notice that everything you wear is protective? What else is armor for? It's basic design is to protect you. The truth protects you. Righteousness protects you. Peace protects you. Faith protects you. Salvation, Scripture, prayer; these things protect you from any and all of Satan's lies.

So, how are you going to live in 2019? By neglecting the armor? By refusing to put on these seven pieces each day? Folks, whenever you set aside what God says for what you think, you live the life of a victim. But folks, when God has called you to a life of victory, it's because you are not a victim. Only Satan lies to you will ever get you thinking that you are a victim.

So, when Paul says "*walk as children of light*," this is what he means. A Christian has no right thinking he's susceptible to Satan's wiles. You are not. If you believe you are, then Satan's already deceived you. Yes, Christians can be deceived. The devil wants you for his next victim. But the Christian who stands dressed in the armor of light is fully able stand against all of his deceptions.

So, have you put on the armor of light? Will you put on the armor of light?

You know, there's only one primary thing a Christian must do when it comes to the kingdom of darkness; STAND. And, folks, we all find it difficult to stand. You see,

when you stand against the kingdom of darkness, you resist Satan. Peter puts it like this. 1 Peter 5:6 *‘Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) **whom resist stedfast in the faith**, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.’*

You see, the LORD’s purpose for your life, at least one of them, is daily and constantly standing with your armor on. And every time Satan tempts or brings doubt or insists on condemnation, you can simply do the following. Remind yourself that that’s why. Jesus died and rose again so that Satan would be completely defeated.

Let me give you a simple, but bold prayer for you to pray this year. Please take this prayer to heart and pray it whenever and wherever you see Satan at work; just four words. “LORD, rebuke the devil.”

One final passage. Do you remember the occasion when the Apostles were in a boat crossing the Sea of Galilee and a storm came up? Do you remember that Jesus was asleep in the boat? And do you remember that the waves began to fill the boat with water? And do you remember that the disciples were more and more afraid? And do you remember they woke the LORD up and said “Don’t you care that we’re about to perish?” Do you remember what Jesus said? All the Gospels say the exact same thing. Jesus rebuked the wind and the raging sea. And what happened? The wind calmed down and the waves calmed down. No more driving wind; no more crashing waves. Why? Because one little word from Jesus will do it every time.

You don’t have authority to rebuke the devil. God does. So, pray. Ask the LORD to do it on your behalf; on behalf of your loved one; on behalf of those here in this Assembly.

And imagine Satan hearing and feeling that rebuke from Jesus when you pray and ask the LORD to rebuke him. Then, of course, constantly thank your Heavenly Father that He’s got all authority and Satan has none.

So, what did you think? What will you do this coming year? What clothing will you wear?

Folks, Satan knows the truth. He knows that he has no power other than deception. So, when the LORD rebukes him, he cowers. He falls. He’s reminded again through you that he’s the victim. He’s the loser. You are the Victor through Christ.

The most effective thing you can do against Satan is to stand against him; resist him as you stand in the strength of the LORD. You’re a victor. Christ is your Victory. Put on the clothing you need most for 2019; the armor of light.

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 734 “Be Strong in the Lord”