

Title: This Is Who Satan Is

Sermon Title: Stand: Stand in Strength - Dr. Darin Wood

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The Apostle Paul's teaching in Ephesians 6 paints a sobering picture of the Christian life. It is not passive, and it is certainly not safe. It is war. If we're going to stand in the fight, we need to understand what we're up against and what God has given us to endure it.

Paul's call to "put on the full armor of God" is not a suggestion. It is an imperative. It is something we must do *intentionally*, because the armor will not fasten itself onto us. This kind of preparation is a matter of life and death, because whether we recognize it or not, our lives may depend on it.

The Urgency of the Armor

Paul doesn't just want his friends in Ephesus to know about God's power. He wants them to *apply it*. He's concerned for their protection. And he knows that protection will not come from within themselves. It can only come from the Lord.

That's why he frames it as urgent. The enemy is real, and he has strategies. The more we understand his tactics, the more we can anticipate them and defend ourselves. As General Douglas MacArthur once said (paraphrased), "*Knowing your enemy's tactics increases your chances for victory.*" Satan's goal is destruction, and he is cunning. If we don't know how he works, we risk being caught off guard.

In Ephesians 4, Paul already listed many of the things that Satan continues to use even after we become Christians: immorality, idolatry, greed, lust, anger, and bitterness. These are old clothes from our former life, and we are called to shed them. But don't think for a moment that Satan has stopped using them just because we've been saved.

Satan's Tactics: How He Fights

Paul wants us to pull back the curtain and take a good look at how Satan operates. His attacks are not random. They are deliberate, and they are designed to exploit our weaknesses.

Here are some of the enemy's most common tactics:

1. Deception

Jesus called Satan "*the father of lies*." This isn't just because he lies, but because he does it in a specific way. He takes truth and *twists* it—just enough to make it sound believable. He hides a lie within a nugget of truth, and that's what makes deception so dangerous.

Deception often sounds like wisdom. It sounds like something God might say. But it inverts the truth and subtly leads us astray.

2. Temptation

Temptation is especially powerful when we are tired or vulnerable. Satan uses it the way a fisherman uses bait—something attractive, interesting, even satisfying—but there's always a hidden hook. And by the time we bite down, it might be too late.

Temptation and deception go hand in hand. Once you've taken the bait, the trap closes.

But here's the good news: even if you've fallen into it, God can still release you. Romans 8:1 reminds us, "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" Through Jesus, we are more than conquerors. His Spirit sets us free.

3. Accusation

When Satan can't deceive or tempt, he accuses. That's what his name means—*accuser of the brethren*. He'll point at you and say, "Look at what you've done. You're a failure. You'll never change."

But here's what we need to remember: *either the cross of Christ is enough for all sin, or it's not good enough for any sin*. There is no middle ground. When accusation comes, we point to the cross and say, "Jesus paid it all."

4. Discouragement

Satan loves to sow discouragement. He whispers lies like, "*If you were really walking with God, things wouldn't be this hard.*" He uses people to cause division. He stirs up bitterness.

Bitterness is especially toxic. It isolates you. It makes you drink poison while you wait for someone else to suffer. But in the end, it only destroys you.

5. Disguise

This might be the most dangerous tactic of all. According to *2 Corinthians 11*, Satan disguises himself as an *angel of light*. That means he doesn't always appear evil. Sometimes, he looks *righteous*.

People will even say things like, "Surely God wants me to be happy, so it's okay to keep living this way." But the truth is, God's highest goal is not our happiness. His goal is our *holiness*.

Happiness is not promised. Holiness is commanded. God owes us nothing, but He has given us *everything*. We must resist the lie that our feelings define what is right.

The Real Enemy

In *Ephesians 6:12*, Paul takes it a step further:

“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.”

This is a sobering reminder. Our real enemy is not other people. It's not a boss, a family member, or someone who has hurt us. The battle we're in is *spiritual*, and it's taking place on a level we cannot see.

The word Paul uses—*wrestle*—is significant. It's not a distant kind of war. It is *close combat*. It is intimate, exhausting, and physical. In Paul's world, wrestling meant grabbing someone and trying to throw them off their feet. It was a contest of strength and will.

This is not entertainment. It's not Saturday night wrestling at the local arena. This is a full-body, full-soul fight. And the enemy plays dirty. He doesn't pull punches. He kicks you while you're down. He doesn't just want to defeat you. He wants to *destroy* you.

We are fighting on a *cosmic* level. That means earthly tools won't work. We need weapons that come from heaven. This is a spiritual war, fought in unseen realms. Satan, as the prince of the power of the air, operates in ways we can't even fully comprehend.

That's why Paul says, *“Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”*

The Good News: Jesus Has Already Won

Let's not miss this crucial truth. As fierce and terrifying as the battle is, *Jesus has already won*. The cross crushed the power of deception, temptation, accusation, discouragement, and disguise. Jesus' victory is not partial. It is *complete*.

We don't fight *for* victory. We fight *from* victory.

Because of Christ, we can be anchored, confident, and secure. Even when the enemy roars, we stand strong—not in our strength, but in His.

Final Thoughts

Satan is real. He is active. And he is after us. But his tactics are not new, and they are not unbeatable. God has made a way for us to stand through the full armor He provides.

Know your enemy. But more importantly, *know your Savior*. Jesus has already won the war. All that's left is for us to stand firm in the strength He supplies.

So put on the armor. Fight with the weapons of the Spirit. And remember who you are in Christ—*more than a conqueror*.