

Ephesians 15-03-29b

We are resuming our study in Ephesians chapter 6, we have come to verse 11, and we're asking ourselves the question, when Paul says, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, the schemes of the devil, what are we talking about here? What sort of a scheme is it? Is it a pyramid scheme? Is it an invagel money out of my bank account scheme? Is it a get me to buy a set of useless steak knives or a set of archaic encyclopedias? Is it to subvert my happiness? Is it to prevent me from enjoying my life? Is it to use me as an agent of dismality and destruction against others? What is the scheme? What's going on here? I put on all this armor, what am I supposed to do? How do I know, is somebody going to bonk me in the back of the head or are they going to come to the front, are they going to try to outflank me, are they going to come popping up out of the ground like these root dwelling movie demon people? What are they going to do? What are they going to do? How do I operate in this armor? Yeah, I get the vague notion that the devil is a bad personality and he's got something against me, but I need some specifics. All of this, put on the armor and watch out for the devil, go away now and go out and live your life and you think, well, I've been living in Plano quite a while now and I haven't seen any devil, I don't know what his wiles are, is he trying to get gay marriage passed? What's his agenda? What am I going to do? How am I going to defend myself and use my sword of the spirit and my other offensive weapons and how do I keep from getting knocked off my feet? Whatever this is, he keeps telling me to stand and to withstand and to stand in the evil day and having done all to stand, stand therefore, well, what does that mean? I need to understand before I can withstand and keep on standing. So we want understanding.

Now he says, put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the scheming of the devil, for we do not wrestle against. We do not actively struggle. This word in its immaterial sense, in its conceptual sense, means to struggle against and of course wrestling is a good physical metaphor, but of course we're not actually trying to avoid a half Nelson and pin some demon to the ground.

Wrestle here means struggle against. Now there's lots of kinds of struggles. What's the thing about wrestling? What particular kind of struggle is that? Have you ever watched wrestling? Have you ever done wrestling? One of the manifold things they make you do when you're a midshipman is wrestle.

I did a whole semester of wrestling. You know what I remember about wrestling? That is way closer to another extremely sweaty human being than I want to be. Some other hapless male midshipman and my face is being squeezed directly into his armpit.

We're both just sweating and straining and struggling in our amateur wrestling fashion. It's really an interesting thing. My dad did wrestling in high school.

My father's been on my mind today for a lot of reasons, but he wrestled in high school and he had

a coach named Coach Peary and when I went to Navy, I had a wrestling coach and his name was Peary and he was the son of my dad's wrestling coach in Tulsa, Central High School and I thought, you know, what are the odds? Wrestling, what is it about wrestling? What kind of struggle is that? It is intense, it is personal, it is distasteful to your finer senses of decorum and aromatic appreciation and so on. It's kind of a disgusting effort. I would never voluntarily say, well, I think I want to be a wrestler any more than I would want to do sumo or bungee jumping or a lot of other weird things, but I wouldn't want to be a wrestler.

It's just you can't keep anybody at a distance. Sooner or later you're going to be grappling and there is just a lot of personal contact of an unwanted nature. It is at the opposite end of the spectrum of any kind of close personal contact that I would be interested in.

So that's the wrestling we wrestle against. This is an ugly contest. It's not just any old struggle.

I can struggle to understand. I can struggle to achieve. I can struggle to fix a thing.

I can struggle to get something done. Well that's more of an objective struggle. One of the girls gets one of these Gordian knots tied in their extremely fine necklace chain and I'm in there with a magnifying glass and a couple of needles and I'm struggling.

I'm struggling to solve that problem. Or they're doing something and snap the chain and I've got to reconnect some little T90 microscopic chain link to make this necklace work again. And I've got my needle nose pliers look like giant industrial steam shovels and I'm trying to use these clumsy tools and my clumsy coordination to get these extremely fine little links reconnected.

That's a struggle but it's not like wrestling. What's wrestling like? I just told you. And some of you have done it and you know.

Well we are not wrestling against flesh and blood. But we are wrestling. We have this personal distasteful struggle.

Somebody is trying to overwhelm us. Someone is trying to pin us down and render us ineffective. There's no more humiliating thing than find yourself pinned.

When I was in kindergarten there was a bully that decided I was an easy target and when I would be coming home from kindergarten, mind you, we'd both get off the bus and this kid that weighed about two and a half times what I did would knock me down and sit on me. And I would struggle to get free but all he had to do was sit there. He was enormous.

And it was just disgusting and I really hated it. And all of my struggling was to no avail. And I just got more and more angry about this.

And one day we got off the bus and started walking down Sarbonne Drive up there at the top of the hill and the fat kid knocked me down in somebody's yard and started sitting on me. And I was

just furious. I got so mad I thought, I don't care what happens to me.

I just cannot put up with this. And I gave a mighty heave with everything that was in my little skinny kindergarten body and I managed to surprise him and knock him off balance and he got off of me. And I got on top of him and I grabbed his head and a lady had bushes there that were ringed with these little flat rocks, little flat bricks.

And I took his head and I just started playing the drums on those bricks with his head. And I said, I don't want you doing this anymore. It didn't hurt him.

His head was so thick. But it did surprise him. And he gained a level of respect and he didn't do that to me anymore.

That's flesh and blood wrestling. That's a physical struggle. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but we are wrestling against, and then it lists four things, principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual things of wickedness in heavenly places.

Four things. This is what we're wrestling against. Now, I want you to take a small little section of your notes there and write down the difference between a principality and a power against a ruler of the darkness of this age and a spiritual host in italics of wickedness in the heavenly places in italics.

Just make a quick note. What is the difference between each one of those? Because he lists four of them, so they can't all be the same thing, right? So, we're putting on this armor because we've got to stand against these four separate and distinct enemies. And do we even know who and what they are? Well, they're demons.

They're unseen forces of satanic darkness. Well, why are there four? What if they come at us from four different directions? How do I know what the directions are if I don't even know what the difference is in a principality and a power? I don't know what a ruler is, and I don't know what a spiritual something of wickedness in a heavenly something is. Well, it's no good.

You're going to be in right field, standing there with your glove, just ignorant as dirt, and everybody's going to be yelling at you when you throw the ball to second base, and you should have thrown it to home. You're going to be standing at the judgment seat of Christ, clueless. Well, yes, Lord, I went to Bible class, and I learned a bunch of stuff, and I put on my armor, but I kept getting knocked over, and I don't know why.

Well, here's why. We have not identified the enemy. We're going to do that here in the next few minutes.

Let's start with principalities. The reason we're putting on the armor of God is that the schemes of the devil are implemented, they are perpetrated, they are put into play by these agents. The devil is the coach.

In the locker room, in his office, he puts the X's and the O's on the board, and he says, all right, this guy's going to block this way, this guy's going to block that way, he's going to open up a hole between that skinny little defensive end and the tackle. We're going to run right over that guy all day long, because he's the weakest link in the defensive line. He only weighs 130 pounds.

We can run over him all day long. We'll leave him on his back, play after play after play. We don't even need to throw a pass, why take a chance when we get intercepted? We'll just run over that guy.

That's you, that's me. So he's designing plays. He has analyzed the team, he knows where the weaknesses are.

Get this, he knows, he has been roaming the earth seeking whom he can design a play to run over, whom he may devour, right? Resist him, steadfast in the faith. When you resist the agent, you're resisting him. When you stop the players, you've stopped the strategy of the coach.

Coach has got to come up with a new plan, because that one's not working. Who knew the little defensive end had a move and was going to slip that block and tackle my guy behind the line, and we suffered a loss, and that's happened three, four, five times now. We've got to give up on that play.

This is where we are. Paul says, look, this is a real struggle here. This isn't academic, it's not, you know, rah-rah for purposes of abstraction.

This is what you are doing today. This is what you and I are going to be doing tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. We're in a contest, we're in a conflict, and the devil has designed plays, and he wants to run over you, because you are effective.

You're here in Bible class. You've been in Bible class. You've been trying to put these things into practice.

You pray, and you don't just pray for yourself. You have been praying for other people. You are thinking.

You recognize the struggle. You're in the game, and you've got to be annulled. You need to be neutralized and taken out, so he's designing plays to stop you.

He's not designing plays to stop somebody that's stewing in their own juice out there, somebody that's running around. I looked in my pool yesterday, and the little Polaris that's supposed to crawl all over the pool and suck up debris and put it in a little bag so that we can empty it, the little thing is just going around in circles, little tiny circles like this. The pool has got a whole swath of unvacuumed debris in the bottom, and the Polaris has been running for hours, and it's cleaned this little circle, and it's just going around and around and around.

It's got some kind of a broken drive chain or something. It's going. It's very energetic, and it's accomplishing nothing.

Don't be a broken Polaris. You want to be functional. You want to be effective.

You want to be useful. So we're not wrestling against flesh and blood. Right away, if you say, I've got a bad boss.

My dad is mean. My mom doesn't understand. They're too harsh.

They're too restrictive. They're too this. They're too that.

This co-worker is this. This person, my boss or my client is that. This person I'm associated with is this, that.

Stop. As soon as you put a human face and a human name on your problem, stop. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood.

By the way, in Greek, blood and flesh. flesh. We do not wrestle against blood and flesh.

We always think it's a bloody conflict. It's the blood. You know, the movie is just slimy sometimes.

You look at it and people get into a fight and they have this wonderfully artful little trickle of blood. It just makes them look cool. You know, Bruce Willis has this carefully designed pastiche of wounds and injuries.

Listen, about the third time you get smacked at that level, you're unconscious and when you wake up, you're in traction for like two weeks. These guys that go on with these mythical heroic struggles in movies. Anybody that's actually been in a fist fight, if you've ever seen a real fist fight, have you noticed how many blows are actually landed and when one good blow is landed, the fight is over? You hit a guy in the gut one time and he doubles over and starts vomiting.

That's the end of the fight. It's just, it's not romantic. Fighting is not romantic.

It's ugly. It's dirty. And somebody usually ends up with lasting damage.

Broken teeth. You take a sock in the jaw. You know, these guys the next day, they're talking and cruising around in their cars and, you know, chasing perpetrators and suspects.

You know what happens when you get your jaw smacked that hard and your little T joint up in here, your temporomandibular joint, that thing's never the same. You can't chew for like a month. Anyway, this is a real conflict.

This is not the fake kind. It's real. And we wrestle, first of all, not against blood and flesh.

Your conflict isn't people, oh, I'm having people testing. No, this is Satan testing and people are just the pawns being moved around on the board. They're just the chess pieces.

There's a brain behind that shoving them. And many believers, by the way, are pawns and tools of the devil. He has fooled them and manipulated them and they are enemies of the cross and enemies of you, therefore.

But don't blame them other than saying, you should have known better. But that's not who we're wrestling against. It's not blood and flesh.

It is against, A, principalities. This is the Greek word, arches, A-R-C-H-E. You know what arche is, right? The archetype.

An archeologist is going back trying to find the first things, the earliest levels of settlement. Arche is the beginning of something. And you can see why they said principalities because the principal thing is up there.

But I don't like principalities. It reminds me of counties, of land areas of some kinds. Well, he was in the principality of Dunkirk or something.

No. Or he's the principal of the school. That doesn't really get it.

Arches. These are heads. These are heads of a thing.

And they're heads in the sense of being first. Maybe they got there first. You know, they talk about some of the founding families when there was westward expansion and new counties.

You read these genealogical things. They say, well, the original settlers of this area. They're not the original settlers, by the way.

There were Native Americans that settled long before them. They might be the original European settlers after they devastated the previous owners. But they say, well, these were the earliest settlers.

And they'll list family names. One of our ancestor families is the Bouchers, the Bouchards. And they were some of the earliest European occupants of the area around Pawnee, Oklahoma, in Indian Territory.

Went there right even before Oklahoma became a state. And we had people that were living in Oklahoma. My great-granddad was the postmaster there.

And his brother was down there, and his sons, and so on. Arche. First ones, and therefore holding offices.

You get there fustest with the mostest, as they used to say. And you get to be in charge. They

had this problem with the Trail of Tears.

And there were Cherokees that left early because they saw the handwriting on the wall, so to speak. And they displaced to Oklahoma. And then later on, when the last of them failed in their efforts to have the rightful title to their land restored, the Supreme Court ruled in their favor.

And Andy Jackson said, I don't care. And they all got forcefully displaced on the Trail of Tears. They were the latecomers.

Well, now there's a conflict because the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, John Ross, had stayed behind using his influence to try to preserve Cherokee land in Georgia and areas around that. Well, he's displaced. So when he shows up in Oklahoma, the people that left early and already carved out a new life for themselves, they've got a chief, and they've got a government.

Well, now you've got two governments. Which one prevails? And they say, well, we're the Arche in Oklahoma because we got here and set this stuff up. You're Johnny Come Lately.

You were too stupid to come when we did. Well, how did it ultimately fall out? The Arche, the original earliest and oldest government for that phase of the Cherokee Nation won out. And the principal chief descends through the structure of John Ross and not the ones that displaced early.

But it was a very contentious issue. And there are still Cherokees fighting over it 150 years later. Anyway, Arche, so get in your mind, these are heads.

These are those who are first in an office. And you'll find this used throughout the Scripture in that way. So these are our foes.

These are our enemies. They are dominions or powers. This was often used to translate the Hebrew word Rosh in the Old Testament.

And many times Arche was used for the beginning of a thing. In Arche, in the beginning, time-wise. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. Arche.

So it has this connotation of beginning. Now, what does it mean to us in Ephesians 6? We wrestle not against blood and flesh, but against those who preceded us and are in a position of power because they've been here longer. Recognize your foe.

Know your enemy. And respect the fact that they've got some insight and they've got some tools and they've got some options because they've been around longer. They've been watching the human race since Adam.

And you're unlikely to innovate some new strategy that they didn't think of. They were here before

you. They've been here since the beginning.

So respect that aspect of your enemy. They are Arche's. They're in a position of headship because they've been here longer.

And awareness of that creates in us an abundance of caution. They've been watching humans like flowers and grass rising and falling for millennia. You're not going to invent some new tricky defense.

You're dealing with vast experience. It's experience headship. It's, I've been here longer, rulership.

Arche's, principalities. What's the second word? Powers. Powers is exousias.

Exousias is a compound word. It's the preposition ek, which means out from, and esten, from amy, which means to be. And this is authority.

This is power that is, uh, that is, uh, that is, uh, that is, uh, that is ability to perform an action. The lexicon says it comes from what you are. You are able to do it because of who you are.

You know, Hulk Hogan and Arnold Schwarzenegger in his prime and these other guys that are just naturally muscular. And then they've spent a lot of time developing it and, you know, inducing it with various, uh, steroids or whatever. Well, because of who they are, because they've got biceps that are thicker than my legs, they are able to do things.

So principalities, they've got capabilities because of how long they've been here. Time wise, position wise, they were here first powers. They can do things because of who they are, because of what they are, because of their, of their amy.

They, they exist as a thing and the unseen forces that have access to invisible dimensions can do stuff that you and I can't do. If you could trap a little being in flat world, you function in three dimensions. You can move up and down.

They can't. They think laterally. Remember con and one of those Star Trek deals, Oh, he doesn't think, you know, he's like a chess player only thinks in two dimensions.

Uh, we, we know up and down. And so, you know, Kirk goes down below and turns around and you know, from the pit of hell, I spit at the end and then cons gone. You couldn't think in another dimension.

Well, be aware these beings because of what they are out from what they are. Eck, Lucy, uh, Eck, Amy, Eck, Estin, X, Estin, because of what they are, you've got to respect your enemy. The opposition for you, a healthy believer in this world is spiritual in nature and it is advanced.

It's advanced because these guys have been doing it for a long time and they have power. It's advanced because of their innate inherent capabilities. Respect that.

Number three, they are the rulers of the darkness of this age. Rulers is Cosmo Crotor. You know what the cosmos is.

That's the organized nature of things. And Croteo is one of those words for power, right? They are a Cosmo Crotor. This has to do with organization.

When you talk about a ruler, you typically think of a government. This is like a president. A president has a staff, he's got a cabinet, he's a functionary in a larger piece of government.

You don't just say, well, I'm the president and I'm just one guy and there is no other government but me. That's a king or a dictator or a despot, right? Cosmo Crotor, when it says ruler, this means they're organized and this is a structured effort. This is an organization of beings, okay? Cosmo Crotor, these are the Cosmo Crotors.

They're confederated. They operate like a congress. They've got coordinated integrated plans.

Respect that. You're dealing with more than one. They've got support.

They've got backup. One of them can go off and take a nap and another one can fill in. There's just a little old you from a human point of view up against an organization.

This is like organized crime. This is the family. This is Cosa Nostra.

This is a big time. This isn't just crime. This is organized crime, okay? Cosmo Crotors.

But it defines this. We are wrestling. We are struggling against the mafia.

Then it says of the darkness of this age. This is SCOTOS, darkness, S-K-O-T-O-S, darkness. Now, what does the Bible tell us about darkness? There's a lot and I want you to write these passages down.

I've got to do it quickly here. I've got about five minutes. Matthew 4, verse 16, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death, light has dawned.

Talking about the birth of Christ, John the Baptist coming to herald the way for the Mashiah, the son of David, the one who will deliver Israel, the one who will fulfill the promises to all the Old Testament patriarchs. The people who sat in SCOTOS, in darkness, there's a contrast at the beginning of the Gospel. There's a contrast between darkness and light.

Jesus speaks in Matthew 6, verse 23, if your eye is bad, if your discernment and your perception is faulty, your whole body will be full of SCOTOS, darkness. There's a way that seems right to a

man and it's not. You can think you know and you can think you've drawn valid conclusions and you haven't because your eye is faulty.

The unaided, fleshly human eye is faulty. We have such partial information. We sit here on a tiny planet in a corner of one little insignificant galaxy making pontifications and pronouncements about the nature of physics and the origin of the universe.

We know nothing. We're extrapolating from the tiniest little bits of perception. How do you know the laws of physics pertain everywhere in the universe? We just assume that.

We've got no idea. We could be in some little weird physics bubble and the speed of light could be completely different elsewhere in the universe. The galaxies and things we think are so far away, they may be just beyond spacecraft reach.

We don't know. We assume. We extrapolate.

We just make these pronouncements out of our human wisdom and we know nothing. You think about the people that said, well, the reason you're sick is you've got a dark humor. You've got an evil liquid and we're going to lance your arteries and bleed out some of that so that you'll get well.

It made perfect sense. That was the pinnacle of human wisdom back when they used leeches and lancets and the barber pole meant this guy is going to drain your blood to make you feel better. That's how they killed George Washington.

They bled him to death. He had an infection in the back of his throat and they drained out all of his blood and he died. Yeah, the pinnacle of human wisdom.

And if you don't think that they thought in that day, we are so advanced beyond all of the ancients. Look at the wisdom we have. Look at all of the technology and the wonderful knowledge that we have gained.

They thought they were sitting at the very furthest reaches of the pushed envelope. And we look back now and we think, how pathetic. You don't think if human history doesn't go on another hundred years, they're going to look back to this point and say, really? Are you kidding? You thought that was smart? Look at everything we've learned in the interim.

You guys were pikers. You were pathetically primitive. Why didn't you just go back and tree pan or something? They've done this, by the way, again on Star Trek.

Dr. McCoy, he comes back to the 20th century and he's just aghast because they do surgery with scalpels and they use stitches and x-rays. My God, Jim, they're savages. If your eye is bad, and trust me, the human fleshly eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

What is the solution to darkness? You've got to get some light. There's only one source of light

and that's God. Light.

People who sat in darkness have seen a great light. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness, Matthew 6.23. Open your eye, let in some light. Sadly, Matthew 8.12, the sons of the kingdom, those who had a birthright to the kingdom, are going to be cast into outer skatos, outer darkness.

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The guy that came to the wedding feast and didn't have on the garment of righteousness, the garment that the king provided, the king says to the servants, bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer skatos, into the darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Remember the unprofitable servant that beat his fellow servants and ate out of the larder and pleased himself? Matthew 25.30, cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth in the darkness.

He's alive, he's saved, he's in the future, but he's in the darkness. He's so far from that source of light which is the throne of the Lamb and the throne of God in the New Jerusalem. He's in the darkness and there is crying and there is grinding of teeth in frustration and self-accusation.

What a fool I was! Jesus on the cross, Matthew 27.45, from the sixth to the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land, reflecting what Jesus was bearing on our behalf on the cross. The Lord Jesus comes in Luke 1.79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, darkness and the shadow of death. Jesus when He is arrested in Luke 22.53 talks to the scribes and Pharisees and elders of the people, chief priests, when I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize me, but this is your hour and the power of the Lord and the power of the exousia of darkness.

Jesus about to be crucified, Jesus ramrodded into execution. He says, this is your hour and the power of darkness. Jesus recognized that there were larger forces that had brought this about.

He sat in the temple daily and human beings didn't arrest Him and bring Him to trial, but it has been granted to them. Jesus said, they don't take my life from me, I lay it down. He says, this is your hour and power of darkness has been allowed to prevail.

That's Luke 22.53. John 3.19, this is the condemnation that light has come into the world. Jesus is the light of the world. Light has come into the world and men loved skatos rather than light because their deeds are evil.

Men love darkness, the darkness in which Satan and his schemes and his structure and his agents function. There are men who prefer that. They make the same choice, the same decision that Satan and the fallen angels did.

And once again there is going to be an hour of darkness before the return of the Lord Jesus. Acts

2.20, the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord. God is once again going to allow Satan to have sway.

That's the tribulation period. The Lord Jesus Christ, this is red ink in the book of Acts, kind of a rare thing. But in Acts 13.11, when Jesus encounters Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, He tells him, Jesus speaking to the man who will become the apostle Paul, now indeed the hand of the Lord is upon you.

Now I've got my passages mixed up. This is a different one. Jesus is going to talk to Paul.

But this is earlier than that. There was a sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul. And he sought to hear the word of God.

And Elymas the sorcerer withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. There's light and there's darkness. There is the gospel and there is subversion and opposition.

Saul who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, O you full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? Now indeed the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. And immediately a mist of skatos, of darkness, fell on him. And he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Why is that story important? Because what is the actual struggle there? It is the truth of God and the truth of salvation in Christ versus the subversive, seditious opposition of Bar-Jesus, Elemus. And Paul says, you're preaching darkness of a spiritual kind to this proconsul and I'm preaching light, so that you'll understand what it is you're doing.

You're going to experience actual darkness and you will not see the sun for a time. Why did he strike him blind? Why did he wither his hand or cripple his feet or make all his hair fall out or something? Why was it blindness? Because looking at the darkness versus the light, skatos versus phos, photia, that's where we get photo, photograph, it's a light writing, phos. Dark mist fell on him and he went around seeking someone.

The passage I'm talking about is the next one in Acts, Acts 26, 18. Jesus talking to the Apostle Paul and he's recounting this episode. He says, I was on a journey to Damascus with authority and commissions from the chief priests.

At midday, O King, along the road, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun shining around me and those who journeyed with me. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, because this is the language of heaven. This is the language God talks.

When God said, Yahi or, I think that's exactly what he said. Speaking to me in the Hebrew

language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads. I said, who are you, Lord? He said, I am Jesus.

I am Yeshua whom you are persecuting, but rise and stand on your feet. Rise and stand. The light is shining all around you, so rise and stand up.

I have appeared to you for this purpose. Isn't this great? The Lord Jesus stands in front of you and tells you the purpose. This is the purpose, to make you a minister and a witness, both of the things which you have seen.

That's all of his Old Testament knowledge. That's everything he had gleaned as a Pharisee sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. You are going to be a witness and a minister of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you in this new light that is shining on you.

I, Jesus, will deliver you from the people, this is the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, and it is the Gentiles to whom I now send you. Who is his target audience? Not the Hebrews, not in Jerusalem, not taking a vow, not trying to reason with the people down there and getting locked up for his trouble. I send you to the Gentiles to do what? To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from skatos to phos, and from the power of Satan to God.

Darkness is the power of Satan, light is the power of God. And as I've said many times in the past, when it's a bright sunny day, you don't say, well, let me get the flash dark, it's too bright here. Let me get my little battery operated thing and I'll shine a beam of darkness.

Darkness doesn't overcome light. Light always overcomes darkness. When there's darkness and light in the same place, what wins? Light, always.

Turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and the ultimate goal, an inheritance among those who are distinct because of their faith in Me. Those who are identified by faith in Me, those who are set apart, those who are distinctive because of faith in Me, an inheritance. What a wonderful declaration, sums it all up.

So you can see why Paul, in talking to the Laodiceans and the inhabitants of Colossae, is going to say, you've got to stand against the schemes of the devil because there are those that have been here before us, there are those who have capabilities because of who and what they are, there are those who are organized into a spiritual mafia that operates in the realm of skatos, darkness, spiritual darkness. Makes sense now, doesn't it, that he would use these separate statements? Now do you understand why the shield of faith is important? Now do you understand why we need the helmet of salvation, why our feet need to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace and so on? Why? Because we have a real identifiable enemy with an agenda, with a specific purpose and it is to knock you off your feet, to knock you down, to neutralize you, to make you think you're not in a conflict, to make you think that you aren't really involved in something beyond what you can see in this life, that your life does not consist with anything more

than what you eat and what you wear and how you entertain yourself. If he can get you to buy into that delusion, you're useless, you're neutralized.

But you're not that, you're here and you are a foe to contend with. Why? Because you are equipped and you know what's going on, you count, you matter and you're going to prevail and win in this conflict which you want to talk about the heroes coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan and those who have fought and served their country and people say, you know, thank you for your service and we appreciate what you have done in the name of our country, pales into utter insignificance with the service we render in this conflict. This counts for eternity, this establishes your inheritance among those who are set apart by their trust in Jesus Christ, set apart, distinguished.

You're not just saved, your life, your daily decisions, the things that you think and say and do matter because this light shines and expels, overcomes and expunges the darkness. Don't be in the dark. We are not of the night or of the darkness that the day of the return of the Lord should overtake us as a thief, a thief that takes away even what we have.

We're not of the night, we're not of the darkness, the skotas, we're of the light. Walk as children of light, stand in the full armor of God reflecting the light even in the midst of this perverse and dark generation. Well, we'll have more to say about this and we'll finish up this section of Ephesians chapter 6 next time.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for the wonderful way that You communicate to us and clearly reveal to us and define for us the nature of our life, the reason You have left us in this earth at this time, in this place with the people we are with, confronted with both challenges and opportunities. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will enliven and inflame these words in our hearts that we will remember hour by hour that our decisions count, that our attitude counts, that the things that we say and do count and we have this wonderful opportunity to serve in a real sense as useful and effective soldiers in this conflict as we await the return of the Lord Jesus who will declare the end of the conflict and the victorious consummation and conclusion of this desperate battle that we now wage.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.