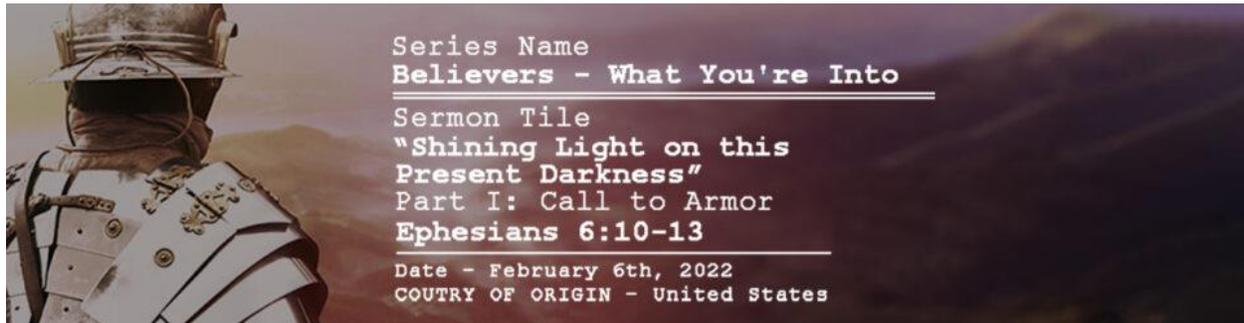


"Shining Light on this Present Darkness"

Call to Armor Part I



Eph 6:10-13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² 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. 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.

Sermon Video is available [HERE](#).

Sermon slides available [HERE](#).

Transcription:

Pastor Thom Rittichier

Well, this morning, I want to talk with you about an exhibit. It was an exhibit that was a very telling exhibit. The exhibit was at The Creation Museum. It's near Cincinnati, it's actually across the river in Petersburg, Kentucky, not real far from here. And this exhibit was pictures The Garden of Eden and there is Adam and Eve, prior to the fall, at least depicted as best we can in our fallen world. And then the pictures are of them after the fall, and the blood sacrifices and what that all meant, the destructiveness of animal against animal, that's where the exhibit was. It was in this sequence. If you've been to The Creation Museum, they basically take you through Genesis 1 through 11, with exhibits and talking about it from a scientific angle. This particular exhibit came right after the fall. And the depiction of the fall. And as you walked into the room, some striking scenes of the social ills that have come since the fall. They describe it, The Creation Museum, with words like this from The Purpose & Meaning of Life, "Throughout the world, generations of young people are being educated in schools, colleges and by the media with evolutionary ideas about our origins. Sadly, they are being brainwashed into believing that the history in Genesis concerning first Adam and

the entrance of sin is not true. Logically then, they begin rejecting the truth of the last Adam, Jesus Christ. If the history in Genesis concerning our origins is not true, and if there really is no absolute authority, then there is no ultimate purpose and meaning in life." And so, they present this exhibit. The exhibit is of a classroom and the classroom has some discernible, blatant presence of defiance to authority. Some very discernible presence of drug influence and just an atmosphere, an atmosphere that is defined. The scene was too telling, so it appears, because The Creation Museum, having gotten a great deal of offence taken to that exhibit, were highly pushed concerning keeping that particular exhibit up. What this exhibit was is a depiction of what we come to in Ephesians chapter six.

I would ask you to turn there with me. Our series in Ephesians talks about believers, what you are into. We come to this, the present darkness, that exhibit that they were highly pressured to remove because it was telling, too telling, of the effects of evolution. Evolution has been around for a long time, as a matter of fact it goes all the way back to the East and Eastern religions. During the Middle Ages, which are called the Dark Ages, evolution wasn't a particularly popular notion among people, except in the East. Why do they call them the Dark Ages? Suppression. Do you know what was suppressed? The Word of God was suppressed. And we had darkness. Do we have present darkness today? What kind of things do you see that are a present darkness for us? Racism, abortion, deterioration of the family, crime rate. Do you know that Indianapolis, a near by city to us, has one of the highest crime rates, murder rates, in the nation? How about maliciousness in social media, hate, sex trafficking. This past week I picked up Counterculture by David Platt, and was reading in there about parents in the Himalaya area, which is such a destitute spot, who were "persuaded by the promise of a better life for their daughters, send them off with men who turned out to be traffickers. Most of these girls live to see their eight birthday, but by their sixteen birthday they are forced to have sex with 1000s of customers. They never see their families again." Tears your heart out to think of it, a present darkness. There are drug problems in every city, every town, every village, as a matter of fact in Hartford City. Officials in Hartford City are working with Portland on getting a coalition, CORE, to attempt to deal with that. A couple of us here at Heartland are involved in that. How about even the the themes on popular TV shows? NCIS or CSI, Crime Scene Investigation. It's about crime. There is a present darkness.

In Ephesians, chapter six, the Lord talks to us about this present darkness, so we're not unaware. And so that we are provided for, in this present darkness. As a matter of fact, Jesus said this, I've come as a light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me will not remain in darkness. Now, look at the clear assumption there, that darkness is here, and it's present. But he's come that you don't remain in the darkness. So Jesus said again, I'm the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in the darkness. But will have the light of life. There is a present darkness. And God does not want us to be unaware of it. And he does not want us to be unprovided for in it, because he's done both, made us aware and provided for us. Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. It's a lamp so I can see my feet. And it's a light to where those feet are going to go. He's provided for us. For with you is the fountain of life and in your light, we see light. In this present darkness, in Ephesians chapter six, we come to God's unveiling of

this present darkness and bringing us light, a light for to shine in this present darkness. And that's exactly what we're going to do this morning. We're going to shine the light on this present darkness specifically. Ephesians, chapter six is where this present darkness is spoken about. Look with me in Ephesians chapter six, verse 12, "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 the evil in the heavenly places". Folks, this is what he identifies as being the source of the present darkness. We just described, in vivid detail, that The Creation Museum made it just too telling. For a lot of folks, it's too telling. We are not unaware, and we have been provided for.

In Ephesians, chapter six, we're going to take a look at what we're into. What we have seen so far, in the book of Ephesians, is really encouraging. It is really uplifting. Let's just scan this quickly in Ephesians. Chapter one talks about God, in love, acting on your behalf, in choosing you before the world even started to be in Christ. And Christ giving us this relationship of adoption with the Father and the Spirit of God sealing us in this, until the day that this redemption is completed. Those are some very encouraging things, God acting on our behalf. Chapter two, he seats us with Christ in the heavenly places. The heavenlies are the places from which God's ruling, jurisdiction over everything, takes place. In the heavenly in Christ, we're seated there. We are seated there with him. And he has put us in connection with the mission that we're giving to today, with his people that he called from the Old Testament times, that we're working with them, there is a great union here. And then chapter four, he begins to talk to us then about walking, walking in a manner worthy, being equipped so that we grow up into Christ in everything. Then chapter five, that we become imitators of God, having the personal experience of being filled with His Spirit, moved along through this life, under that influence of the Spirit to where our family life is affected, husbands and wives, a tremendous place where the present darkness exist, and parents and children, the Spirit filled life coming there. And the Spirit filled life coming into our working with each other, in jobs, in voluntary endeavors. And then he says this. In the midst of all that encouragement, he says, there's one thing remaining. Exactly. That's what it means when he says, "Finally", one remaining thing, verses 10-12, "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." The very place where we are at in Christ, the place from which God rules the world, there are spiritual forces of evil there. "Therefore", verse 13, "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." We know brothers that we are from God, the apostle John says this right after talking about being born of the Spirit, the Spirit of God. It is a real thing. There are people who say they're Christians, but they are devoid of the Spirit. The Bible describes them, and it describes them well, in the book of Jude. They say they are, but they're devoid. It's a form of godliness. It denies the power there of, from such he says, Turn away, turn away from them. We're of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And there in, is the source of the present darkness, that we know, that we all just recount. This is a real thing.

And this morning, from Ephesians 6:10-13, we're going to talk about this present darkness: 1) What God wants for you and me in this present darkness. This is what he wants. This is what he goes after and directs us to. Then, 2) Where you and I are to stand in this present darkness. This is the location, the position that we are to occupy, so occupy this as planned, as directed. And finally, 3) When we will encounter our need, our need for this in this present darkness. What God wants, where you and I are to stand and when we will encounter in this present darkness in a very personal way. I want you to remember, as he takes us through this one remaining thing, "And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us." "For still our ancient foe does seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not equal. Should we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.", from A Mighty Fortress. This is God's will for us. It's what he wants. That's where we start. This is a call to armor. This is part one. We're going to look at the call this morning. And next week, the specifics of this, Lord willing.

What God wants for you and me in this present darkness. One remaining thing he says, You are to be strong in the Lord. This is an urgent thing. This is an urgent direction that he's giving to us. It is a direction, it is a call to direction in military terms that the Apostle Paul was using here. And for him to use this military image was very fitting. It was very fitting because Paul's in prison here, and he is around a lot of military folks. As a matter of fact, he talks about himself being chained, chained to the guards dressed in their armor. That was fitting, but it's also fitting like this, because God pictures himself as dressed in armor. And being the divine warrior who is on our side, "were not the right Man on our side, our striving would be losing." This is a fitting picture. It's a fitting picture. The way this is said here, the "be strong", is passive on our part. It is done to us. We are empowered. We are strengthened. We are made strong. And the source is this, "in the Lord". It's in the Lord. Finally, one remaining thing, be empowered, made strong in the Lord. In the supernatural power of the Lord. That's the term that he uses here. It's only used in the New Testament for supernatural power, be made strong in the Lord, by supernatural power, in the power of his might, in the power of his might. This is what God wants. You passively to be made strong in the Lord in his power. This expression of power is different because it's power in action.

You know, I've noticed something over the years, when I lived in Illinois, when I lived up in the Chicago area, and even as I live here in Hartford City, I noticed that guys have kind of a hankering for trucks. Have you noticed that? The other day I was behind a truck, and there was this seethrough sticker on the back window that said, "Silly rabbit, trucks are for girls". And it was a girl driving the truck. You know, this past week, when the weather got a little rough, like Thursday morning, I had an early eight o'clock meeting that I needed to go out. And you know what that was kind of like, at that point in time. And I got in our Explorer, which is a four by four, it's intentionally by a four by four. I intentionally got this Explorer, four by four, which means four wheel drive, so my wife would have it. But in the time period we've had it, I've never really had an opportunity, till this Thursday morning, to reach over and push that button that says, four by four. And I pushed it. And then I put it in drive. And with all of that snow that was all around us, I just touched that pedal and I went right through it! I went right

through it! And I was like, What am I driving here, a tank? I was going through it with so much ease, that when I returned to my driveway, which was totally drifted...and I never do this....I just drove the whole length of the driveway, right on through. You know, I now know why guys like trucks, especially the four by fours. And I want you to know that the whole power of that thing wasn't me at all, I was completely passive in this. And that's what he's telling us. This is power in action. That's what this is. It is power in action that is inherent, its resident in the Lord. That four by four button, that's right there on my dashboard, that's power. I don't have it on all the time. But man, was it there when I pushed it. That's what you have in the Lord, this active power that resides in him. We are to be made powerful, strong, supernaturally strong in him. That's what God wants. That's what he wants. As a matter of fact, it's an urgent direction.

And then he adds this, you are also urged to put on, verse 11a. This word is to sink into, to sink into. You know, this past week, it got a bit chilly out especially when I was going outside to go to work. Not all my vehicles are four wheel drive. As a matter of fact, my Ford Focus is a front wheel drive. And it is really different driving the SUV and my Ford Focus, it is really different. So I had to get out and clean that driveway for the other vehicles that are there. And you know, as I did this, I slipped into this jacket that has a material that resists the wind blowing through it. What he's telling us here is urgent, it's to put it on, to sink into, like a garment or like the sweater when it's cold in the house and you just slide into it. That's what you're to do here. Sink into the full armor God, he says, the whole, the complete for the need that you have. That's what that means when he says the full armor, it is complete for the need that you have, the full armor of God. This is armor under, for sure. And it's armor over all that we need, under and over. And under armor here is not a brand name. There is under armor and over armor that will become very specific concerning sinking into this. You know, I can't think of this without reflecting on Iron Man. How he hits that button and it all goes around him. And the things that he can do and where he goes.

Now that is fiction. And this is not. This is provision from God for what we need to do, and where we need to stand. Because there is a battle of light and dark that is going on. It is a battle that involves unbelievers. As a matter of fact, listen to this description from the Word of God concerning the battle on unbelievers. The Bible says this, If the gospel, the gospel we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see, that's the darkness, they are unable to see the glorious light of the gospel of God. They don't understand the message about the glory of Christ. That comes from the New Living Translation, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. That's the darkness. It's a darkness by blinded minds, that they don't see. It's a dangerous place, it's a deadly place, this present darkness for unbelievers. But for believers, listen to this, Stay alert. Be watchful, for your great enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, 1 Peter 5:8-9a. Firm in your trust in the Lord. A hungry lion, hunting to devour, here today for us, for me, like come on! Really? You know to some believers the idea of a hungry lion looking to devour them, today, now, here specifically you, is like the furthest thing from their mind. I'm here to have fun! I'm here to get what I want, when I want it, how I want it! And the idea that there's a lion that wants to chew me up. Come on! I want you to know, that is this

present darkness and they are surely prey if that's what they're thinking. And there's many that think that way. There are many.

Now my purpose in saying this is so that we will stand, where we need to stand, we will be in the position that we are to occupy. Because there is a position God has for us to occupy here. The armor of God is because God is in the battle, it is his battle, you are to sink into it. Because it is to be what completely provides for you. So get submerged. And here is where you are to stand. You are to stand, position yourself against the schemes of the devil, verse 11b. Now, the word that he uses for against here is that you are to be in a place that you move towards the schemes of the devil. You are so provided for that the movement is toward them, not running away and cowering, not thinking they don't exist, that they're not there, but that you move towards them. The Apostle Paul tells us that we are not to be ignorant of the devil's devices. He has wiles, he's got schemes, he has plans. And the word for schemes here is our word method. He has methods that are cunning arts, they are cunning crafts, cunning arts and crafts, that he who is the opposer, the slanderer, the accuser has designed for you. They are real, they're part of this present darkness and the position that you are to put yourself in is that you are sunken into this complete armor. You move towards them not cowering away from them. You move towards them. Now, "did we in our own strength confide, our winning would be losing". You can't do this without God's provision.

In Acts 19:15-16, there was a person who tried to do this, in his own strength. As a matter of fact, he went up and started to talk to this evil spirit. And the spirit's response was, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And the evil spirit works against this man and completely strips him, thrashes him and sends him out with his tail between his legs. That's you're losing, in your own strength confiding. It's losing. But in the supernatural power of his might, active, resident in him, we move towards the cunning arts and crafts, because we're not ignorant of his devices, we're not ignorant of his schemes. You see folks, they are consistently the same. They come out in different variations, but consistently the same. And you can see it because it is consistently the same. I want you to do this. Turn with me in your Bible to 2 Corinthians chapter 11 and he says in verse three, "But I'm afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning", his cunning arts, his cunning craftiness, "your thoughts", there is the target, your mind, your thoughts, your thinking, "will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ." I want you to think for a moment about what happened to Eve. Eve was there and the serpent began to play with her mind, and began to shade what God had said, and then, quite frankly, pointed out that God was in a position of being suspect, and out right defied what God had said, so that her mind progressively moved through this shade, the suspect, and then the conclusion that it's good to do this. Contrary or inconsiderate of what God has said, I can you do this! The effort was to bring the mind along. Always is, always is. The mind of man plans his way. As a man thinks in his heart, that's the way he behaves, that's the way he acts. The mind is looked at as the reins, it directs where we go. In Mark 5, when there is a direct encounter with the demoniac, Jesus deals with him in a supernatural way. And the Bible tells us this, that the man was then clothed and in his right mind, his thinking had come back from being led astray. Always. This is the enemy's device, lots of different avenues, but we're not ignorant of his device. It always is, has been, it's what he does. As a matter of fact, Jesus called him

the liar because he abides not in the truth. He is a liar and the father of it. The deception, cunning art so that you think differently than the way it really is. Sometimes it's with conspiracy theories, in conspiracy theory I'm thinking about it the way it really is. Or am I? That's the game. Always has been the game. It's a scam. Where do we get the truth? The Word of God provides to us the truth. As a matter of fact, the word of God tells us to be very leery of saying, conspiracy...conspiracy.

So now in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6, "For though we walk in the flesh", we live in and move around in flesh and blood bodies, "we're not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion that raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete." The enemy's target is your mind. His aim is to take you along on the same path you took Eve so that you, with shades and then suspect, come down on a place where it doesn't line up with what God has said and given us direction to. That is always, always, always his device. And he does it sometimes with such beauty, such appeal, he's able to appear as an angel of light. Look, he says, this is light on the subject. This is like a messenger of light. You can't, you can't in your own strength confide, you're winning would be losing. We have to confide in The Lord's strength. Next week, we're going to take a look, specifically, at how these pieces of armor fit.

So the enemy goes after you're thinking so you will believe his lie. Here's an illustration of how this looks in this present day. I have sent this to some. This was a circular that went around this week. I've talked to you in the last couple of weeks about ordinance 31-21. Do you remember? It's at West Lafayette, this ordinance says basically that there'll be a \$1,000 fine for anyone who attempts to instruct children, relative to gender orientation and gender identity. So this ordinance has been brought out into the light. And this is going on. This was a circular that was passed around West Lafayette Purdue University campus this week and it talks about Pastor Viars, who has a biblical counseling ministry. They're office is right in the corner of West Lafayette Purdue University and it says this: "Pastor Viars, Keep your hands off our kids". And then it goes on to say, "ordinance 31-21 would help end the practice of 'conversion therapy' on minors in West Lafayette. Pastor Steve Viars and his cronies on the city council want to block ordinance 31-21 and continue the practice of child abuse in our community". And this gets circulated. "Contact your city council". A couple of things here. Notice the nature of this. Pastor Viars has hands on our kids. Hands on our kids? What does that suggest to you? Looks a little shady here, don't you think? Hands on our kids. Sounds a little shading and suspect. This conversion therapy, pastors and conversion, conversion therapy? You know what conversion is right? Well, this conversion therapy, classic conversion therapy is where a person has a deviant sexual behavior, sexual orient. And this came from the Diagnostic Statistical Manual recognizing this as a deviant behavior treatment, conversion therapy, where you shock a person in the sexual organs so that's no longer is a stimulant to them. And it also uses other things that would that would turn them, conversion therapy. This is suspect, pastors and conversion therapy, and they want to convert our kids. And they have hands on. And by the way, our kids, you know what the "our kids" are? It's the thinking of "it takes a community to raise a child".

It takes a community. So the kids are "our kids" in the community. And parents can't talk to their kids. Because only, according to this ordinance, a state licensed counselor can do that. No parents, no non state licensed counselor. Now do you notice the nature of this thing? Would you say that this seems to be trying to lead minds in a specific direction? I think I hear a voice from Eden.

You are to stand in this position for you are to wrestle. You have hand to hand combat. Have you watch wrestling? I'm not talking about whatever they call it nowadays, World Wrestling Federation. What do they call it now? SmackDown. That's it I think, whatever it is, okay. They use deception. But in real wrestling, there are these moves where they are kind of trying to trick you. This is the kind of thing you are in, a hand to hand wrestling match. This is personal. This is yours. It is not against people, though people get involved because of mind being led astray, but it is really against the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places, verse 12. This is the war. Satan, you know, is not omnipresent. What does that mean? He's not everywhere. He's not omniscient, which means he doesn't know everything. So how does he make the whole world lie in the power of darkness? How does he do that? He has an order. And in this order, there are rulers. And you know, this is a rebellious group. So there are authorities here that keep this thing in line. There are rulers. There are authorities. There are cosmic powers. What is cosmic power? What do you remember Daniel chapter 10? Michael, the Archangel, ends up contending with the prince from Persia. Do you remember that? There was a prince released from Persia, who is a cosmic power, that influenced Persia. They influence the United States, influence Saudi Arabia, influence Ethiopia, there are these cosmic powers and what they are, are spiritual forces that are there in the heavenlies, the very place where we're seated in Christ. The Bible talks about this, the book of Job chapter one and chapter two, the book of Psalms chapter 81, talks about this place of counsel there. As a matter of fact, if you'd like to get a little bit better picture of this, put on your deep commitment here, read The Unseen Realm by Michael S. Heiser. There is this force, don't worry, you're provided for, you're taking care of. This is what you struggle against. And you can't keep it together without his armor, all of it. Spiritual forces in the heavenly place.

Let's conclude by saying this. When we will encounter our need in this present darkness is centered around what is said in verse 13, "in the evil day". This is the center, "the evil day". Of course we've been in evil days since Christ came. But there is a particular evil day, verse 13, a day in which there is a planned assault. Job had it. The Apostle Paul had it when suddenly there's a riot coming at him. Martin Luther had it at Worms, to where he shrank and he didn't even know if he was going to hang with the gospel or not. He needed to take a day to think about it. You'll have it. It's a day that the enemy's cunning craft gets unleashed on you, with rulers, authorities, principalities, powers, and it comes at you. And you think the whole world is coming apart. It's an evil day. There are probably more than one. But definitely any evil day. For the pre-evil day, here's the direction. It too is an urgent direction. Take up, he says in verse 13, take up the complete, the whole, the full armor of God that you may be able to stand against, in that evil day. Then for post-evil day, and having done all of this, having done it, having taken up the armor like he says, having done all, you're victorious to stand and stand firm. 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". I want you to know folks, you and I inhabit this present darkness. It's where we live. We live here by God's purpose and plan. He could take out the demons, he could take us to Heaven, but we are here for his purpose and plan; what he wants, where we're to position ourselves, when it happens in the evil day. So that through the ages to come, he may show the exceeding riches in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. For all ages to come, he is going to demonstrate how he made you stand in this world, in its darkness, with its devils filled.

I'm going to end with this illustration and then we're going to sing. The Kendrick Brothers, put out a film called War Room. Priscilla Shirer was in that. They told Priscilla Shirer, that is Tony Evans daughter, that you're going to be attacked by Satan when you do this. Now she had been in ministry for awhile. But she said, I was attacked by Satan and his emissaries! So she wrote a thing called the Armor of God and put it out for kids and adults to know what this involves, it's been helpful. We've used it in our family repeatedly. It's helpful to have the armor of God to stand firm.

Father, you're good to us. Thank you for this provision. And as we look at it, the detail to be victorious, in Jesus name, Amen.