

Engage Your Allies

Spiritual Warfare ~ February 21, 2021 ~ Eph 3.1-21 (only vss 20-21 at start)

Sermon Series Review

- ❖ Series started with message “**Know Your Enemy**”
 - ✧ Satan and his demons hate humans and heavily influence world systems
 - ✧ Our own hearts serve as outposts in their attacks on us – (if we let them)
- ❖ Last week’s topic was “**Master Your Weaponry**”
 - ✧ We wear armor for defense to protect us from temptation and attack
 - ✧ We use the sword, prayer, and fasting to oppose and defeat our enemies
- ❖ Today is “**Engage Your Allies**” / Today we realize we’re not alone in this war
- ❖ Next week we’ll merge the 3 topics into “**Embrace Your Battle**”

“Allies” Correlates & Contrasts With “Enemies”

- ❖ This message is a counterpoint to the one on enemies
 - ✧ Illustration on handout should look familiar
- ❖ Our enemies are “**the world, the flesh, the devil**” & his henchmen
 - ✧ “**What evil villain is complete without henchmen?**”
 - ✧ **III: Despicable Me** – Gru has his minions to do his bidding
 - ✧ Henchmen are always buffoons in comedy films / but now in action too
 - ✧ But loyal service of henchmen make the villain who he is
- ❖ In a comparable way – the allies of a hero make him who he is

“Who are our Allies?”

- ❖ Our allies are God, His angels, & the Church – “**Where are they deployed?**”
 - ✧ Allies are of less help when far in the rear / 1) heaven, 2) earth, 3) heart
- ❖ Enemies were 1) Satan, 2) demons, 3) world systems, 4) our flesh
- ❖ Allies are 1) God in heaven, 2) angels, 3) Church, and 4) God in heart
 - ✧ **Read Eph 3.1-21** ~ Please read along with someone with handout

Xition: First, let’s speak of our allies in heaven . . .

1. Heaven

God in Heaven – (Father and Son)

- ❖ Throne of God is in heaven and God rules all creation from there
 - ✧ **Ps 103.19** ~ “The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.”
- ❖ 1st ~ in heaven we have the Father (16 highlights)
 - ✧ When we read God, the Trinity, or the Father alone, may be in mind
 - All 5 possessive occurrences of “His” in our text refers to the Father
 - **v5** ~ “His holy apostles and prophets”
 - **v6** ~ “His promise in Christ”
 - **v7** ~ “the effective working of His power”
 - **v16** ~ “the riches of His glory”
 - **v16** ~ “His Spirit”
 - ✧ God the Father chooses what to do and when
 - **v3** ~ “by revelation He made known” / God chooses “**what**” to reveal “**when**”
 - **v9** ~ “mystery .. hidden in God”
 - **v10** ~ “manifold wisdom of God” / “**multi-colored**”
 - **v11** ~ “eternal purpose which He accomplished”
 - **v15** ~ “Father .. from whom whole family in heaven and earth is named”
 - **v20** ~ “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think”
- ❖ 2nd ~ Christ the Son is in heaven as well (9 highlights of Jesus)
 - ✧ Jesus is woven throughout our text
 - ✧ We know Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection
 - **Read Acts 2.32-33** ~ “This Jesus God has raised .. you now see and hear.”
 - ✧ We are said to be “with Christ” – we are seated in the heavenlies with Him
 - **v11** ~ “in Christ Jesus our Lord .. we have boldness and access”

Xition: Thirdly – in heaven we have the angels . . .

3rd ~ Angels

- ❖ Angels fill heaven – their rear base is heaven
 - ✧ Jacob's ladder (**Gen 28**) had angels coming and going between heaven and earth
 - ✧ Jesus usually referred to angels with phrase, "angels in heaven"
- ❖ Jesus said He could summon more than 12 legions (1,000's) of angels (**Mat 26**)
- ❖ Angels are strong / **Read Ps 103.20** ~ "Bless the Lord, you .. of His word."
 - ✧ Given tremendous power of angels it's odd they're so seldom requested
 - ✧ **Ps 35.4-5** ~ "Let those be put to shame .. angel of the LORD chase them"
- ❖ "Are we to request or call upon angels?"
 - ✧ David prayed to God to employ angels on his behalf
 - **Ps 35.4-5** ~ "Let those be put to shame .. angel of the LORD chase them"

4th ~ The Church Triumphant

- ❖ We have a 4th ally in heaven
 - ✧ In **Revelation 6.9-11** we read of martyrs "When he opened .. was completed"
 - ✧ These martyrs in heaven cry out to God for justice – prayers (*Esau's blood*)
- ❖ The transfiguration of Christ appears in all 3 synoptic gospels (**Mt 17, Mk 9, Lk 9**)
 - ✧ All 3 say it was Moses and Elijah that consulted with Jesus
 - ✧ Luke shares content: "spoke of His death which He was about to accomplish"
- ❖ "What was the purpose of the transfiguration?"
 - ✧ It's not clear / but appears members of the Church Triumphant counseled Jesus
 - ✧ "Isn't this remarkable?" / That Jesus would consult with them
 - ✧ Jesus did not entrust Himself with any man on earth – Yet these he trusted
- ❖ We pray only to God / We're not to pray to men or angels
 - ✧ Yet men and angels in heaven are aware of what's happening here
 - Peter says (**1 Pet 1.12**) ~ "things which angels desire to look into"

Xition: We now descend from heaven to earth

2. Earth

The Church Militant

- ❖ **Ephesians 3** is primarily about the Church – the mystery of the gospel
 - ✧ Gentiles are joining Jews fully (**v6**) “**fellow heirs of the same body**”
- ❖ The Church informs the angels of the mystery of the gospel
 - ✧ **Read v10** ~ “**that now the manifold wisdom .. heavenly places**”
- ❖ The Church is to glorify God in heaven “**to all generations**” (**v21**)
- ❖ The Church is Christ’s body on earth
 - ✧ **Read Eph 1.22-23** ~ “**And He put all .. fills all in all.**”
 - ✧ **Ephesians 5** presents human marriage as analogous to Christ and Church
 - Jesus “**nourishes and cherishes**” the Church (**v29**)
- ❖ Paul, writing Timothy, called the Church “**the pillar and ground of the truth**”
- ❖ Too many Christians have a low view of the Church – they minimize its role
 - ✧ But the Church is central to all of God’s plans
 - ✧ The Church is the “**bride**” of Christ / the “**body**” of Christ

Angels

- ❖ “**Angel**” means messenger / They do God’s commands / **Ps 103.20** ~ “**Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word.**”
- ❖ **Heb 1.14** ~ “**ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation**”
- ❖ Angels are in only 1 verse of our text (**v10**) yet their role on earth is great
- ❖ “**How have angels helped people?**” / To name a few . . .
 - ✧ Angels announced births of Ishmael, Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist, Jesus
 - ✧ Angels saved Lot and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah
 - ✧ Angels fed Elijah in the wilderness after he’d fled from Jezebel
 - ✧ Angels executed 185k Assyrian soldiers surrounding Jerusalem (*Hezekiah prayed*)
 - ✧ Angels orchestrated every phase of the Great Tribulation
- ❖ Hebrews cautions that we may interact with angels without knowing it (**Heb 13.2**)

Xition: We now move from earth to within the heart of believers . . .

3. Heart

God in Our Hearts (Son and Spirit)

❖ Holy Spirit

- ❖ v5 ~ “it has now been revealed by the Spirit”
- ❖ v16 ~ “strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man”
- ❖ v20 ~ “according to the power that works in us”

❖ The Holy Spirit is said to dwell within us / 2 refs here (**16, 20**)

- ❖ Paul’s famous rhetorical question to the Corinthians
 - **Read 1 Cor 6.19-20** ~ “.. do you not know .. which are God’s”
- ❖ Then his brief command in **1 Thes 5.19** ~ “Do not quench the Spirit.”

❖ But Christ is also said to dwell within us

- ❖ v17 ~ “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”
- ❖ Not in addition to the Spirit – Holy Spirit is sometimes called Spirit of Christ
- ❖ We must tread carefully when distinguishing within the Godhead

Contrast of Enemies to Allies

1. Satan in heaven contrasts with God the Father, Jesus, & Church triumphant
2. Demons contrast with angels (1/3 to 2/3)
3. “**Old Man**” of our flesh contrasts with Holy Spirit and Jesus dwelling within us

- ❖ When we “walk in the Spirit” we are victorious

❖ So far so good / Pairing up in athletics or gymnastics I like our odds

❖ But what is our last match up...?

4. The systems of the world contrasted with the Church militant

- ❖ Our confidence here probably wanes – Today’s Church is weak
- ❖ Too many Christians have abandoned the Church as unworthy of them
 - Many individual churches are truly unworthy of being called Christian
- ❖ Yet God will never give up on His Church
- ❖ His plan will prevail / Christ’s body will storm the gates of hell

Xition: We’ve discussed enemies, weapons, and allies . . .

- ❑ Next week we'll embrace the battle
- ❑ Until then please read and reflect on Ephesians 3

➤ Prayer and Song

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen ***pause*** Go in peace . . .

Engage Your Allies - Handout

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1. Today's message correlates with which prior one? _____ Your _____.
2. Who are our allies? _____, _____, and the _____.
3. Where do our allies reside? _____, _____, and our _____.
4. Who are our allies in heaven? _____ the _____, _____ the _____, _____, and the _____.
5. Who consulted with Jesus at His transfiguration? _____ and _____.
6. Who are our allies on earth? The _____ and _____.
7. List some ways (other than those given) in which angels have aided humans: _____

_____.
8. Where is the 3rd place in which we find our allies? _____.
9. Who is said to reside there to help us fight our enemies? The _____
_____ and _____.
10. Which ally do you rely on most? _____.
11. Which ally do you rely on least? _____.

Father	Son
Holy Spirit	angels
church	Paul

Ephesians 3 New King James Version (NKJV)

1 { 3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— 2 if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets; 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.

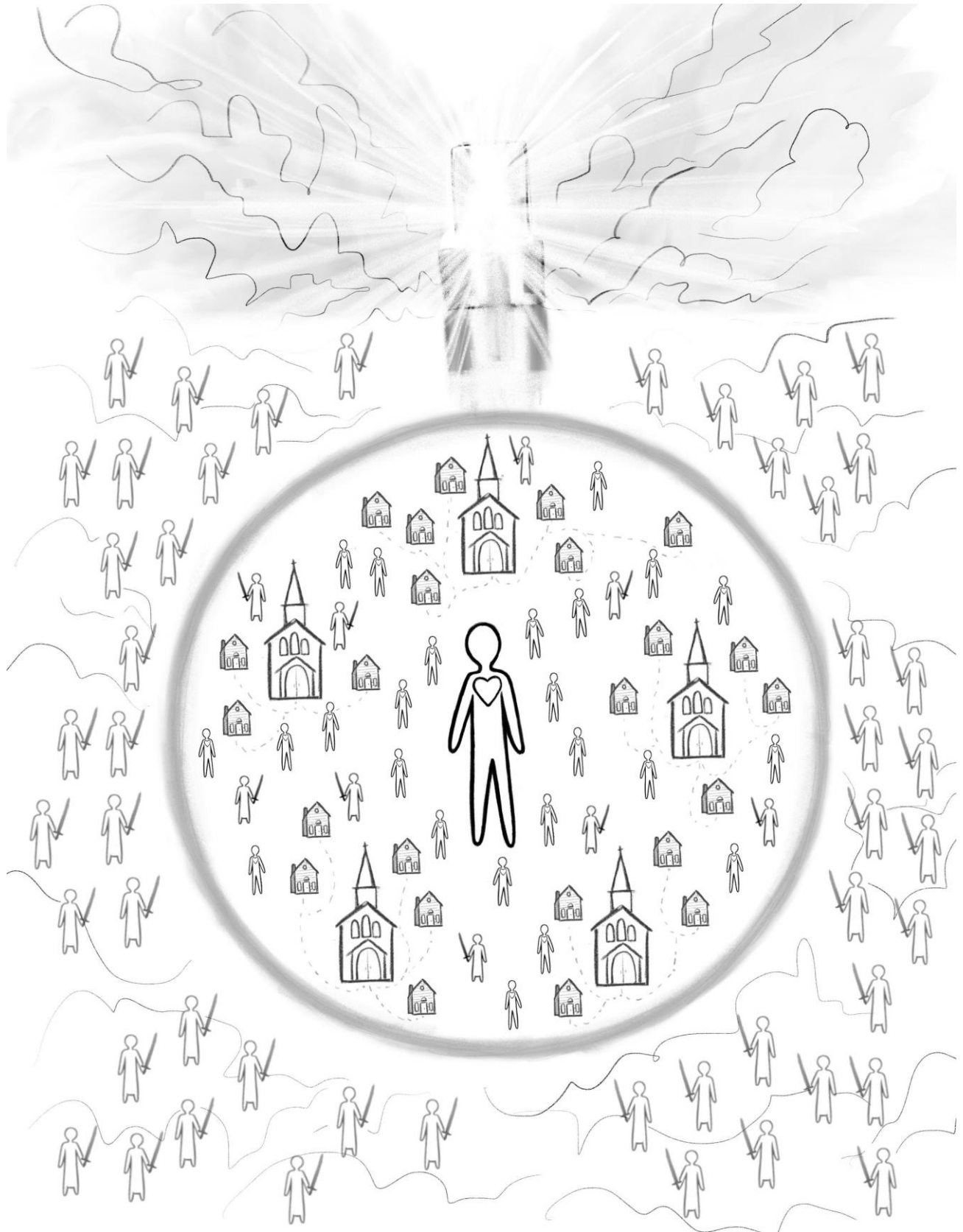
2 { 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. 13 Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

3 { 14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

4 { 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

prisoner
grace of God
revelation He made known
when you read, you may understand
the mystery of Christ
revealed by the Spirit
His holy apostles + prophets
Gentiles should be .. same body
His promises in Christ
gift of grace minister
His power
the saints
preach
unsearchable riches of Christ
fellowship of the mystery
mystery hidden in God
all things through Jesus Christ
wisdom of God made known by church
principalities + powers
eternal purpose accomplished
in Christ Jesus our Lord
faith in Him we have boldness + access
do not lose heart
tribulations
Father — of all bow my knees
from whom heaven + earth named
grant you from His riches His glory
strengthened .. through the Spirit
that Christ may dwell in your hearts
inner man .. rooted + grounded in love
comprehend with all the saints
the love of Christ .. passes knowledge
Fullness of God
He is exceedingly able
the power that works in us
to Him be glory in the church
to all generations

Engage Your Allies



Know Your Enemy

