Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – November 17, 2019

**The Mystery and Majesty**

**of Jesus Christ**

*How God’s Glory and Promises Find Fulfillment in His Son*

Exploring Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians

***Battle: Being Strong. . . in the Lord!***

***Ephesians 6:10-20***

 We are not strangers to conflict. Whether we relish it (some do) or merely tolerate it out of necessity, somehow we discover ways to make it through. Often we are focused outwardly in skirmishes over money or position or location or parking spaces. Our pride comes into play and our desire to control can control us.

 Then there are internal conflicts, where we take on our darker side. That means battling with our appetite for food, desire for the finer things of life, excitement, entertainment, or just plain comfort, however we define it. These struggles are inwardly focused and just as real.

 But have we ever embraced the truth that all conflict is, at some level, spiritual in nature? Do we realize that our family and neighbors are not our greatest enemy, and that even our own selves often serve the purposes of the arch-enemy of our souls?

 Today’s passage introduces us to this ultimate conflict-reality, and gives the one and only formula for victory. But don’t take this passage as it usually is presented, a free-standing blueprint for spiritual warfare. Rather, see it as Paul presents it, in the context of God’s amazing blessings, *the invitation to enter the victory which Jesus already has won.*

***Being victorious in true spiritual warfare means. . .***

***Fighting in God’s strength, not our own.*** v. 10

 All the power needed comes from Him. All of it. Eph. 1:19; Ps. 1

***Fighting with God’s own resources (armaments)*.** v. 11a

 All of the resources needed come from Him. All of them. Josh.1

***Fighting God’s battle (against Satan,* et al., *not people).*** vv. 11b, 12

Know your real enemy behind all of the other apparent enemies.

***Holding your ground with God’s provision (weaponry).*** vv. 13-17

 1. The battle belt: The core support of God’s Word, Truth. 14a

 2. The breastplate: Knowing you are right with God. 14b

 3. The footwear: Sure-footed peace in the Gospel of grace. 15

 4. The shield: Trust in God’s character and promises. 16

 5. The helmet: Salvation, that is, spiritual security in Jesus. 17a

 6. The sword: God’s Word, the ultimate weapon! 17b

*Praying intelligently, alertly, and per*sistently. vv. 18**-20**

For yourself and ALL believers you know and don’t know. 18

 For the mission: fearlessly proclaiming Christ to the nations. 19, 20



***Why it matters. . .***

*What are your key conflicts? How might they be battlefields of spiritual warfare?*

*With all God’s resources at our disposal, why do we not use them?*

*How can we trust God’s promises, choosing faith over emotions?*

*How are your swordsmanship skills? Can you list some other Scriptures which talk about how*

*God’s Word is a sword and powerful to help us?*

*List some ways this passage helps us live confidently in God’s salvation, not fear.*