

Ephesus, in 62, was a great city--& a good one.

The greatest library in the world.

Licentiousness not conspicuous

Good conditions for Christian growth--like today.

Yet Paul wrote as though Ephesus was at war

He tells how to fight that war.

"For we are not contending against flesh and blood...but against the spiritual hosts of wickedness."

The worst enemy of the Christian is not flesh and blood.

Paul was in prison--he does not write about tyranny.

He writes about "evil" that attacks the heart.

"The devil"---"hosts of wickedness".

It is tempting to laugh

Until you think of the evil that overcame the Germans

Bachau---Buchenwald

Or times in our own history when people were caught up in evil.

Los Angeles--where riots grew from nothing--except hate

Alabama--where a respected citizen shot a minister

Mississippi--where men shot a woman and sped on

Evil forces are loose in the world.

Robert Louis Stevenson met the devil in a railway station.

All of us have met the devil--in strange places to find him.

Think of times when temptation leaps out at us

At a cocktail party, or at church; on a trip, or at home.

clearance

The world is full of evil, and all the slum/programs, and all the church union programs, won't change that.

So put on the full armor of God:

1. Truth

The greatest defender against evil

It defines the enemy

It straightens out relations with others.

It exposes to ourselves our own sins

Truth is the belt--the center of our armor.

2. Righteousness

Not self-righteousness--but doing righteousness

Do what is right because it is right

Like attending Church

Like supporting Church with our tithes and offerings.

Like keeping good companions

Like using good language--and good manners

A breastplate, to keep evil powers away.

3.

Witnessing

A Christian can't be monastic

That is to run from the world

That is leaving the battlefield

A Christian must be on the offense

Moving into battle

Church visitation

Testimony of a Christian life

Letting light shine

Christian conduct in business and social life

Merch

Missions--domestic and foreign

Civic participation--so that Christian influence is felt

Paul says put on sandals--to move forward

4. Faith

A shield--Roman shield 2 1/2' x 4'--stopped flaming darts.

Faith answers the unanswerable

When, in spite of all, evil comes, faith defends.

5. The Word of God.

To us--the whole Bible

To Paul--the Old Testament

Plus--conscience  
the still small voice  
the sudden inspiration to do right  
How many times have you felt a sudden impulse to do good  
The "alms" box on the counter  
The youth who needs time and attention  
The impulse to answer evil--to challenge those who  
confuse, and lie, and steal in many guises.  
These, too, are the words of God

#### Finally, Prayer

There are so many pressures to conform  
Clothes--row on row  
Speech  
Entertainment  
Standards of living  
Standards of morality

Prayer keeps us in touch with eternal standards  
It opens our eyes--no use to lie  
It brushes away pride--who can be proud before God  
It provides a strategic reserve

The war Paul writes about is a war on the "good life"  
Not in terms of the 20th century  
But in terms of eternity

"The world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does  
the will of God abides for ever."