

Recently, the rhetoric of warfare has resurfaced, as the United States and every other country in the world has contended with the medical and economic effects of the corona virus. NATO's Secretary General, Jen Stoltenberg and others have described the virus as our "common invisible enemy". We can't see the virus with our visible eye, yet its insidious power wreaks havoc on our health and our lives. Ever changing strategies are being employed in attempts to fight its worst effects. But there is another invisible enemy that has been wreaking havoc in our lives for millennia. Unlike the worldwide attention given to COVID-19, this enemy operates with little or no attention given to its strategy of destruction. The Apostle Paul describes this enemy in Ephesians 6:12, as the "spiritual forces of evil" and "the powers of this dark world".

Pastor Mark, in this new series, *The Invisible War*, begins by taking a close look at the characteristics of evil. We are often oblivious to the reality of this enemy, and relegate devils to the land of make-believe. Yet conscious or unconscious, the effects of evil are still all around us.

Although not a comfortable subject for many of us, recognizing the DNA of evil, gives us a grasp of the enemy we are up against. Reflecting on Ephesians 6: 10-12, Pastor Mark, finds several defining characteristics of evil. Evil cannot be reduced to sociological and biological influences, which can be intellectualized away. It is a conscious, conspiring, complex presence, which fights to separate us from the love of God and His victory over darkness in Christ's death and resurrection. But the power of Christ's resurrection has won the battle against evil and death. Nothing, now, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. That is why this passage in Ephesians can begin with these words: "Be strong in the Lord, and in His mighty power." (Eph. 6:10)

Reflections:

1. How do caricatures of Satan in a red tunic, with horns and a tail influence your understanding of "spiritual forces of evil"?
2. Why do you think we have reduced our understanding of evil to a sociological or biological problem stemming from lack of education, resources or family support?
3. Have you ever felt confronted by the evil in this world? How have you dealt with it?
4. How does the Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 6:10, urge us to deal with evil?