

A person in riot gear, including a helmet and a clear visor, is shown from the chest up. They are holding a large, rectangular shield in front of them with both hands. The shield has a red and white pattern on it. The person is also holding a baton or stick. The background is blurred, showing other people in riot gear. The overall scene suggests a riot or a protest.

Powers Principalities & the Armour of God

Ephesians 6, 10-20

“What is truth?”

- Truth is stumbling in the public square
- No longer popular to talk about truth
- “There isn’t really any truth anyway – it’s all opinion”
- A post-truth world:
 - Truth is replaced by “something better”
 - After all ... “didn’t you see the alternative facts?”

**Truth is
stumbling in
the public
square**

*“Truth stumbles in the streets,
and honesty has been outlawed.
Yes, truth is gone,
and anyone who renounces evil is attacked”*
(Isaiah 59, 14-15, NLT)

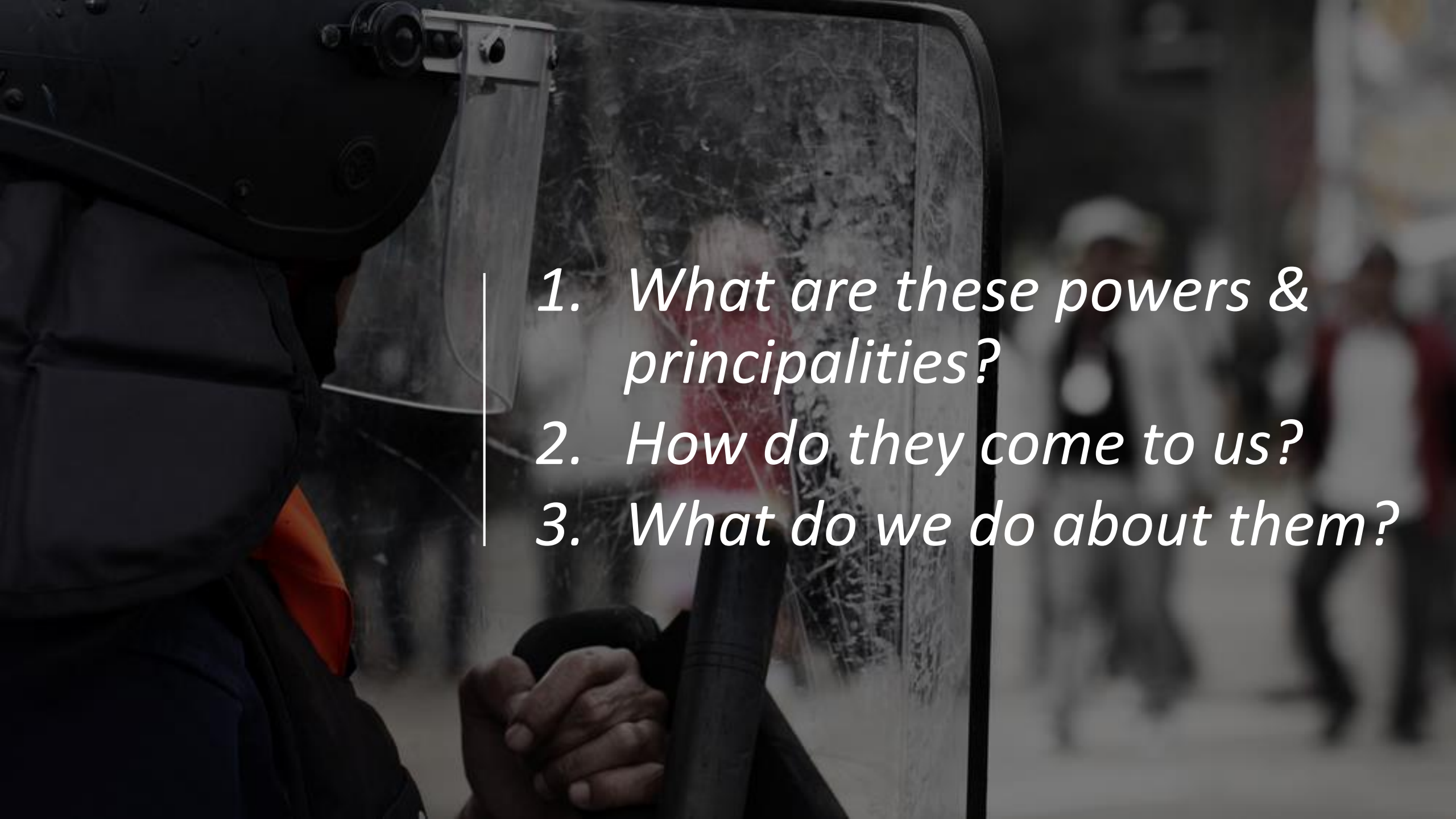
Evil can be traced back to simple untruths

Ephesians 6:

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Well this is a bit uncomfortable isn't it!

- “The d word”?
 - Forces of evil?
 - Powers & Authorities?
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- It all sounds a bit weird – but it's OK. Today ...

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- A person in riot gear, including a helmet and a clear visor, is holding a large, dark, rectangular shield. The person is wearing a dark jacket with an orange stripe on the sleeve. The background is a blurred crowd of people, some wearing white clothing, suggesting a protest or riot scene. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.
- 1. What are these powers & principalities?*
 - 2. How do they come to us?*
 - 3. What do we do about them?*

What are these powers & principalities?

Paul is talking here about *any power that offers an alternative authority to God's authority*

- He says there is a real struggle against evil and it's not just with people
- When it comes to the devil, churches are a bit schizophrenic
 1. It's superstition, the problem is unjust systems and bad peopleOR
 2. The devil is behind everything (sometimes leading to unhealthy fascination with evil)

Do evil powers really exist?

Some acts cannot be grasped without a notion of evil

- Children: Mary Bell kills at the age of 11, Venables and Thomson -10 year olds murder a toddler
- Shipman or Fred West, or Josef Fritzl
- What we saw in Cambodia or Rwanda
- These people were born like us
- We too can become subject to evil
- But are “evil powers” cruel systems of injustice and abuse, or is evil a personal being ...?

... both

3 points on the nature of evil

1. Evil rarely looks evil until it accomplishes its goal
 - “masquerades as an angel of light” ... as untruth
 - Drawing in ... or radicalisation
 - There are churches:
 - Who hold to the same creed - don't spend time in foolish arguments
 - And then there are “churches” who believe something completely different
2. Major trend upward in supernatural disturbances. Why?
 - Greater incidences of mental health or stresses in society or people searching for something different or the last days?
3. *“If satan's hordes are out there they are tremendously outmatched by Christ and the Cross” (Jayne Irlam)*

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 - 2. How do they come to us?**
 - 3. What do we do about them?*

How do powers & principalities come to us?

- “Any power that offers an alternative authority to God’s authority”
- Evil most often starts as simple untruths
- But how do these arrive on our doorstep?
- Where is the guiding authority in our life? (Name one!)
ie where people go asking questions, seeking advice

Is the internet a power & principality?

- It is certainly a vehicle
- And for the vast majority of people it does exert authority

Is the internet a power & principality?

- A lot of stuff out there is wholesome, educational and good, and we need it – all of us
- But it is also the #1 place to find untruths that are not of God eg sites that promote suicide, that radicalise, that pipe pornography into homes
- Topic of intense theological study!

Topical: Faith & Tech

Thou shalt be disrupted - technology



7minutes.net 

minutes

Interested?

Popular!

"Would you baptise my dog please?"

5 verses taught on

Is the internet a power & principality?

- For now simply remember
 - The internet is not just another tool
 - It's MUCH more potent than printed word or TV
 - It enters our lives at many points – THE point of entry for Truths AND Untruths

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How do we stand firmly in the truth?

- The wrong way to stand in the truth
 - Go and find out about all these powers and principalities
Fascination can lead to enticement
- The right way (& the easy way) is to be intentional about the truth ... But how?

Fortunately God has placed everything we need at the disposal of every Christian ...

Lets read the next part of that passage ...

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.



No provision is lacking ... We will focus on just the first item



“Gird up your loins!”

Pull yourself together, draw yourself in! ... with Truth

To fasten on the belt of truth is to fasten Christ himself around us. To give Christ the final say

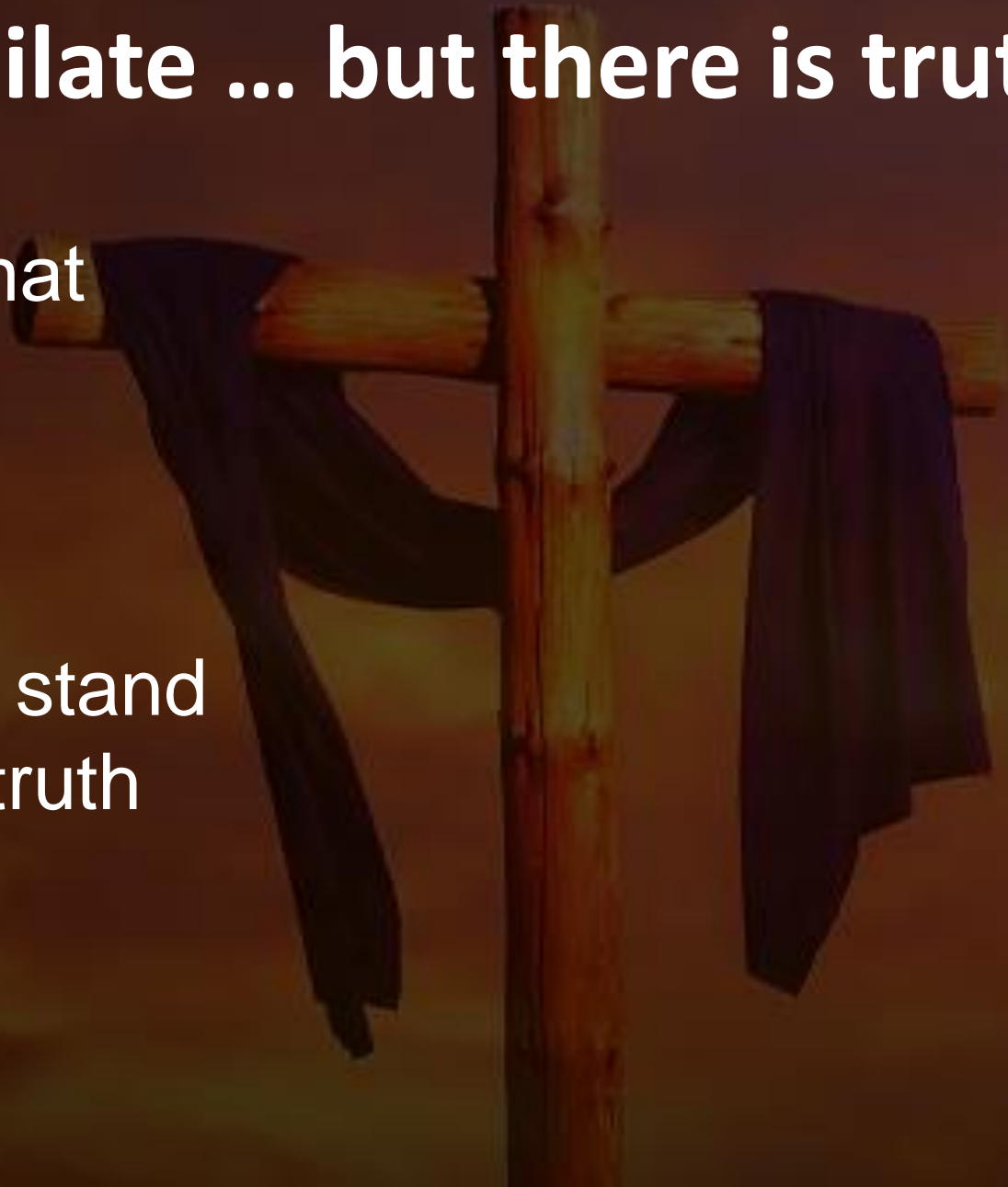
“What is truth?”

- If Pilate’s rhetorical statement was true in his day it is more true in ours!
- Truth today is an unacceptable word
- Everything is a matter of opinion or political correctness

But actually... **THERE IS TRUTH!**

“Excuse me Mr Pilate ... but there is truth”

- In the past it wasn't that clear, but now Jesus makes it clear
- He IS the truth
- So, to overcome evil, stand firm with your belt of truth



The take-away:

Follow Jesus – To the Cross – Every day

- Don't go looking
- Just stay connected, following Jesus, to the cross of Calvary, every day you live on this earth
- In church, in house groups, in your own time



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