

The Helmet of Hope

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Introduction: Open your Bible to the book of **Ephesians 6:10-17**.

There is no way to avoid it. It is definitely coming your way. You are going to see it when you look in the mirror. You are going to see it when you look deep inside your heart. You are going to see it when you look at this church, at your job, in your family. It's everywhere! Disappointment. No one on earth ever can or does live up to the expectations put upon them. Everyone and everything on this earth disappoints. We face disappointment every day.

- Maybe you were in a job situation that you loved, and you couldn't imagine life being secure without that job. But you lost it, and you were devastated.
- Maybe you had a friend that you especially trusted, and they broke your trust and your heart.
- Maybe you couldn't imagine life without a husband or a wife. Some here have somehow lost a spouse, or a dear loved one, and life seems so dull and meaningless without them, and a cloud of disappointment sometimes hovers over you.
- Maybe you have trusted in a certain paycheck, and you made certain decisions based on that paycheck. But now you no longer have that paycheck. You have a much smaller one. Disappointment has settled in.

If you haven't noticed, no one and nothing is trustworthy on this earth. Nothing works the way it was supposed to. Your family does not always operate the way it was meant to operate. Your heart does not operate the way it was meant to operate. The church does not operate how it is supposed to operate. Everything has been dented and broken by the fall. Everything will disappoint you.

If you are looking for the perfect church, I want to announce to you this morning that you have NOT found it. If you stay here very long, you will be disappointed in the people around you from time to time, beginning with me. If you are looking for the perfect spouse, or the perfect job, or the totally dependable mode of income, you landed on the wrong planet. These things are not found anywhere on earth. The only totally dependable things are in heaven. The only place you will find an absence of disappointing people and circumstances is where God is.

Therefore we ought not to have our hope in **people** or in **paychecks**. Our hope is in God.

Some people believe that once a person is saved, God will automatically take away all their disappointment. The exact opposite is actually true. Christ didn't die to give you your best life now, but He died to give you your best life in the future, when you

either die or Christ comes in the final resurrection. For now God has dropped you right smack dab in the middle of everything that disappoints and asks you to trust not in all these disappointing earthly things, but to HOPE and TRUST IN HIM WHO WE CANNOT YET SEE WITH OUR PHYSICAL EYES.

It is a fight to keep living for that which we cannot yet see or taste or touch. That's why Paul in Ephesians 6 compares this future hope in our final salvation to a helmet. He calls this future hope a "helmet of salvation". It is something that will protect us in the midst of the spiritual battles that assault us when disappointment comes.

Proposition and purpose: *I show you how to put on the "helmet of salvation" and FIGHT FOR JOY today.* This joy is not in anything on this earth, but in God alone. One day God will wipe away all tears, and He will be our God and we shall be His people. This is the helmet Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6, and it will protect you during all the disappointing circumstances of life.

Let's stand and read **Ephesians 6:10-17**, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **stand** against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**. 14 **Stand** therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 **Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked**. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God".

[Prayer for Guidance]

The helmet of salvation is a **helmet of hope**. Paul says in **1 Thessalonians 5:8**, put on for "an helmet, the hope of salvation". We're talking about the confidence in a full final, total salvation when we will be glorified, and you will never sin again. You need to put on this helmet each day. In other words, you need to constantly be encouraging yourself that this life is only temporary. The pain, the disappointment, and the trouble are not what you were created for. Put on the helmet of hope, that one day you will never sin again, and you will dwell in Christ's presence forever. That's where our joy for living comes from.

This helmet that transforms your vision. I'm not talking about your physical eyes. We are talking about the eyes of your heart. Human beings have the amazing ability to envision the future and to anticipate things that have not yet happened. If these things that they envision are good, the person is given an encouragement in the heart that we call hope. This brings us to our first point.

- I. ***For every human being, there is a compelling vision that you live for.*** There is something that provides you with a hope and a purpose for living. For the Christian, that compelling vision is not found here on this earth. But for most people, their vision does not go farther than the temporary pleasures of this earth.

- Some see the hugeness of a sports' team and always look forward to the "big game".
- Maybe your goal in life is tied up in a romantic relationship. You think, my life will change if only this person will love me.
- Or you might live for getting to a certain geographic location. If only I lived in Hawaii life would be better.
- Or, if I could only have this certain job, or this certain experience. If only, if only... The sad delusion of all of this is that **anything** on this earth would ever satisfy the longing of your heart, but it **never** satisfies.

So our first point is this: ***For every human being, there is a compelling vision that you live for.*** What are YOU living for???

- II. For a Christian, ***your compelling vision (your hope) is not the temporary pleasures of this world, but Christ alone.*** Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ!" (**Philippians 1:21**). What are YOU living for???. What is the grand vision that keeps you going each day?

Most people in this world live for a much smaller purpose than they were created. We were created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The vast majority of people live

- A. The helmet of salvation opens your eyes to something greater and something better that is not found on this earth. The helmet of salvation is the ability to look toward the promises of God, which ultimately is to be in Heaven, freed from the presence and power of sin completely, and living in the joy of Christ's presence.

This helmet of salvation is the constant realization for the Christian that though I live in a world of trials and suffering, and broken expectations, my ultimate destiny is a place where God is my all in all.

If you are a Christian, you are part of a new humanity, a great group of people that spans the ages that does not have their hope in this earthly city of man, but your hope is in God's city, the New Jerusalem, a city not made with human hands!

Look over at **Hebrews 11:13-16**. **Hebrews 11** gives us a selected history of a few people that served God in the Old Testament. What we have in **Hebrews 11** is a group of people that went through a great deal of hardship and sorrow. The stories of the saints in the Scripture and history are stories of deep suffering and prolonged hardship. Faith in God does not give me a ticket out of grief and tears. But faith in Christ gives me a remarkably different way of facing the hardships that come my way.

God records all this suffering and hardship on purpose. I will tell you why in a moment. But understand that the Bible is a ***selected history of redemption***. If God would have recorded everything, you would not be able to carry your Bible with you to church. It would have to be delivered to you in several 18 wheelers.

God has selected precisely what we find in Scripture to point to us to only unending hope in the universe: the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The purpose for every recorded event in the Bible is to show us the glorious hope we can have in Christ, and how ***absolutely everything else fails***.

The people spoken about in **Hebrews 11** had a compelling vision that they lived by, but they received none of it while they lived. That is because their hope was not found in this world. Their hope was not the city of man, but the city of God. Look at **Hebrews 11:13-16**, "These all died in faith, **not having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. ¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. ¹⁶ But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

If you are living for Christ, you will not receive the promises in this life. You must drop dead to receive them, or Christ must come.

What country do you seek? Put on the helmet of the hope of your salvation.

The writer of Hebrews said earlier that this "hope we have" is like "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast" (**Hebrews 6:19**).

Do you remember what our first point is? ***For every human being, there is a compelling vision that you live for.*** What are YOU living for???

Our second point is this: ***For the Christian, that compelling vision, our hope, is found in our final salvation in Jesus Christ. It is NOT found in the here and now.***

B. The question for you is this: **What are you living for?** Where is your joy? Where do you find happiness?

- Could you be happy if you never found the spouse you have hoped for all your life? Or if you are already married, could you be happy if God took your spouse away?
- Could you be happy if your worst nightmare occurred in your job or with your family?

Illustration: Let me give you two examples of men who I know, and the worst happened to them. One went on to serve God, and the other is simply confused with life and not following God.

1. I know a man, close friend of mine and strong believer. When his little boy was 3 years old somehow got the second story window screen open, and jumped out to his death. This tragedy revealed how strong his faith was in God. This man had on him the helmet of hope. His hope was not that everything would go well with him. In fact, though he could never have expected this nightmare, his hope was in God, and it guarded him from doubt and despair, and actually he drew nearer to God during this unthinkable tragedy.

2. I know another man, at one time he was a professing believer, but has now left the faith. He got married, served God for a while until his marriage got rough. He divorced his wife and was no longer following God. His rough waters revealed that his hope was not ultimately in God, but in the good circumstances of life.

Application: There are many in life who are only willing to follow God when things are going well. Their hope is not in the future, but their hope and their vision and purpose for living has to do with right now!

So our first point is this: ***For every human being, there is a compelling vision that you live for.***

Spurgeon said this: "Hope what you please; but remember, that hope without truth at the bottom of it, is an anchor without a holdfast. ***A groundless hope is a mere delusion.***"

What good is a ladder that seems just fine until you reach the top rung? Everything on this earth is a ladder with broken rungs. That cannot hold you. Everything in this earth is a false hope. Therefore, for the Christian, ***our hope, is found in our final salvation in Jesus Christ. It is NOT found in the here and now.***

REVIEW

- So our first point is this: ***For every human being, there is a compelling vision that you live for.*** What are YOU living for???
- For a Christian, ***your compelling vision (your hope) is not the temporary pleasures of this world, but Christ alone.***

III. Our third point is this, ***if you are a Christian, because your only hope in life and in death is Jesus Christ, you need to fight every moment for joy taking up your helmet of salvation.***

I want to show you how to fight for joy by constantly hoping in God.

A. Before that, I want to show you ***what you are fighting against.*** What are Satan's weapons?

Explanation: Let me show you how this hope of salvation is like a helmet. The Roman soldier wore his helmet to protect himself against the sword of the enemy. Satan has many swords. Let me give you three of them: ***deception, doubt and discouragement.***

1. How does Satan use ***deception?*** God created us to be part of worshipping His infinite person. We were made for something amazing! We were made for the glory of Christ. All human beings are hard wired for worship. The problem is, with the fall, we have turned from worshipping God, and we are treating very small things as if they are very big things.

Satan uses our desire to be a part of something bigger to destroy us. Someone might join a political campaign, because they want to be part of something world changing. Or perhaps you live in a city where your team is in the championship. People will say, "We're in the finals". Well, you're not in the finals! But we want to connect ourselves to something bigger. God wired all of us to be a part of the greatest purpose in the universe: to worship Christ in His glory! Read the book of Revelation, and you cannot miss that purpose. Every human being has the desire to be a part of something bigger than himself.

The deception is that Satan is selling something that is infinitely small compared to God as if it were as big as God. Satan will deceive us into living for small earthly purposes, instead of God's eternal purposes.

- So a man will look at a woman across from him at work and fantasize about her for 15 minutes, and he's actually contemplating throwing away 15 years of marriage with the woman God gave him and three children God gave them. Now, the man at this moment has been deceived. He is seeing 15 minutes with some woman he has never met as worth more than 15 years with his wife and the three children. This is the trick of our enemy. He makes temporary things seem worth more than eternal things!
- At this moment there are thousands of people within a hundred mile radius that are on their death bed. The vast majority of them have lived for small, temporary things that pass away. They have banked their happiness on that which cannot deliver.

You see we are all living for some kind of treasure. The thing that is your treasure will control your heart. Whatever controls your heart will control what your life and behavior. Everybody's life is shaped by some kind of treasure. Now Christ proposes only two kinds of treasures: there are those treasures that rust, they rot, and they decay and pass away (Matthew 6:19). These treasures never deliver. But there is another kind of treasure. There is the treasure of the kingdom of Christ. Now this kingdom is here now as Christ reigns over us as Lord of our lives. But it will not be fully and perfect realized until I drop dead or He comes again. Where is your treasure? Satan wants to deceive you into thinking that something very small is worth more than the Kingdom of Christ. But I want to put an end to this deception. **Matthew 6:33**, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..." Don't lay up treasure on earth. You can gain the whole world and lose your soul. Seek the glory of Christ, whose kingdom will NEVER pass away. Satan's key weapon against us is deception.

2. Satan also fights us with ***Doubt***.

- a. Satan is the ***accuser of the brethren***. That's his title. When you sin, he will tell you that you are not saved. Listen, your salvation does not depend on your feeble hold on Christ, but on His omnipotent hold on you. If you are saved, you will not be sinless, but you will be transformed.

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Made an end of all my sin.

Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.
To look on Him and pardon me.

- b. Satan also will cause you to doubt God's character. Satan wants you to think God's not going to deliver. Maybe God's asleep. Maybe God is too busy to be paying attention to you. Maybe God's forgotten about you. Maybe the Bible works for some people, but it's just not working for you. These are all doubts from the wicked one. Of course if God doesn't deliver, then he'll give you a thousand other things to trust in that will deliver. You need a better job! You need a better location, a better house, a better car.

I want you to know that God will deliver. He never breaks His promises. You were not created for all these smaller things. Don't live with the helmet of romance, or the helmet of wealth, or the helmet of health, or the helmet of prosperity. All of these things pass away. All of these things are earthly treasures. Put on the **helmet of salvation!** You were not created for all the small things! You were created for the glory of Christ. Put on the helmet of salvation. Live in the reality of "Christ in you, the hope of glory".

3. Satan will also fight you with **Discouragement**. Satan loves to put giants in front of you. If you look at the circumstances of today, there is often a lot to be discouraged about. But I will tell you that our mind has a way of making things worse than they are, and then comes the onslaught of the wicked one. He will make you think that today is the end of the world. He'll put a giant in your path. He'll make you think God's promises are impossible.

Adoniram Judson, missionary to Burma, who had lost his wife and his child with almost no prospect of anyone turning to Christ for salvation said when asked if he would return home. He said, "The future is as bright as the promises of God".

I don't know what giant is standing in your way, but God's promises to you will never fail. Sure there are many tears in the Christian life, but in all of our tears, we know that God will soon wipe them all away. In all of our trials, we know that God is forming Christ in us. Don't be discouraged. God has not left the control tower. Put on the helmet of hope and know that all of this is planned by God. You will understand why soon enough. But before that, you need to fight with the helmet of the hope of salvation.

B. Now I want to show you how you can fight for joy.

You can fight for joy by living in the reality of the world to come. Your joy must ultimately in God and His character and His promises alone. He alone must be your vision. He alone must be your hope. You will not receive the ultimate promises in this life. Your hope must rest that Christ at any moment will come in the clouds to redeem you. He will wipe away all tears.

Conclusion: Let me close with five passages that show us how to put on the helmet of salvation.

Colossians 3:1-4, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God".

1 Peter 5:4, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away".

1 John 2:28, "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

I pray that the compelling vision that you live for will not be a bigger house, a sports team, a perfect family, or even a perfect church. I pray that you will live all your days longing for the glory of Christ to be revealed.