

The Helmet of Salvation
Unshakable Confidence in Christ's Deliverance
Winning the War for Your Soul
Armor of God Series – PBC

Texts: (Eph 6:17)

- ***I Cor 15:50-58*** (v. 58) “*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*”
- ***Isaiah 59:14-21*** (vv. 16-17) “*He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.*”
- ***Eph 1:13-14*** “*In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*”
- ***Rom 8:35-39*** “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”
- ***I Thess 1:9-10***. “*For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*”
- ***I Thess 5:8-10*** “*But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.*”

Introduction:

For the past six weeks we have been looking carefully, thoughtfully, and in a hope-filled way at the armor that God has given to us by which He promised we would find matchless, limitless, unconquerable strength to withstand the Devil when he comes with all his force and his many schemes to knock us off the ground God has given to us through Christ.

At the very end of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul exhorted them to use their confidence in Messiah's victory over death and their trust in His promise to raise them from the dead as fuel for their commitment to be steadfast, immovable, and ever abounding in their service for the Lord knowing that their labor was not in vain.

But what will fuel our hope in Christ when the battle gets intense – when sin and temptation hand us a momentary defeat; when fear and doubt overwhelm us, or when the war seems prolonged and we are overwhelmed at the intensity of the battle?

Let me give you some examples – what will sustain us when our sins crush us and continue to enslave us? What will fuel joy when our earthly body is assailed by irreversible weakness, restriction, or life-ending disease? What will keep us going through the unexpected loss of an infant or loved one? What will sustain us as we watch the end of life approaches relentlessly for ourselves or for someone we love? How do we keep going when the job or ministry we dreamed of has been denied or lost to us? How do we continue to go forward when a cherished relationship is irreparably broken? When truth seems lost and justice is nowhere to be seen? What will strengthen us to be immovable and unshakable – what will help us to continue to abound in our love and service to Christ when in fact, our labor and even our life and service to Christ does seem to be vain?

Paul's answer points us to the next piece of armor God has provided – a helmet of salvation! Helmets are designed to do two important things:

1. They are first and foremost designed to protect the head from a disorienting, disabling, or mortal blow. No matter how strong or fit a person's body might be, if they receive a blow to the head their body loses functionality, rationality, and vitality.

2. A secondary function of a helmet is to communicate identity or rank to others. Often the helmet of an officer in the Roman army would bear a distinctive crest so that His men could see him, recognize him, and locate him instantly.

This piece of armor is designed to protect our mind and our thoughts so that we will hold fast to our faith in Christ against the strong doubts that often assail us regarding either his fidelity to us or His presence with us.

Furthermore, this helmet also reminds us of His true identity as our ***faithful champion, trustworthy savior, and our wise and benevolent Lord.***

We have received the obedience and righteousness Christ won for us and have strapped on the eager readiness to announce the peace Christ made for us through the gospel. As we take this marvelous message into the kingdoms of the world – the domain of Satan – Christ has given us three additional pieces of armor to defend us and to sustain us in the heat of battle. Last week we looked at the promise God made us to be our shield and protection against the fierce attack and the fiery arrows that Satan constantly hurls at us.

But Paul also warned us that the battle we fight would at times be fought in hand-to-hand combat when we wrestle against the forces of evil. And to protect our thoughts and minds against such attack – God has given us a helmet of salvation. So ... we need to understand what this helmet is and how it works so that we can wear it effectively.

This morning I want to make some Old Testament connections for us that will give us important insight into this amazing helmet and then I want to answer four questions that will help us know how to use it effectively.

OT connections in Isaiah 59:1-21

- This chapter opens with an explanation as to why God's people have not experienced God's deliverance from their enemies. It isn't because

God's arm isn't powerful enough or that His ear does not hear their cry for deliverance. The reason for His absence and His silence is that their sins and iniquities have separated them from Him (vv. 1-2).

- What follows is a long list of their sins as well as their attempts to weave webs of deceit to cover their iniquity and hide their sin from Him.
- Because of their determination to cover up their sins and continue in them, Isaiah states – *“Desolation and destruction are in their highways. the way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no who treads on them knows peace.”* And this wickedness has become so widespread and common in their lives that Isaiah concludes, *“Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter ... We hope for justice and there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us.”*
- The Lord saw this and it displeased Him that there was no justice but, when He looked for someone to intervene and deliver His people from their affliction and from the consequences of all of this evil – there was no one to intercede (v. 16).
- So, the Lord Himself decided to intercede and save His people! He puts on armor – a breastplate of righteousness, a helmet of deliverance, garments of vengeance, and a cloak of zeal/wrath. And when he comes, he will do two things: He will deliver and save His people who repent and He will bring recompense and punishment on those who continue to rebel. And when He is finished, the entire earth will fear the name of the Lord and will see and celebrate His glory. (vv. 17-19).
- Then, in the last two verses we find out something amazing – God will actually do this through an appointed champion – A Redeemer who comes to Zion (v. 20). He makes a promise/covenant with His people to send this Redeemer to deliver/save them. He will put His Spirit on this Redeemer and will put life-giving words in his mouth. And this Redeemer will have offspring – and they and their children will have and keep the words that God has given to this redeemer (v.21).

- And 800 years later this Redeemer, Jesus, came to Zion and brought righteousness and salvation to His people and to the ends of the earth!
- AND while He was here, he made promises to His people – and those words were given to His apostles who gave them to us – they are now our words! And those words have to do with what will happen when He comes again clothed in vengeance and wrath to repay His enemies for their deeds.
- But, those words also promise us when He comes again or when we stand before Him, He will validate our salvation by delivering us from the coming wrath that God will pour out on His enemies.
- He also promises to keep us safe from the wrath that Satan desires to bring against us as we live and serve Christ here on earth in this life.

Which brings us to the question that the Helmet of Salvation is to help us answer: ***How do we really know that we can trust these words – especially given the hostility and intensity of what we are experiencing in our present lives?*** If God doesn't seem to be able to deliver us from the persecution, power and pain of sin and the curse now, what gives us any assurance that He will do so in the future when it really counts – on judgment day?

Paul's answer to that massively important question is to point us to this piece of armor – our helmet. So ... we need to answer four questions this morning to make sure we truly understand the helmet God has provided.

I. What Exactly is the Helmet of Salvation? (1 Thess. 5:8-10)

*“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the **hope of salvation**. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.”*

- At first the answer would seem obvious – it must be referring to our salvation. However, Paul is talking to believers who have already received salvation and telling them to wear this helmet.

- Since Paul has already told the Ephesians that Christ has saved them and that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of their salvation (1:12-14; 2:4-10), this helmet can't be referring to us getting saved.
- Paul provides clarity in *1 Thess 5:8* when he told the Thessalonian believers to wear as a helmet “**the hope of their salvation.**”
- We need to make sure we understand what Paul is talking about when he mentions “salvation” and “hope” to these believers.
- “*Hope*” – the idea is absolute confidence or unshakable expectation.
- “*Salvation*” -- In the next verse Paul tells us the aspect of salvation he is talking about is the final judgement where every person will stand before God and either be delivered from His wrath and given entrance to Heaven or they will face that wrath for eternity in hell.
- Paul is telling the Thessalonians that their unshakable confidence in the reality that God will save them from His wrath on judgment day is a strong protection in this life!
- So the helmet that protects our minds and thoughts is made up of hope related to or associated with salvation. Both salvation in this life from the accusations Satan brings against us (like Job), and salvation in the life to come from the wrath of God on judgement day.
- *Believers have been given something that gives them absolute, unshakable confidence that God will deliver them.*
- So what have they been given that gives them this confidence?
- The answer is in the text of Is 59:21 – believers have been given a covenant or promise from God. And that promise/covenant has been detailed for them in words that Messiah gave them through His apostles. *And this brings us to the second question:*

II. How Does this Helmet Work?

- This helmet is the *confident expectation we have in Christ's promise to save us in this life and in the life to come.*

- This confidence is based on our belief that He is fully able to deliver us from God’s wrath and that He will protect us from Satan’s wrath – no matter how our present circumstances seem to be at odds with those realities. ***Here are two important texts:***

Deliverance from God’s Wrath to Come: 1 Thess 1:9-10. “For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

Protection from the Wrath of Satan: Rom 8:35-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- ***This confidence is grounded solely on the reliability of His promises that are contained in His word*** – we rest everything in this life and in the next on those words. So ... why are we wise to do this?

A. God’s Character Stands Behind His Promises. (Is 59:16)

- Note the connection between God’s salvation and His righteousness. God is perfectly righteous or He can’t be God. Since He is perfectly righteous, He must fulfill every promise He makes.
- And He made a covenant/promise to send a Redeemer to deliver His people from their sins. Furthermore, He expanded that promise to include us – and specifically He has promised to save us from His wrath (1 Thess 5:9-10) and to protect us from the wrath of Satan (Romans 8:35-39).
- As a righteous God, He has obligated himself to keep these promises to us – and He put them in writing for us!

B. God’s Actions Verify and Validate His Promises

- And God has a perfect track record of keeping His word
- He did send a redeemer to His people – and he did come clothed with righteousness and salvation. By his perfect obedience and His willing death as our substitute this Redeemer obtained our salvation.
- God validated that His work was complete and acceptable by raising Him from the dead!
- And when this Redeemer comes again – He will bring vengeance and wrath upon His enemies who refuse to repent of their sins – that is what the whole book of Revelation is about!

III. What Will Wearing this Helmet Require of Us?

A. We must examine ourselves to ensure we are in the Faith.

2 Corinthians 13:5 “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”

B. We must remain faithful to the faith!

Colossians 1:22–23 “he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.”

C. We must make our calling and election sure!

2 Peter 1:10 “Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”

D. We must rest in His word and not our works!

Philippians 3:8c–9 “In order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—”

So how do I actually do this? What will it require of me?

1. Confident Trust in God’s Written Word
2. Faithful Obedience to God’s Revealed Will

So that my life is:

- shaped by God’s Word
- conformed to God’s Will

- committed to God’s Way
- Invested in God’s Work?

Which brings us the final question – and the key question upon which the protection afforded by this helmet rests:

IV. How Can I be Confident this Helmet will protect me?

Given my limitations as a finite person with knowledge and perspective limited to what has gone before me and what is happening in this life – how can I have any confidence at all about the promises God has made to deliver me in the life to come? (*2 Biblical cases*)

A. The Confident Belief of the Official whose son Jesus Healed (John 4:46-54)

- An important official comes to Jesus in Cana of Galilee to ask him to heal his son who was at the point of death – it was a day’s walk.
- Jesus said to him, “Go your way, your son will live.” And the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.
- When he arrived home he was met by his servants with the wonderful news that his son was recovering.
- This man had one question – “what time did he start recovering?”
- The answer – “Yesterday, about this time!” And the man knew that this was the very hour that he had been before Jesus!
- He believed and walked a day’s journey – and when he got home, he found out that Jesus had kept his word!
- You and I came to Jesus one day for forgiveness – and He said, “Go your way, your sins are forgiven!” And we will walk the whole way to the Father’s house where, on the basis of that forgiveness we will be welcomed in – and when we look back we will see that we were actually forgiven far before we arrived home!

B. The Confident Belief Jesus had in God to raise Him from the dead and to give him all that He had promised – (1 Peter 2:21-25)

- Jesus wore this helmet – His father had made awesome promises to Him in Daniel 7 – a power and authority, a kingdom, a people. He had promised His Son eternal glory on His throne.
- Jesus came and obeyed God fully and perfectly – in every way and at all times. And then it came time for the final obedience – the death on the cross. And Jesus had to believe that God would actually keep His word and raise Him from the dead.
- Early on in his ministry, Satan had seized on this question and offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth without the cross – but Jesus believed His Father and resisted the Devil.
- Now on the last night of His life – he asked His Father to deliver Him from the cross – and God said no.
- So Jesus put His hope and expectation in God’s promise and went willingly, joyfully to the Cross.
- And on the third day – God kept His word and raised Jesus from the dead!

Conclusion:

And that is the same promise God has made to you! Listen to Paul’s inspired words: *“And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power!”* (1 Cor 6:14).

Jesus wore this amazing helmet to the cross and His resurrection validates its powerful protection.

Now He hands it to you – battle tested under the most extreme circumstances, and says to you – wear my helmet! It will deliver you from the wrath to come and it will protect you from the wrath that Satan hurls at you when he comes against you in battle.