

“The Belt of Truth”
Ephesians 6:14
(Preached at Trinity, February 14, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. For 2 ½ chapters Paul has been exhorting his readers to walk worthy of the high calling of the Christian life. He opened the section with:
Ephesians 4:1 NAU - "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"
2. The Christian life changes everything. Paul has been describing the transformation.
Ephesians 5:8-9 NAU - "for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light"
3. But there is another dimension of the Christian life. The Christian life is one of warfare. We are engaged in a terrible war with an unseen enemy. This final section of the Book of Ephesians describes this spiritual warfare.
Ephesians 6:10-12 NAU - " Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*."
4. We've spent three weeks examining this enemy – his person, his plan, and his power. We must never underestimate this enemy. No earthly war has ever been fought with an enemy as ferocious as Satan and his army of demons. He never sleeps and his attacks are endless. His hatred of God and His people knows no end. John R. W. Stott writes: "bear in mind that they have no moral principles, no code of honor, no higher feelings. They recognize no Geneva Convention to restrict or partially civilize the weapons of their warfare. They are utterly unscrupulous, and ruthless in the pursuit of their malicious designs."¹
5. The Christian life is about being alert and remaining vigilant. The enemy is always stalking us.
1 Peter 5:8-9 NAU - "Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in *your* faith"
6. We must be steadfast and immovable as we engage the enemy in warfare.
1 Corinthians 15:58 NAU - "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord."

¹ Boice, J. M. (1988). *Ephesians: an expository commentary* (p. 232). Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library.

7. This is what Paul is admonishing us to do in these final verses of Ephesians.
Ephesians 6:10 NAU - "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."
 His word to Christian warriors is:
Ephesians 6:11 NAU - "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
8. After describing the terrible foe Paul says we need to be equipped with great protective armor, an impervious shield, and a powerful weapon. It is all essential if we are to be victors in the war. We will only be able to stand firm against the onslaughts of the enemy if we are adequately protected.
9. Standing firm is at the heart of fighting any battle.
 Paul told the Corinthians:
1 Corinthians 16:13 NAU - "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."
10. We must not retreat or flee in fear. We must not surrender and give ourselves over to the control of the enemy. We must not lay down our weapons or slumber in the midst of the battle.
11. After describing the enemy and the war Paul says in **Verse 13** – “Therefore . . .”
 διὰ τοῦτο – literally, “because of this”
 We must engage the enemy as mighty conquering warriors.
 Notice how Paul uses words of action
Be strong, put on the full armor of God, take up the full armor of God. As God’s people we must be people of action.
12. And then Paul adds, “Stand firm!”
 The Biblical writers often use repetition to give weightiness to what they are saying.
 Notice, Paul states this three times. ἵστημι
Ephesians 6:11 NAU - "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm"
Ephesians 6:13 NAU - "Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."
Ephesians 6:14 NAU - "Stand firm therefore"
13. In **Verse 11** Paul commands, "Put on the full armor of God"
 In in **Verse 13** Paul adds, “and having done everything, to stand firm.”
 In other words, we can only stand if we take advantage of every aspect of the armor of God. The word for “full armor” is πανοπλία which referred to the full armor of a soldier
14. Some have suggested that Paul received his inspiration for describing our armor by examining the Roman soldier guarding him in his imprisonment. While there may be an element of truth in this Paul’s greater focus was always upon the Word of God. Paul’s wording here comes directly from Scripture. Isaiah applied this to Christ.
Isaiah 11:5 NAU - "Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist."
Isaiah 59:17 NAU - "He put on righteousness like a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head"
15. This morning I want us to begin to consider the armor and weaponry essential in the Christian warfare. We must put on the full armor of God.

16. The first element of our armor isn't really armor at all. It is the simple use of a belt. The belt served two functions for the Roman soldier. It served to attach the scabbard for his sword. There was also a practical use. It served to hold the tunic in place so the soldier could move about freely. It enabled the soldier to have unencumbered action.
17. The armor is described in a particular order. This belt was to be put on before anything else. It prepared the soldier for action. The Christian soldier has to be ready for action. Paul calls this belt truth.
- Ephesians 6:14 NAS** - "Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth"
18. What does Paul mean here by this belt of truth? Many highly respected expositors insist that this cannot possibly be referring to the objective truth of the Word of God. This includes Matthew Henry, Charles Hodge, William Hendriksen, even John Calvin. They give two essential arguments.
- A. First of all, they say that this cannot refer to the Word of God because Paul will describe this aspect of our full armor in **Verse 17** as he describes our mighty sword which is the Word of God.
The truth is all of our armor has the Word of God as its foundation.
- B. Second, they point out that the word for truth here does not contain an article. In other words, Paul is speaking of girding our loins with "truth" rather than "the truth." They insist that in this sense it speaks of sincerity and truthfulness rather than the objective meaning of truth.
19. I agree with Martin Lloyd-Jones that this *IS* speaking of the Word of God—the entirety of objective truth, in contrast to the particular passages we use as our mighty sword.
- A. This is something we must actively put on in order for us to be adequately prepared for battle.
- B. This truth must be foundational before any other piece of armor is put on. We must rest upon the truth of God's Word.
20. This morning I want us to consider this belt of truth that we must put on if we are to be equipped for action in our warfare with Satan.
- I. First of all, we need to be convinced of this truth
- A. We live in an age that doesn't believe in absolutes
1. If we talk about law and judgment we are labeled as fanatics
 2. If we talk of a single true religion we are labeled intolerant
 3. If we describe the Bible as infallible and absolute we are dismissed as naïve, even among some who call themselves Christian.
- B. In order to be engaged in this war with any hope of victory we must be convinced that the Bible is absolute and perfect.
1. This is really at the heart of Christianity. Christians are convinced that the Bible is God's infallible Word.
 2. **Loraine Boettner:** "The answer we give to the question, 'What is Christianity?' depends quite largely on the view we take of Scripture. If we believe that the Bible is the very word of God and infallible, we will develop one conception of Christianity. If we believe that it is only a collection of human writings, perhaps considerably above the average in its spiritual and moral teachings but nevertheless containing many errors, we will develop a radically different conception of Christianity, if, indeed, what we then have can legitimately be called Christianity."

3. If we are to go to battle with Satan we must be convinced in the power of God's Word.
We'd better have our loins bound up with this unshakable persuasion.

II. Second of all, we must have confidence in this truth

Being convinced that the Bible is God's infallible Word, we need have confidence in it

A. Only those who are convinced that the Bible is God's infallible Word will have an unshakable confidence in it.

1. Behind every Word of God we have the promise that He cannot lie.
Titus 1:1-2 NAU - "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, ² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,"
Numbers 23:19 NAU - "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"
2. If you go to battle without an unshakable confidence in God's Word you are already defeated.
3. Satan's chief tactic is to call into question God's Word
Genesis 3:1 NAU - " Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden '?"
4. In order to stand before such a lying enemy we must have unshakable confidence in the promises of God. This is the belt of truth.
That God's promises are absolute. They rest upon His infallible character, His infinite power, and His absolute purpose.
They are not yea and nay. They are not true one moment and then false the next. They do not speak one thing today and then another tomorrow. They are always yes, true, infallible. Our confidence rests upon the unshakable "Thus saith the Lord."

B. All of the Promises rest upon Christ

2 Corinthians 1:19-20 NAU - "For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us-- by me and Silvanus and Timothy-- was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. ²⁰ For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."

1. Paul is saying that in Christ all of the promises are "Amen"
 - a. The Greek word ἀμήν occurs 129 times in the New Testament
It literally means, "truly." Our loins are girded with "Amen!"
 - b. In Christ is yea, truly, amen and amen
 - c. Jesus IS the Amen
Revelation 3:14 NAU - "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God"
2. Saving faith demands notitia, assensus, and fiducia
 - a. It demands knowledge. The source of this knowledge is the Word of God. We must be convinced of its truth.

- b. But we must also agree with what it says--assensus.
And then we must rest upon it—convinced of it and confident in it.
- c. Only then are we equipped for war.

III. Finally, we need to be committed to this truth

- A. This is the foundation of our armor. We must have our loins girded with this belt
 - 1. We really have nothing else in this war. It was the only tool Paul had
Acts 20:31-32 NAU - "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. ³² "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."
 - 2. It is the Word of God alone that will guide us through the battle. How sad that so many Christians are so poorly acquainted with this wondrous Book. The Bible is our confidence through every battle and it will be our confidence in death.
 - 3. Are you committed to the Bible?
Do you approach the Bible with wonder and dive into it with amazement? Too many are guilty of neglecting God's Word.
J.C. Ryle – "No gift of God to man is so awfully neglected and misused as the Bible. One sweeping charge may be brought against the whole of Christendom, and that charge is neglect and abuse of the Bible. I am well aware that there are more Bibles at this moment than there ever were since the world began. There is more Bible buying and Bible selling, more Bible printing and Bible distributing than ever before. We see Bibles of every size, price, and style—Bibles great and Bibles small. But all this time I fear we are in danger of forgetting that to *have* the Bible is one thing, and to *read* it quite another."
 - 4. For those who have discovered this wonderful gift it becomes their great delight. David described his longing of God's Word as panting. He lusted after the Word of God
Psalms 119:131 KJV - "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments."
 - a. Like a man dying of thirst he panted after God's Word.
 - b. There are only two things we find in the Psalms that are worthy of panting after. God and His Word
Psalms 42:1-2 KJV - "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. ² My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"
- B. We must be committed to the Word of God. We must gird our loins with truth Only this will keep us ready for war.
 - 1. We must proclaim it – it is God's chosen means for the salvation of souls
 - 2. We must study it – We must know what God has said to us –
If God's will accomplish His purposes according to His Word then it would be prudent for us to know what it says

3. We must trust it – not one Word shall ever fail
God will be faithful to keep His Word
Psalm 119:89 – “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.
Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: thou hast established the
earth, and it abideth.”

Conclusion:

1. We must have this preparation - we must be girded with truth. This is the foundation for the remaining armor - Truth!
2. What I am talking about is a confidence based the authority of Scripture.
3. Be certain that you are girded with truth - this takes effort. Give yourself to it that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.