

Ephesians 6:14-24

“Wear The Armor, Wield The Sword”

If your heart belongs to J.C., you are in a spiritual battle. You may not *like* that, you may choose to ignore or turn a blind eye *toward* that, but it doesn't change the reality *of* that. & If you've chosen to *ignore* it, odds are you're not fairing to well *in* it. Because I'll promise you this, your enemy hasn't chosen to ignore you, he's doing everything he can to wreck you. It's his express agenda to destroy *you* & everything you hold dear.

Now that may not look like your life crumbling in a heap of ashes (though it might). It might also look like a successful business venture, or great fishing weather... Let's not forget that your adversary employs what the bible refers to as scheming strategies. If ruining your life will distract you from God, then he'll seek to go that way (alcoholism, pornography addiction, whatever). If giving you money, entertainment & the cares of this world will distract you from the things of God, that's fine to... Of course, I'm not implying that if things are going well that the devil is behind it. But what I *would* encourage you to think about is this, “Are the things in my life leading me closer *to* God, enabling me to further the agenda of the *kingdom* of God, or are they distracting me or leading me away from the *things of God?*”

Family, we've got to learn to look beneath the surface. To the Corinthians Paul said it like this, “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,*”¹ Or to understand that another way, we live in a world that's material, but we war in a world that is spiritual. Therefore, our warfare isn't fought by conventional means... We're to be utilizing *not* the weapons of this world, but the resources that God has supplied that we might fight the good fight of faith, being fruitful in our walk w/God...

We spoke last week of the need to be strong in the Lord & in the power of His might. One of Paul's prayers for the believers earlier on in Ch 3 was that God would grant us according to the riches of His glory to be *strengthened w/might through His Spirit* in the inner man. We can't be strong in the Lord through our own will power. To be strong *in* the Lord we 1st must be submitted *to* the Lord. It's a work of *His Spirit* in our lives. We need to be in the *word of God*, in fellowship w/the *saints of God*, in prayer *before God* (all these things take place as we submit ourselves to God)...

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Co 10:3-5]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Submit yourself *to* the Lord that you might be strong *in* the Lord. Take up the whole armor of God... Did you realize that the bible actually provides us w/a mental image of God robed in armor? It's His armor, but w/Christ *in* you, it's a perfect fit *for* you...☺

Perhaps Paul was thinking of *that* passage when he was inspired to write *this* passage. In speaking of God, we read in Isa 59, "**For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head;**"² & Somewhere in there Paul is perhaps meditating on that, he's looking at the Roman soldier he's chained to... & It hits him, he's thinking of God's armor, he's looking at the soldier's armor & he's like, "That's it!" & The analogy (item for item) begins to resonate in him. "**These soldiers go into battle armed for war, how much more the child of God should be readily/effectively equipped for the spiritual warfare he faces?**" & God gives him this glorious passage... Let's look at it together, & let's fall back into the flow beginning back in Vs 10.

Vs 10-13

Btw I should say this as well; here we're learning that we're to "stand" against the wiles (the cunning/clever scheming strategies) of the devil. But this isn't the only standing that God gives us to maintain. As you make your way through the scriptures you'll learn that we stand in grace (Rom 5), we stand in the gospel (1 Cor 15), we stand in faith (2 Cor 1), we stand in the liberty w/which Christ has made us free, (Gal 5) we stand fast in unity (Phil 1)...

There's a lot wrapped up in the word "stand". If you're called to stand, it means you can anticipate resistance or opposition (attack). The enemy will attack you concerning all the areas we just mentioned; God's grace, the truth of the gospel, in the area of your faith, in Christian liberty, in maintaining unity... We're to *stand* against it.

If you "stand" than you can't "slouch", you can't fight effectively, or stand your ground efficiently w/a ½ hearted effort, no self-pity allowed... ☺ (We spoke of that last week). If we're standing, we're at our position, we're alert. We're not considering retreat, we stand. (We begin to learn in Vs 14 *how it is* we're to take our stand). Notice.

Vs 14-17

Let me just say this then we won't dwell on it, I just want you to be aware of it. Every piece of the armor of God somehow points to, speaks of or somehow revolves around J.C. Paul told the Galatians that as many as are baptized *into* Christ have *put on* Christ.

² [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [Is 59:17]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Here in Eph, it's like we get a bit of a breakdown of what that looks like. But just so that you see, perhaps later you can dwell on it. But we're told to put on the belt of truth. Of course Jesus *is* the truth. He said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*³ The breastplate of righteousness; there's more than 1 passage that points to Christ our righteousness. He was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor 5). But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor 1)

We're to put on the combat boots of the gospel ☺. What *is* the gospel? It's the good news of the death, burial & resurrection of J.C. for the sin of the world. The shield of faith, Jesus (Heb 12:2) is the author & finisher of our faith, He's the source *of* it, our reason *for* it. We see the helmet of salvation. Christ *is* our salvation. *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*⁴ Our salvation isn't based in what *we do*, it's found in what *He's done*. He is our salvation. & The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. Just read the very 1st Ch of the gospel of Jn. "In the beginning was the word, the word was w/God & the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him & w/out Him nothing was made that was made." Jump down to Vs 14, *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*⁵ Jesus is the Living Word of God... It's all *about* Him, it all points *to* Him, He is our all in all.

So as we take our stand against the enemy, our only hope for victory, is through Christ. In Him our victory is certain, apart from Him we will fall.

Paul tells us here in Vs 14 that we're to take our stand therefore having girded our waist w/truth. This is the belt that though it may not be a piece of armor specifically, it's central to every other piece being held together effectively. The breastplate attached *to* it, the sword was hung *from* it... W/out it, you simply couldn't fight effectively, everything hinges on the belt... (Think of like the Bat belt, everything Batman needs can be accessed from his belt, it's central to his whole operation. Same thing here).

Truth is central to everything you are & do as a believer. It's what everything else "attaches" to. It's central to your life personally, your personal integrity, if you're not walking in truth than your witness, your warring will be ineffective.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 14:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 1:21]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁵ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Jn 1:14]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But truth also speaks to what you believe doctrinally. Many churches have taken off the belt of truth, they think that the way to advance is to lay off dogmatic doctrines, let's not tell people they're sinful, that they need to repent, or speak of the blood of J.C. Let's just make sure everyone thinks they're ok, God loves them & there's nothing to worry about.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that will not win the war, that will lose souls. Does God love you? Absolutely, but His love won't save you. It's His grace that saves you & we receive His grace as we turn from our sin & place our faith in J.C. That's what the bible teaches, that's the truth & everything else hinges off of that.

We need to be about the truth of God's word. Not all roads lead to God, it's not simply being sincere in what you believe that saves you, hell does exist, the wages of sin is death, Christ has paid that penalty & you can be saved through faith in Him... Guys, we can't compromise on these things... You & me we are sinners, we're a sinful people & we desperately need a Savior. **People don't like to face the truth about themselves, or the consequences of their actions. But central to all that you are (if you're to stand effectively against the enemy) is truth. Truth holds everything else together... Don't listen to the lies of the enemy (God will understand, your situation is miserable, hey God will forgive you... on & on it goes) Satan is a liar. You stand *on* & operate *from*, truth...**

"Having put on the 'breastplate' of righteousness," the breastplate was obviously that which provided essential protection to your vital organs. 2 Lines of reasoning you want to have in the forefront of your mind with this. (& 1 That you definitely don't want). What you *don't* want is to think that "righteousness" has anything to do w/your works. **Our righteousness before the Lord (Isaiah tells us) is like filthy rags. Even when we do a good work, we're still offering it from a sin nature. So it's literally impossible for us to do a work of perfect righteousness. Perfect righteousness can only come from a perfect person (which rules all of us out).**

So that which guards our heart isn't a self-righteousness, a *feeling* of righteousness, it's not a confidence in experience (we don't put on the breastplate of experience, we're grateful for experience, but we don't rely on it). But what's in view is #1 The righteousness received by faith in J.C. Remember? **He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. What guards our heart is the imputed (accredited) righteousness of Christ.**

One of Satan's favorite attacks is toward the heart of the believer.

He loves to attack you in the area of righteousness & how you lack in it. The bible calls him the “accuser” of the brethren & he loves to put you on a guilt trip, point out how short you fall of God’s standards. But you guard your heart not through *your* righteousness (of which there is none anyway) but through the righteousness of Christ that’s given to you by faith. You & me, we aren’t going to heaven based on how good we are, but based upon how good God has been to us, & all that Jesus has done *for* us.

Having said that I also want to encourage you along the lines of the *sanctifying* righteousness that we’re to be growing in. Which is to say, we’re made righteous by faith in J.C. (that’s our standing before Him), yet as you’ve heard me say, the grace of God that saves your soul will also change your life. We’re to put on the new man, which was created according to God (Eph 4). The Spirit of God is working in us, bringing practical change to us day by day to make us more like Jesus. The more like Jesus you are, the less the enemy has to accuse you of. So protect your heart by receiving Christ’s righteousness, & doing right by others as well.

If you’re not cheating people, embracing some sort of sin, or being distracted by the cares of this world, then there’s not a lot you can be accused of. The breastplate of righteousness is essentially giving God *His way in your life...*

Vs 15, “having shod your feet w/the preparation of the gospel of peace;” being prepared to share the gospel is represented as protective shoes. You *cannot* fight effectively w/out appropriate footwear. How many horror stories have we heard about soldiers who would’ve won, should’ve won, but they were sent into terrible conditions (wet, or deep snow) w/out appropriate boots & so they’re feet were frost bitten or gangrene or something.

The gospel is the foundation, provides the footing for everything we do. It doesn’t really matter how strong you may be in the rest of your body, if your feet are wounded your pretty easy prey for the enemy... The believer should have a solid foundation in the gospel, ready to share it, able to articulate it clearly & simply. If you can’t, consider that your homework for the week. 😊

Vs 16

When he says, “Above all” don’t think “& more importantly than anything else”. What he’s saying is, “& beyond these things” “in addition to these things.” The previous must be worn constantly, you must “have” the belt, the breastplate, the shoes.

When necessary you “take up” the shield.

This isn't the little round forearm shield. It's the 2' wide by 4' long shield that formed a wall as soldiers walked together & the 2nd row would take their shields & form a covering "above all" when the arrows were volleyed by the enemy.

There's an element of being there for one another here. Soldiers would lock shields & move forward together (don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together). As believers we're not in the battle alone. But faith is represented as a shield. This isn't saving faith, it's the faith that trusts in the promises of the word of God.

The enemy starts hurling fiery darts of condemnation, darts of lust, doubts, blasphemous thoughts, desire for sin & disobedience, fears, lies... We've got to take up the shield of faith, "No temptation has overcome you except that which is common to man" "boom" the dart is quenched. **The enemy seeks to isolate you, make you feel alone, "God has said, 'I will never leave nor forsake you'" we trust the promises of the word of God & quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. Fear overcomes you, "God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but of power & of love & of a sound mind..." See how that works?**

Vs 17

The helmet of salvation. It guards the mind. I've told you again & again of the emphasis that the bible places upon our minds. The enemy will tempt you to give up, to become discouraged, the helmet of salvation defends against these kinds of things. In 1st Thess Paul elaborates a bit on this saying that for a helmet we put on the "hope of salvation." Not, "I hope I'm saved." Biblical hope is a guaranteed certainty & a concrete reality, no shadow of doubt. Christ in you the "hope" of glory.

But the salvation in view isn't being born again, it's the return of Christ, the summing up of all things. No matter how heavy it gets here, it's only for a season, you have a hope that transcends this world & will be realized at the return of J.C. The breastplate of righteousness will guard your heart, the helmet of salvation will guard your mind.

So far this is all *defensive* battle gear, you have one *offensive* piece of equipment. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The Spirit of God provides a sword for you & the sword He gives you is the word of God. Now that should tell you something... If you want to wield it effectively you've got to know God's word...

If you don't know the scripture, if you're not confident *in* the scriptures (as the word of God), then you won't wield the sword effectively. Think of a gladiator, he doesn't wait to practice until he steps in the arena, by then it's too late. He's got to be prepared in advance so he knows *which* strike to use at *what* time.

You've got to be a student of the word. Of course, Jesus was a "Master Swordsman" & you see that when He was combating Satan in the wilderness. Satan would tempt Him, "Since You're the Son of God, why not turn these stones to bread." Jesus would strike, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

"Since You're the Son of God, cast Yourself down from the temple for it is written 'He shall give His angels charge over you & they shall bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus would strike, "It is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Satan tried a 3rd time, "Bow down & worship me & I'll give to you all the kingdoms of the world..." Jesus struck again, "Away w/you Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God & Him only shall you serve.'" Family, He wasn't carrying around scrolls looking up bible promises in the heat of the battle! He knew God's word!

He struck w/the sword in the face of temptation. Kind of like using the shield, the sword & the shield go together. But if you don't know your bible, you're not going to do well in the warfare. That's why David said, *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You."*⁶ & Listen, this isn't something for spiritually advanced pastors (as if), it's basic training people, wear the armor, wield the sword.

If you're going to have a word in due season to minister to the need at hand, you've got to have God's word in your heart. The more you wield a material sword, the duller it becomes, the more you use the spiritual sword, the sharper it will be in your life. & You will learn to use it effectively & the Spirit will "cut people to the heart" as His word is given out & we respond in repentance... Christians conquer as they understand God's Word, memorize it, administer and obey it.

Vs 18-20

Here's what I want you to see in Vs 18, "All", "All" & "All". Praying always w/*all* prayer & supplication in the Spirit. (That doesn't mean "in tongues", even as we worship God "in Spirit" we're to pray in the Spirit) from the heart, earnestly, passionately, honestly. Pray silently, audibly, kneeling, standing, alone, in groups (all prayer). "Being watchful to this end w/*all* perseverance." *There's no quit in you, you stay the course. "& supplication for all the saints."* Did you see that, prayer isn't something that we do for us. We pray for *all the saints*. If you were in the trenches & the enemy was invading, you wouldn't have the mindset, "Wow, my buddy is really being attacked but as long as I'm being left alone I'm not going to concern myself w/that." You'd jump in there & help him.

Pray for one another. You're in the trenches w/your family, fight for them, intercede for them. Battle on behalf of them. Don't sin against the Lord (1 Sam 12:23) in ceasing to pray for each other.

Then Paul says, "& While you're at it, pray for me." Not that he should be set free from prison, or be comfortable & safe, but that he would be effective & bold in his witness & his ministry. He was to speak before Caesar shortly & he wanted to represent Jesus accurately... God help us to be bold in our witness. Proclaiming the gospel clearly, fearlessly wherever our "deployment" may be. For Paul it was in prison, for you it's where you work, or go to school, or at your house. Don't despise your deployment, ask others to pray for you, that you might stand boldly & effectively right where you're at.

Vs 21-22

Faithful minister (the carrier of the letter). What a great way to be spoken of, a "faithful servant". Undoubtedly people were worried about Paul knowing he was in prison, this guy would catch them up to speed on everything.

Vs 23-24

Grace & peace, the cornerstones of the Christian life. God loves you. May His grace abound toward all of you who love J.C. genuinely, in purity & from the heart...

Prayer Points:

God, we're grateful for all that You've taught us, entrusted to us & how You've enriched us through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. May it bring forth fruit for Your glory. May we fight the good fight, waging effective warfare, wearing the armor, wielding the sword to the glory of Your name.

God wants to use your life. But 1st He wants to *give* you life. The truth is that if you don't know J.C. you need to turn from your sin, believe on the Lord J.C. who has loved you & given Himself for you that you might be saved. For w/the heart one believes unto righteousness & w/the mouth confession is made unto salvation. It starts in your heart, don't harden your heart against God, open your heart to Him & receive J.C.