

Sermon Title: Take Up The Full Armor Of God  
Scripture Text: Eph. 6:13-17 (Ephesians #47)

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 8-14-22

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We are going to look at the "armor of God" this morning. This is in the conclusion to this letter—to the Book of Ephesians. You can see the end from here. Barring the unforeseen, Lord willing, we will finish this book next Lord's Day.

Paul exhorts us here: "Take up the full armor of God" (Eph. 6:13). That's a metaphor for a series of reminders that he gives us here to *practice* the essentials of Christianity.

Remember: The presumption in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of Ephesians is that you have read and believed Chapters 1, 2, and 3—and you are, therefore, "in Christ" (Eph. 1:1, 3; 2:6; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). This has *nothing to do* with how to get into the Kingdom; this is how to *live* because you *are* part of the Kingdom of God on Earth (cf. Titus 2:14).

We began by looking at the command from God in Verses 10 through 12—"Be strong in His strength." It's a strength that is not your own; you have His strength *available* to you, but only *His* strength will enable you for this passage.

So, "*Be strong* in the Lord" (vs. 10). "*Put on* the full armor of God" (vs. 11). "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood" (vs. 12). So you need to know how to live with the spiritual resources that God has given to you.

And then today, we are going to be introduced to the *specifics* of this extended metaphor of "the armor of God"—that which He provides *every one* of His children.

The next verse—which is the first of our text for today—is the Introduction: Take Up, Resist, and Stand Firm. It's Chapter 6, Verse 13—"Therefore..." "Therefore" means: "Because you understand that now that you are in Christ, you are under assault; you have a strong, crafty, secretive, subtle, sinister enemy who *hates* God, who hates the *Word* of God, who hates the *people* of God, and he hates the *Church* of God, "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." (NASB-1995; and throughout, unless otherwise noted)

The command is: "Take up" your "armor." Men, gear up—we are ready to go now! There is a military sort of snap to that command: "Take up" your "armor." It is a command meant to be obeyed at once, and it is to be obeyed once for all. You don't take off your armor and have lunch; you wear your armor when you are in the battle, and you are in the battle while you are in this "world" (1 Jn. 5:19; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:17). This order will *never* be revoked. The Greek word was used as a military term for describing that final preparation to make sure that you are ready for the battle.

And he gives you two purposes for wearing the armor: "resist" and "stand firm." "Resist" has the idea of: There's an onslaught coming; don't let it knock you off your position! You are operating behind enemy lines (2 Cor. 4:4; Lk. 4:5-6). You are in enemy territory (Eph. 2:2). You will always be at odds with the system (Jn. 15:18-19; cf. Gal. 4:29). You are, as Peter described it, an "alien" and a "stranger" now in this world (1 Pet. 2:11). Paul says you *used to be* an "alien" and a "stranger" to the Kingdom of God (Eph. 2:19); now, you are part of that Kingdom; now, the target is on you (Jn. 17:14; 1 Jn. 3:13).

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"Stand firm" is the translation of a word that means "to stand against something, to resist it, to oppose it." But it is not a totally passive connotation; you don't just stand like a brick wall, waiting passively for a battering ram to hit you. Remember, the imagery here is of a soldier who is equipped for battle, on the move, defending and parrying and attacking; and as we will see, there is one *penetrating* weapon that we have—"the Word of God" (vs. 17).

Now, look at *when* you have to fight this battle: "in the evil day." Well, what is "the evil day"? It's every day—every day that you live in the "world" that "lies in the power of the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19). The word translated "evil" is a very strong word; it means "something pernicious." It describes evil in the sense of "active opposition to what is good." So, *any day* that includes an assault on the truth of God, *any day* that includes any temptation or testing of your faith is a day in which you need your armor. In other words: You need your armor all the time, until you are not any longer on enemy territory—which is when you will "be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17; cf. Phil. 1:23).

Then he says: "having done everything"—that rounds out the scene. This battle is ongoing; you don't huddle in your bunker, you carry through the battle with *all you have* so that you can report to your Commander in Chief and say, "I did everything possible—by Your grace, in Your strength—to fulfill Your mission."

From here, we are introduced to six specific pieces of armor that God provides; this is your spiritual equipment. It is based on the image of a Roman soldier. The mental picture was very familiar to everyone to whom Paul wrote.

When I think of this, I think of being in Israel, where all of their surrounding nations want to exterminate them. Israel's only friendly border is with the Mediterranean Sea. And so, everybody serves in the military, and they are there all the time. When you walk around, you get used to seeing people walking around in military uniforms carrying weapons all the time. You actually get kind of comfortable with it. Marsha and I had our picture taken with a 19-year-old girl walking around with her Uzi and making sure that we felt comfortable when we were there.

This is a ubiquitous picture; they all would have understood this. These soldiers were everyday sights throughout the Roman Empire. It is possible Paul may have, at some time, been chained to such a soldier. Certainly, he was guarded by soldiers—probably as he wrote this; he was under house arrest, but somebody made sure he didn't get away.

So, here is the picture of our spiritual resources, based upon the analogy to the armor of a Roman soldier. There are six pieces of armor described here: Truth, Righteousness, the Gospel of Peace, Faith, Salvation, and God's Word.

Now, how do we "put on" the "armor"? How do we *use* these resources? Number One: Wrap Yourself in the Truth. Chapter 6, Verse 14 begins with: "Stand firm therefore"—just commanded you, "Stand firm"—"Stand firm, therefore, having girded your loins with truth."

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You know if you see it in all-caps in the New American Standard Bible, that is their way of saying this is terminology from the Old Testament. "Having girded your loins with truth" comes from Isaiah Chapter 11, Verse 5.

"Having girded your loins"—I happen to know that most of you *did that* this morning, you just didn't know that that was what you were doing; you didn't say, "I'll be right there as soon as I gird my loins." This is the idea of wrapping the belt around your waist. Your "loins" is your midsection and your thighs, and there was a short tunic that was worn by the soldiers; when they were getting ready for battle, the tunic would be gathered up and held in place by the belt (cf. 1 Pet. 1:13). The tunic was the original miniskirt, but it was worn by soldiers. This belt was a very important, basic piece of equipment. It held the breastplate in place, and the sword was hung from it; so it's like the anchor-piece of the armor, if you will.

"Girded"—also a word we don't use, but it means "cinched up." It is worded to make it clear that *you* have the responsibility for putting on this belt—and that is true of every piece of the armor. These are resources *God* gives, but it is *your* duty to put the resources to work (e.g., Gal. 5:16)—like *you* are commanded to "be strong" *in His* "strength" (vs. 10). You are commanded to "gird up your loins *with truth*"—the "truth" that He gives to you.

"Truth" here speaks of truth as a quality. Later, he is going to mention "the word of God" which is *the* truth (vs. 17)—that doctrine "which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3)—but here, he is talking about what anchors your character, what is the centerpiece that connects the rest of your armor.

If you are going to be successful in this spiritual battle, you need to be a person of "truth." That means you are committed to *truthfulness* and sincerity. Truthfulness is part of the character of "the new man" that we have met in Ephesians Chapter 4 (vs. 24, LSB), about whom one of the characteristics is: he "speaks truth in love" (vs. 15; cf. 1 Cor. 13:6; Ps. 15:2).

Less than total commitment to truth will be your spiritual demise. Deceit, guile—they are not part of the life of a successful Christian soldier (cf. Jn. 1:47; Prov. 13:5). "Speaking truth in love" is sometimes painful, but it is *always* the right thing to do (Prov. 27:6; 28:23). Say what you mean, and mean what you say (Jas. 5:12b). Do away with hidden agendas (Prov. 30:8). If you want God's blessing and protection in the battle, speak His truth and be truthful.

When you encounter lies in the world, you need to make sure you are anchored in the "truth," and you have it ready at your disposal (Prov. 22:18), as if it were tied around your waist—anchored with the "truth."

Secondly: Guard Yourself with Righteousness. The other half of that verse: "and having put on the breastplate of righteousness." Those words also come from Isaiah; this time, from Isaiah 59, Verse 17.

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The "breastplate" covered and protected the chest and the vital organs. Picture a catcher in baseball—make sure that the ball can't kill him by hitting him in the heart. This breastplate was made of overlapping scales, and it was made in two pieces—one for the front and one for the back; think of a sandwich-board sign anchored on you and cinched up by the belt girded around the loins.

The application of "righteousness" in practical living to your spiritual life is logical. What protects your most important spiritual resources—or, your sources of spiritual vitality—is "righteousness." Now, think this through: Remember, this presumes you are "in Christ"; so if you are "in Christ," you have been "justified" (Rom. 3:24)—which means you have been declared righteous (Rom. 4:5; 8:33). So this *isn't* talking about that which God grants you in justifying you, and I think you can see why: It would be absurd to tell you to put on something that only God can do, and He has already done it for you, in the absolute sense, for all of eternity (Heb. 10:14). He is not talking about your *position* in Christ (Is. 61:10; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9), he is telling you about your everyday life in the world: *Live* righteously, based upon the righteousness that has been bequeathed to you (cf. Eph. 4:17, 24).

An interesting thing here—something that you cannot really put smoothly into an English translation—the phrase is literally "*the* righteousness": "having put on the breastplate of *the* righteousness"; and there seems to be this extraneous word "the" in front of "righteousness," but that's because he is referring to something very specific—a "righteousness" that he mentioned on the previous page of your Bible: Ephesians Chapter 5, Verses 8 and 9, where he says, "Walk as children of Light"—remember: You used to be in "darkness, but now you are "Light" in Christ; "walk" therefore "as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth)."

So, "walk in" what God has already given to you in Christ. This is the "righteousness" that accompanies "walking in the Light." It is the fruit of salvation (Ezek. 36:27; Eph. 2:10). It is righteous behavior, "upright" living (Prov. 2:7; 3:32; 11:6; 14:2; 16:17; 21:8, 29). You have to be committed to truth by *saying* what is right and true—"girding" yourself with the "truth," wrapping yourself in "the truth"—but you *also* have to be committed to "righteousness" by *doing* what is right and true (Ps. 15:2); that's wearing "the breastplate of righteousness." And what produces practical righteousness in your life is for you to be immersed in the Word of God for the long haul (Ps. 119:38; Acts 20:32; 1 Thess. 2:13), and you do what He says to do (cf. 1 Thess. 5:8a with 1 Jn. 5:3).

The third piece of equipment, the third part of the armor: Prepare Yourself with the Gospel of Peace. Chapter 6, Verse 15—"and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." This time, the Old Testament allusion is from Isaiah Chapter 52, Verse 7. And this one might sound familiar to you, because it is also quoted in Romans Chapter 10, Verse 15.

Notice, he says: "having shod your feet." You also probably didn't say this morning, "I'll be right along, dear. I haven't shod my feet yet." It means: Put on your footwear—put on your *shoes*. And it is *your* responsibility to put this on, as with every other piece of the equipment.

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Having your feet prepared for what you intend to do is really important! You don't go scuba diving in your snow boots; you put on flippers, right? Proper footwear has to match the activity, for mobility and stability; and it differs for different activities.

You could go search through my house, and you would find that I have dress shoes, and I have walking shoes, and I have slippers—warm ones for the winter, cooler ones for the summer. There are flip-flops. There are the *old* "tennies" for doing something grungy in the yard; there are the *nice* tennies. There are the boots for snow—I even have some cleats I can strap onto my boots for when I'm walking on icy things. You would also find my golf shoes. Now, in deference to age and damaged parts, I have jettisoned the racquetball shoes. I no longer have soccer referee shoes. I don't have my track shoes anymore. I've even given up the bowling shoes. Some people might have dancing shoes, bicycle shoes, cowboy boots, waders, high heels—it depends on what you're going to do. You have your feet prepared for the activity that you are going to be engaged in.

Well, "shod your feet"—prepare yourself—"with the *preparation* of the gospel of peace." "Preparation" implies that we need to be ready! We need to have an answer ready to explain who we are in Christ, and why we act the way we do (1 Pet. 3:15). Knowing and living in light of the Gospel gives us the "preparation" and the readiness we need.

We need to be prepared with "the gospel." "Gospel" means "good news"; specifically, the Gospel of Jesus Christ—First Corinthians 15:3-4: The "Gospel" is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." And *that* is the *only* basis for our hope (Jn. 14:6); that is the *only* basis for our salvation (Acts 4:12). That *is* what sets us free from bondage to sin (Jn. 8:36; Rom. 6:17-18) and from the penalty of sin (Rom. 5:9; 8:1).

Now, as I mentioned, the quotation here comes from Isaiah 52, Verse 7; and if you go there, you would see that the "good news" that Isaiah was referring to was the "good news" of the return of Israel from captivity, and the fact that they would be able to come back into the Land and worship again in Jerusalem. But in Romans 10:15, Paul gives the inspired application of that verse to those who preach Christ: the *ultimate* "good news" of liberation from bondage—not bondage in exile to a foreign country, but bondage to sin (Prov. 5:22; Lk. 4:18; 2 Tim. 2:26).

It's "the gospel of *peace*." "The gospel of peace" is that good news which makes "peace" between man and "God" (Rom. 5:1; cf. Ps. 5:4; Is. 59:2). It is the only basis upon which we can truly experience the "peace" which God gives (Jn. 14:27; Phil. 4:7). It is the only thing that truly brings alienated parties together in Christ; we saw that at length in Ephesians Chapter 2 (cf. Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

Now, here is some irony. I heard, awhile back, the definition of "irony": it's the opposite of "wrinkly." But in a more literary sense, your readiness for battle comes from the "gospel" whose content is "peace"! We fight this *battle* with the message of "peace." You need to be at peace with God in order to be ready to battle His enemies. You need the "gospel of" His "peace" if you are ever going to set free the prisoners of your enemy.

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Fourth piece of armor—fourth bit of spiritual equipment: Shield Yourself with Faith. Ephesians 6:16—"In addition to all, having taken up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (LSB). Here, I slipped in the Legacy Standard Translation because it has just a slightly better rendering of the verb: "having taken up" rather than "taking up." We don't want to imply: "Oh, no! There's a 'flaming arrow' headed my way! Where did I put my shield?"—and you go get it. No, it's "having taken up"—you *wear* this all the time.

The "shield" was used by foot soldiers, infantry soldiers. It was oblong—about four feet by about two and a half feet, a good size shield that you could wield with one arm while you had a weapon in the other arm. It was covered with tough leather. It could be used to block or deflect blows aimed at you, or "darts" (6:16; NKJV), or small spears, or even large spears thrown by an enemy.

Sometimes, those "darts" or arrows could be dipped in pitch and set on fire. You know, somebody tries to fire flaming things into your house; hopefully it will find its way through a window and set something on fire, and flush you out; or if it hits *you*, it's going to hurt even more than just the arrow itself. And the "shield" was the main defense against those "flaming arrows."

What is this, spiritually? Well, it's "the shield of *faith*." There are two legitimate ways you can take that word here, and I think both of them fit the context. I alluded to this one already: First, it's "*the* faith." "The faith" is that body of truth which is contained in the Word of God. It is "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints," according to Jude (vs. 3; cf. Acts 6:7; 13:8; 1 Cor. 16:13; Gal. 1:23; Eph. 4:13; 2 Tim. 3:8).

We are called to "contend" for "the faith." We contend against error; we contend against perversion of truth. And you need to know the truth of the Word of God to be strong in battle (1 Jn. 2:14b). When you take "faith" this way, it refers to you taking your stand on the truth of God's Word. I'm going to stand my ground; and no matter what absurdity you might say to me, I'm going to repel those "fiery darts" of error and doubt with the truth (e.g., Col. 1:23).

The second way in which you can take "faith" is to take it as the *exercise* of faith, or: obediently believing. Not only do I *say* that is the Word of God, not only do I *agree* that that's the Word of God, but I *live* by the fact that that is the Word of God (cf. Lk. 11:28; Jn. 13:17). So your defense comes as you take truth and you believe it to the point of faithfully obeying it (Jas, 1:25).

Taken that way, "the shield of faith" is very similar to "the breastplate of righteousness" in that it has to do with choosing to act in a certain way. "The breastplate of righteousness"—I choose to act righteously. "The shield of faith"—I choose to act in obedience to the truth; I'm *living* by "faith."

So, to be a person of "faith" and wield "the shield of faith" is a dynamic combination of knowing what God has said—"the faith"—and being faithful to what He has said by obeying it.

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Number 5: Assure Yourself of Salvation. Verse 17—"also receive the helmet of salvation" (LSB). That's *another* allusion to Isaiah 59:17.

The "helmet" of the Roman soldier was something we can relate to. In our world now, we wear helmets of all kinds: batting helmets, bicycle helmets, motorcycle helmets, scooter helmets—whatever else you might think of. This one was made of brass, covered in leather—again, to protect the head from being struck; if a blow could not be avoided, at least it would not crush your skull.

In the symbolic sense here, it refers to the confidence and assurance of salvation that allows you to go into the battle *knowing* you are secure (cf. 1 Thess. 5:8b; 1 Jn. 4:16). Remember: This *presumes* that you are "in Christ" (cf. Ps. 37:28; Jn. 6:39; 10:28).

And when he says: "receive the helmet of salvation," it's not as if you can *choose* to put it on and take it off. It's that, as "righteousness" is something that you have positionally "in Christ" (Phil. 3:9), but you need to live it out in battle (Phil. 3:14-15), "salvation" is your eternal condition with God (Jn. 5:24; 11:25-26), but you just need to live by it in the world (Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:15).

No one can "separate" you "from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:39), so that's your "helmet of salvation." *Don't let them mess with your head*, you might say, if you wanted to wax a little bit more spiritual about it. Understand: Satan is the ultimate "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10); and as such, he will orchestrate *all kinds* of suggestions to try to get you to *doubt* the reality and the eternal nature of your salvation with God. Stand on the truth of what He says (Rom. 10:11).

And Number 6: Sharpen Yourself with God's Word.

There have been several allusions to Scripture in these pieces of the armor: Truth, Faith, Righteousness, the Gospel, your Salvation—they're all inextricably connected to your Bible. But those were, if you will, primarily *defensive*. The idea is: God has placed you where you are—stand your ground, there's an army coming after you. "Having done everything... *stand firm*"—hold your position.

But this *last* implement of your equipment is, you might say, your only *offensive* weapon. It is also defensive against other attacks. I mean, if somebody is wielding a knife or a sword at *me*, I'm going to keep my distance. But *this one* can also penetrate. Look at the end of Verse 17—"and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

There are a couple of *really cool* insights in that phrase. The word that is translated "sword" is the Greek word *machaira*; it describes a small, light, *very sharp*, double-edged tool for hand-to-hand combat. There is a vivid word-picture that you can understand when you see the contrast between that and the other New Testament word for "sword"; that one is *rhomphaia*. It just sounds bigger and badder, and it is. A *rhomphaia* was a heavy sword, about three feet long, built with a grip so you could hold it with two hands, and you could swing it back and forth. You could even pinwheel it and deliver crushing blows that would create split personalities.

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That is the big sword. This is the little sword—more like a dagger, used to strike with precision from *very* close range. And by the way: This is the word that is also used in Hebrews Chapter 4, Verse 12, to describe God's Word as "living and active and sharper than any two-edged *machaira*, and piercing as far as the *division* of soul and spirit." The idea is that it lays open your soul, it reveals what is in your spirit, it is "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." So, it's an *incisive*, sharp, penetrating thing.

The other sword—that *rhomphaia*—is the word that is used to describe the "sword" of the Word of God that is wielded in judgment by Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. Read about it in Revelation 19:15. *That* is the sword that just *swipes through* and levels the enemies.

That's one nuance: This is the penetrating, precise, sharp "two-edged sword."

The other nuance is the word "word." There is a careful distinction between two New Testament words that are translated "word." It is hard to find the words to say to explain the word "word" as it is worded in your Bible. *This one* is *rhēma*; it means "a specific utterance" or "a specific thing said."

The *other* word is the word *logos*; all of our words that end in "ology" come from this word; it means: "the word about something"—the *big idea* about this subject. "In the beginning was the Word"—the *Logos*—"and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:1, 14). Christ is "the *Logos* of God," if you will (Rev. 19:13).

But *here*, we are told that this weapon of our warfare and our battle with the enemy is the ability to use the Bible *specifically*, applying *specific* things that God has said to specific circumstances (e.g., Acts 18:28; Titus 1:9). "The sword of the Spirit" is not just grabbing you Bible and waving it around as a symbol of what you believe; it is taking the things from it and applying *specifics* wisely, incisively, to combat the things of the world around you (cf. Eph. 5:11).

In this sense, it's like answering a question (e.g., 2 Pet. 3:4-6). It's like responding to a deceptive proclamation. It might be applying wisdom to a specific situation. It might be refuting a subtle lie with the truth.

You are going to be successful in this spiritual battle to the extent that you are willing to apply God's Word specifically and carefully in *your life*, and to the things that come upon you (cf. Jos. 1:8; Ezra 7:10; Ps. 1:1-3). It's not just something to be sentimental about. It's not just to sign a doctrinal statement—"I agree with those things"—it's to *know* the Word, and be able to apply it specifically (cf. Heb. 5:13-14). It means that you can carefully, incisively *personalize* the application of God's Word in a hostile world.

Now, I'm not smart enough to have timed this, and I didn't; but if the information that I have from my intelligence sources is correct—in Bruce Smith's Sunday School class, you are studying Psalm 119, the longest chapter of the Bible. It's 176 verses long, and that is not an accident. It's because there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and Psalm 119



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is an acrostic on the Hebrew alphabet. There are eight lines in each stanza, and all of the first eight begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the next eight begin with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, etc. So, 8 times 22 is 176 verses. The *entire* psalm is one continuous prayer. And the theme of every part of the stanzas is: the Word of God. "The sword of the Spirit" *is* "the word of God." I want to read to you the second stanza of Psalm 119. Remember: This is "the sword of the Spirit." This may encourage you.

Obviously, we can't make it all begin with the same letter in the English alphabet. This is the "Beth" section; "Beth" is spelled like the woman's name "Beth." As we said when we almost named a daughter that—"BEFF"; we thought about naming a daughter "Beth," and then we couldn't do it after we thought of that matter of silliness—and God didn't give us a daughter. And that's all irrelevant. You know, when there are that many mice running around in the attic, sometimes things fall out. *Seriously.*

The Word of God: Psalm 119, starting at Verse 9 and going through Verse 16—"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me stray from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You. Blessed are You, O Yahweh; teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have recounted all the judgments of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will muse upon Your precepts and look upon Your ways. I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word." (LSB)

*That's your sword!* Know it well enough to be able to *wield* it specifically, incisively—if you want to make another play on words: *pointedly*—to *exactly* the right place that it needs to be applied (2 Tim. 3:17). These things are *extremely* practical. These things are down-to-earth. It is meant for use by normal people like you and me. If you are "in Christ," *wear your armor!* It is the practical application of these six pieces of armor:

Are you committed to "truth," a truthful person?

Are you committed to "righteousness" in your behavior, even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient to do the right thing?

Are you prepared and happy to share the message of "the gospel of peace"?

Are you a person of "faith," knowing and obeying God's revelation?

Do you understand the amazing grace that brought you "salvation," so that you live confidently in it?

Are you able to handle accurately the "word of God" so as to apply it to specific situations?

I mentioned last week, some of the *silliness* that people have come up with about "Spiritual Warfare" in this last generation. Spiritual warfare—your part in spiritual warfare is *not* to go out looking for demons to flush out and shoot them down like you would birds when you're bird hunting. Nor are you to be afraid that a demon is going to pounce on you from behind some rock. *Nor* are you to be afraid that maybe your life is actually *infested* with demons because of wicked things that your parents did!

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*That is not what this war is all about!* This is about: You are "in Christ"! Your enemy hates *everything* to do with Christ (cf. 1 Jn. 3:8b; Rev. 20:10), so you are under attack.

You are not meant to "bind Satan" (cf. 2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8). You are not here to cast out demons. Look, demons are real (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:9), but you are here to stand your ground (cf. Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9), operate in your armor—confidently, steadily being about your business of seeking to free the captives of the enemy (2 Tim. 2:26) so that they, too, can be "in Christ" (2 Tim. 2:10).

"Take up the full armor of God"—with or without a "u" in the word "armor." This is what God has granted to you, that you might be His instrument in this world, "and having done everything, to stand firm."

Let's pray:

*Father, we see the assaults all around us. We hear the lies, and we see the manipulations. We see our whole society just running headlong toward the end of Romans Chapter 1, not only doing evil things but demanding that everyone give "hearty approval" of them. The assault is on. Make us comfortable in our armor, assured of its usefulness. May our "feet" be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"—by which not only can we stand our ground, but we can free captives of the enemy who will come to faith in our wonderful Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen.*