

The Belt of Truth
Our Spiritual Foundation
Winning the War for Our Soul
PBC Fall Series

Texts: Multiple

Ephesians 6:13- 14 “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand** firm. **Stand** therefore, having fastened on the **belt of truth** ...”

Proverbs 23:23 “Buy **truth**, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.”

John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but **grace and truth came by Jesus Christ**.

John 14:6“Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Ephesians 1:13 “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,” (cf Col 1:5)

Ephesians 4:15 “Rather, **speaking (i.e., confessing together) the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,”

Ephesians 4:20–25 “But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, **as the truth is in Jesus**, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in **true righteousness and holiness**. Therefore, having put away falsehood, **let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor**, for we are members one of another.”

John 17:17: “Sanctify them **in the truth; your word is truth**.”

1 Timothy 3:15 “but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, **the pillar and support of the truth**.” (NASB95)

Introduction:

We have been working through the final and most important paragraph of Paul’s letter to the Ephesian Christians who have been given a marvelous enlightenment into a divine secret that God has revealed to His servant Paul who is now making it known to them and us. The revelation has to do with a ***stunning plan that God the Father is working out through the ministry of God the Son to restore all of creation*** to the

perfect condition of *unstained goodness and unmarred beauty* (Eph 1:4), *unencumbered blessing* (Eph 1:33), and *unbroken harmony and unrestrained fellowship* (Eph 1:5, 6b-8) – and the **term for all of this is “shalom”** – a full-orbed peace with God and man that was won and made by none other than our very own Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Eph 2:14-19).

After God quickened us so that we could respond to this amazing plan (2:4-5), the Holy Spirit indwelt us and became both the validation and the guarantee that every believer will stand before God and receive the inheritance God has promised to him because of his permanent, in-dissolvable union/association with Jesus Christ (1:5,14).

And because of this amazing plan that every member of the Trinity is working out in us, we as members of the Church of Christ are the first display of the shalom that will one day be present everywhere when Christ comes back to reign over the earth.

This is the reason the relationships we share with other members in our local church, in our marriages, families, homes, and employment are so important. ***They should be flavored and marked by the beauty and blessing of the full-orbed shalom Christ won for us!*** So if the Holy Spirit has helped us to know and understand this (1:15-23) and is also strengthening us with His unlimited power so that we are able to display and preserve this shalom (3:14-19), ***why is it so hard and why do we encounter such resistance in every area of our lives?***

Paul answers our frustration by reminding us that though we have been immensely blessed by God and are present possessors of this amazing shalom, ***we are living under constant, relentless attack*** from a very powerful, ancient enemy of God who is determined to ***destroy, derail, damage, or disfigure this display of God’s wisdom, power, and grace in our lives*** – and he has powerful evil forces and multiple strategies and schemes at his disposal in his war against God’s people (6:10-13).

As we prepare to look at verse fourteen this morning, lets make sure to remind ourselves of three important concepts we have come to understand in the previous messages in our study on *Spiritual Warfare: Winning the War for Our Souls!*

1. ***What exactly is Paul exhorting us to do in this war going on around us?***

- As we face the superior numbers and powerful forces of the enemy that comes against us and as we encounter his battle schemes and tactics – what are we supposed to do?

- Paul’s answer to this question is found in a single word repeated 4x in this section – it is the word “**stand**” (6:11,13,14).
- The idea behind this term is to stand our ground or to refuse to give up or cede our position when we find ourselves under attack and in the heat of the battle – no matter how outnumbered or outmatched we may think we are at that moment.
- And the way Paul explains this concept is by attaching a phrase to the term “stand” in 6:13 – he describes the idea of standing by using the term “**withstand**.” This is the same concept Peter expresses in 1 Peter 5:8-11 where he exhorts his readers to “**resist** the devil by remaining firm (unshakable) in your faith.” James assures his readers that when we “**resist** the devil, he will flee!”

1 Peter 5:8-11 “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (NASB95)
James 4:7 “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

- So, **our responsibility in the war against our souls is simple – we are to resist the devil.** But, what hope on earth do we have on winning against such an ancient and powerful enemy? And that is the second important concept we must recall. We do not fight in our own strength, but in the strength of another who has successfully resisted the devil and from whom the devil has already fled (Matthew 4:1-11).

2. *What foundational truth will give us unassailable hope so that when we encounter the enemy and find ourselves in the heat of a prolonged battle, we will not lose heart or give up the ground God has won for us?*

- We do not fight in our strength but in the strength of another – **a divine champion** who has fought against and defeated Satan in our stead! Jesus Christ our Lord!
- This divine champion was promised (Gen 3:15), announced (Is 9:6-7), and described (Is 11:1-16). He wore an armor and utilized a strength supplied by the Spirit of God (Is 11:2).
- We have been **formally, legally, spiritually, and personally joined to him in an unbreakable union that is marked by his unswerving loyalty, unfailing devotion, and unbroken affection for us!**
- Like David faced Goliath, the strength of the Philistine army, and as Israel’s champion, fought in their place – so **Christ is our champion.**
- **He has fought the Devil in our place and has won the victory for us!**

- And it is ***in His strength and because of His victory*** that we who belong to him are confident that when we face this same enemy, Christ has already won the day for us! ***This is what Paul meant when he exhorted Timothy to take courage and be strengthened by the grace (enablement) that is found in his union with Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:1).***
- However, though our champion has won the day for us, we still face the daily battles that come against us as we live our lives in the realm that is energized by the one Paul describes as the prince of the power of the air” and who is at work in the lives of those who do not know Christ and who are marked by disobedience (2:1-3). ***How exactly are we to avail ourselves of the strength and victory that Paul tells us is available in Christ? Put differently, practically speaking, how are we to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might?” (6:10)***
- 3. ***How exactly are we to stand our ground and resist the Devil in the day of battle (the evil day 6:13) and how are we to do it in the strength of His might?***
 - The answer is by **putting on** certain pieces of God’s armor and by **taking up** specific pieces of the armor that Christ himself utilized to resist the Devil in his own temptation.
 - Specifically we are to prepare for the battles we encounter daily by putting on pieces of armor that mark our identity – who we are in Christ:
 - a. we are to take truth and strap it around our waists like a belt as the foundation of who we are and what we are truly like in Christ – our new identity and character because of our union with Christ.
 - b. we are to take the righteousness Christ has won for us and given to us and wear it like a breastplate.
 - c. we are to take the peace that comes from the gospel and find in it a stability for our feet that afforded by the battle shoes of a Roman soldier.
 - We are also to take up three pieces of weaponry by which our association/union with Christ affords us marvelous protection in the heat of the battle:
 - d. A helmet that assures us of the security of our salvation won by Christ.
 - e. A shield comprised of the doctrines of the faith by which Satan’s darts are deflected and quenched.
 - f. A marvelous sword from the Spirit by which daily victory is assuredly won.

The very first thing God has given us to arm us for success in battle is the “belt of truth.” But this belt will do us no good if we do not understand its significance so that we employ it properly in our lives. And to properly understand how to use this piece of the armor God has given us we need to ask and answer three questions:

I. What exactly is the belt of Truth?

A. *The nature of the belt:*

When Paul tells us that in order to stand and resist the Devil, we must first prepare by strapping on the belt of truth, he uses ***two terms*** that are important to our understanding of what he means:

1. We are to ***strap*** something on – this term is used to describe putting on a piece of clothing – specifically something (***usually a weapon***) that would be strapped on around the waist or thighs.
 - ***Judges 3:16*** – Ehud made a two-edged sword and strapped it on his right thigh under his garment.
 - ***Judges 18:11*** – 600 men of the tribe of Dan were armed (girded) with weapons of war.
 - ***Psalms 45:3*** – the ancient hymnwriters of Israel, the sons of Korah, exclaimed of King David, “*Gird your sword on your thigh, O Mighty One, in your splendor and majesty!*”
2. Paul wants us to picture this ***belt*** being strapped on around a person’s waist or thighs.
 - When a biblical writer referred to someone’s thighs or waist/loins, he was referencing their source of physical strength.
 - It was from the loins of a person that new life would be conceived and born.
 - Strapping on a belt or girding up the loins was often used as a metaphor for strength or preparation for hard work or exertion of strength.
 - It meant to be prepared and ready for a sudden action or event.
Luke 12:35-37 “*Be **dressed** in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. “Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. “Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that **he will gird himself to serve**, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them.” (NASB95)
1 Peter 1:13 “*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” (NASB95)*

- This is why “girding up one’s loins” came to be a way of saying, get ready for hard work or strenuous activity such as battle engagement.
- So whatever this belt is, it is important to strap this on before we engage in battle – and that speaks to its function – what a belt or girdle was designed to do.

B. *The function of the belt*

- A belt or girdle in biblical times was designed to do two primary things:
 1. ***Provide Stability*** – It was designed to gather up a person’s tunic so that it would not hinder strenuous activity or cause a person to trip or stumble at a key moment in the struggle or battle.
 2. ***Provide Utility and Accessibility*** – It was designed to hold important tools or weapons so they would be available at the critical moment in the battle – example: a sword.
- So the image Paul is using is telling us that we are to wrap something around us that is essential to our winning the daily battles we encounter as we live our Christian lives. Without this belt – we are weak, exposed, and completely vulnerable to Satan’s schemes and attacks.

C. *The identification of the belt – truth*

- The belt is actually truth – and so we need to understand what Paul means when he starts out with the truth as the foundational piece of our armor.
 1. God is the Author and Source of all Truth –
 - Fundamentally, truth is reality (ontologically real) and because God is the creator, sustainer, moral authority over, and evaluator of all reality, truth is ultimately sourced in Him and from Him flow any and all blessing.
Isaiah 65:16 ““Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Will swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight!”
 - Because God is true and the source of truth – He is trustworthy and Messiah himself affirms this to be so.
Psalms 31:5 “Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O LORD, God of truth.”
 2. Christ is the Embodiment of Truth – ***the Living Word*** (John 1:17; 14:6)
John 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
John 14:6 “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

3. The Truth is God's Word – ***The Written Word*** (John 17:17)
 “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” (NASB95)
4. That Word is How we are Saved – Ephesians 1:13
Ephesians 1:13 “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,” (cf Col 1:5)
5. The Truth is what God Uses to Sanctify Us – John 17:17; Eph 4:20-25
John 17:17: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”
6. Christ has caused Holy Spirit to teach us the Truth – Eph 4:20-24
Ephesians 4:20-25 “But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”
7. We are to confess, obey, and consistently walk in the truth
Ephesians 4:15 “Rather, speaking (i.e., confessing together) the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,”
Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.”
3 John 3 “For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth (in other words, the truth about you – my comment), that is, how you are walking in truth.”

So ... if we are going to resist the Devil and withstand his attacks, ***we are going to have to strap on the same piece of armor that Messiah used to successfully resist the devil and cause him to flee – we are going to have to wear truth as a foundational garment that girds up our lives.***

Which leads me to the second question – why truth and not something else? Why is this component of the armor listed first? Why is it so important?

II. Why is this belt of truth so important?

A. ***Truth is foundational to who we are in Christ***

- We are not just people who happen to believe and confess a certain truth about God (Eph 4:15).
- We are not just people who are striving to tell the truth and live out its demands in our lives (Eph 4:25).
- We are actually people whose entire identity is now truth! In other words, as Christians, we don't just talk the truth and do the truth, we actually are truth because truth has transformed us in our inner being! Paul talks about this reality by comparing truth to light and revealing that we are not just people who went

from being in darkness to being in light – we are actually light! (Eph 5:8) “for you were formerly darkness, **but now you are Light** in the Lord; walk as children of Light”

B. Truth is foundational to what we are to do for Christ: we are to display and announce the truth to those who are still in darkness! (1 Tim 3:15)

1 Timothy 3:15 “I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”

C. Truth is foundational to how we are to stand victoriously for Christ

John 8:31–32 “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.””

1 John 2:14 “I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and **you have overcome the evil one.**”

And everything that we know about Christ the Living Word has been revealed to us in the Bible – the Inspired, Written Word. Which brings us to our final question this morning – how do we actually use this belt of truth effectively?

III. How do I use this belt of truth effectively?

We know the truth and have been given it in the Scripture – but often, we are like the miser who has many sacks filled with gold and precious stones but who never opens the bag or uses his wealth – but is very happy and content to have the bags. And then one day an enemy comes and replaces the bags of treasure with identical bags of bricks and stones – and because the miser never opens the bags – he is as happy with his brick and stones as he was with the gold and precious stones. We are often like this miser when it comes to truth and the word of God! Solomon has a word for us about this danger – **Proverbs 23:23** “Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.”

So how do we go about making sure we open up the word of truth and use the wealth God has given us in its pages for our good and for His glory?

A. We Must Read and Hear the Word Regularly, Thoughtfully, and Accurately

Psalm 1:1–2 “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.”

2 Timothy 2:15 “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”

B. *We Must Receive the Word Eagerly and Submit to it Willingly*

1 Peter 2:2 “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,”

James 1:21 “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

C. *We Must Apply the Word Correctly and Employ It Consistently*

2 Timothy 3:16–17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

James 1:22–25 “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

- ***To eradicate wrong thinking in life (2 Cor 10:3-5)***

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are **taking every thought captive** to the obedience of Christ,”

- ***To embrace and shape right living throughout life (Romans 12:1-2)***

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

D. *We Must Rest in the Word Completely and Confidently – remain in it*

Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (NASB95)

- ***by trusting what it says about life and circumstance***
- ***by receiving its warnings and appropriating its promises***

This means on a practical level – we will look to God’s Word to **guide** us as we navigate the complexities of life and culture. We will submit to God’s word to **govern** us as we navigate the current circumstances that come in life. We will depend on God’s Word to **guard** us as we face pressure from the hostile world around us!

Conclusion

- God has given us a wonderful piece of armor and has promised by means of this belt to provide the strength we need to stand. However, for the belt of truth to work and accomplish its purpose we have to put it on and apply it diligently to all areas of our life and walk as believers. And this is hard – because it comes into our life and forces us to take a long hard look at what we truly believe and where our confidence truly lies as we navigate life under attack!
- We must join the writer of Hebrews in holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering! (Heb 10:23). And this will require far more from us than mere casual reading of a verse or two a day or a chapter here and there every so often.
- We must not stop at merely understanding the truth accurately we must persist until every part of us savors the truth! Do not stop until your mind fully understands, your will cheerfully submits, your conscience is educated and shaped, your heart loves, your hands perform it, your feet walk in it, your mouth speaks and celebrates, and your memory savors the truth you have read in God's Word!
- We must relentlessly bring our thinking in line with God's truth. Here is an example of what that could look like for you this week:

Reading Phil 2 – the majestic passage where Jesus lays aside the outward glory, privilege, and power that were His as a member of the Trinity and took upon himself a human body and came into this world as a servant – a slave. He humbled himself in that way and this humility manifested itself in a marvelous obedience – to flawed human parents (that he had created) and to wicked earthly rules (Roman governors and broken political system). This obedience was so extensive that he submitted to the worst possible death imaginable in its pain and shame – execution by crucifixion. This is a stunning, jaw-dropping obedience.

And as we hold our obedience up in comparison to this majestic obedience, we are ashamed and perhaps even discouraged – until we open up Romans and realize that when God looks at us, He never sees our weak, small, and broken obedience – He sees the majestic obedience that Christ won for us and that God the Father imputed to us! Christ's obedience is in fact our obedience – and it burns away any discouragement or any human legalistic effort to measure up – and instead it

produces in us a glad obedience to God our Father that comes out of gratitude for the obedience won for us by God the Son and the strength that comes from the Holy Spirit that enables our own glad and responsive obedience! And this brings joy to the Father's heart and praise to the Father's Glory – which is the point of Ephesians!