

Armor, A Sword and Walkie Talkies

Put On All Of God's Armor: Ephesians 6:10-18

We are under attack! But don't head for the hills. All of us in God's kingdom of light are sitting in the middle of Satan's kingdom of darkness (he is the god of this world, for now, Paul said). We are the world's enemy and we are living our lives in its territory. So, Paul exhorts all believers, all followers of Jesus, to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power and to put on all of God's armor so that we will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-11, NLT).

Did you know that Satan has strategies currently employed to destroy you? Peter tells us to stay alert and to watch out for our great enemy, the devil, because he prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. He exhorts us to stand firm against him and to be strong in our faith (1 Peter 5:8-9).

This battle is not against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

So, this is not a fight that we can win in the flesh. That's a relief, because I know that I would have no chance in my own strength against Satan and his army! I mean, I was a pretty good athlete once upon a time, but I get winded now just walking to the mail box! The most well trained, disciplined and ready athlete would have no chance against a power like Satan in the physical realm. This battle is real, and it's being waged right now in the spiritual realm. The fight is over you, me and all believers, and every soul on earth, and there is no way to avoid it.

It's interesting to me that many scientists theorize that two or more worlds can co-exist in the same place. They say it is possible that there are many unseen worlds co-existing with ours right now, unbeknownst to us. From God's Word, we know that there is the realm of the spirit co-existing all around us, all of the time. This realm is full of good and evil spirits, a.k.a. angels and demons.

Sometimes, we are just cruising along in life and all is well. And praise God for those times, because they are wonderful and that's the way God ultimately wants it

to be for us. And we have His wonderful kingdom to look forward to, where there will be no evil or sin, only righteousness and peace. But, many times in life we begin to realize that something is wrong. God's Holy Spirit, that He has given us, speaks to our hearts and we just know that things are off, and we realize it's a spiritual attack. Even if life is seemingly smooth for you at the moment, right now Satan and his minions are scheming against you; attacking in ways you do not recognize and planning further attacks on you shortly.

Now, at this point, you may be thinking, "gee, thanks for the upbeat message today, Brian. I think I'll go on back and find something else to read!" But don't. I am not trying to discourage or bring fear, but warn you and to shed some light on how the Bible says to defend ourselves as Christians against the attacks of the Devil. God has led me into this study because we all struggle with spiritual attacks.

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians in chapter six, got all of this down. You remember that he had a few attacks to deal with in his life! If you haven't already, prayfully read verses 10 through 18, and then we'll continue going through them one by one.

Put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm (Eph. 6:13).

Okay, there it is. One, we need to know what God's armor is. Two, we need to have all of it. And three, we need to put each piece on. Why is this so important? So that after the spiritual battles you will still be standing, and standing firm! Without God's armor and weapons, the Devil may very well destroy you. So, it is absolutely imperative for all of us to get this and employ it in our lives.

We've covered verses 10 through 13, so let's look at the armor from verses 14 through 18.

Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness (v. 14).

I like that. First of all, Paul says, when the enemy attacks, stand your ground! "Yeah, why should I be moved, devil? You are attacking one of God's children here. I have the truth of God and the reality of all that He is. God is good, He is present with me, He is all powerful, He is perfect and right in all of His ways. He is

merciful and kind, and He is my refuge and strong tower of defense. God is working all things out for good for me, because I love Him and I am His child. You can't do anything that my God doesn't allow you to do. And I trust my God!"

An analogy for the belt of truth could be a weight lifter's belt. Have you seen one of those? It is that thick, leather belt they wear around their waist when they are lifting those heavy weights. Without it, their bodies begin to buckle under the pressure of all that weight on their shoulders. But with the belt around their waist, their bodies stay straight and upright and can hold the weight for a moment, until they set it down.

We have the truth on our side. Who God is. What He has done. What He is going to do. His character. His mercy and love.

So, #1, the belt of truth. And #2, the body armor of God's righteousness. When you come under attack, think of the truth of God and the truth of who God is; think of how God is perfect in all of His ways. Think of His character and know that He is working out His perfect plan and perfect purpose for you.

For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News (the Gospel) so that you will be fully prepared (v. 15).

Jesus said, I am leaving you with a gift- peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid (John 14:27). The peace that we have, that has come to us through the Gospel, is the peace of Jesus Christ Himself, the peace of God dwelling in us. Isaiah said that Jesus will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. And we have access to this peace through Jesus. Amen? Amen!

We are not fully prepared for the attack of the devil unless we put on the peace of God, the truth of who He is, and what He is doing in our lives. We need the peace that only comes from knowing Him. The peace that comes from the Gospel is like entering into a rest. We are resting in what Jesus has done for us, not what we have or have not done for God. He has done it all. We are saved by grace through faith alone, not by works, so that no one may boast except in God and in His goodness and faithfulness. And we are resting on what He is going to do for us, not what we can or cannot do. Oh, the perfect peace found only in the presence of our Lord. Be in that place! Be at peace with what God is doing in your life. Be at peace with

where you are at “in Christ.” You are in Christ and He is in you. You are in God’s hands. Remember the storm that Jesus calmed? While they were afraid, He asked the disciples why they had so little faith. He was with them and they should have known that He would save them. Be at peace. Only in our Savior may true and lasting rest be found.

Okay then, the 3rd piece of armor for us to “put on” is resting in our relationship with Christ and being at peace because of our salvation in Him. Putting on the peace that comes from the Gospel is another necessary piece of the armor in order for us to be prepared for the attacks that inevitably will come. Let us seek that rest in the presence of the Lord Jesus daily.

In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil (v. 16).

Faith here I think refers to standing firm in our trust in God with our lives, knowing who He is and that He intends good for us. Faith is seen, it is born out, when we are standing our ground against the enemy as he lies to us or when the attacks keep coming, because we know that God is Sovereign in all things. Our gracious Father works all things out for good for those that have faith in Him. We need to stand strong, continuing to put our faith in Jesus to accomplish His perfect will in His perfect timing in our lives.

I love the illustration the Holy Spirit uses in this verse for faith. When our faith is strong it becomes like a shield that stops the fiery arrows of the devil. I can picture a large, thick metal shield being held up against some nasty and fiery arrows. But, I see those arrows bouncing off of the shield. Just, bing...bing...bing, falling all around and the little fires burning out. Notice that there isn’t just one arrow. Isn’t that true? It seems when we are under attack it just keeps coming, one after another. Make your faith like that big, heavy iron shield. Strong and impenetrable, and keep holding it up against those arrows. One after another they come, but the enemy will exhaust his resources at some point, so hang in there and keep that shield up.

So, #4, keep your faith strong and focused on the Lord and who He is and what He is doing. He is the Creator of all things and all things are held together by Him. He will never let us down!

Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (v. 17).

The fifth and final piece of armor to put on is salvation, and we are to put it on like a helmet. Okay, but what does Paul mean by “put on salvation?” Here’s one possible answer. I think Paul may mean two things here: the hope of our eternal life in Christ and the unpayable debt we owe to Christ for this salvation He has freely given us.

When we are faced with trials and temptations, when the devil is attacking our finances or our loved ones, when we are weak or being persecuted, when things are happening that we just do not understand, look to the cross. Look to the salvation that God has so freely given to us as a gift, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We could not make ourselves right with Him, He did it for us. God humbled Himself and became a man and went to the cross for you and me and for the whole world. That is the sacrifice that He made for us. We need to stay focused on the eternal life that He worked out for us. We need to stay focused on our true home, God’s kingdom. Colossians 3:2 says, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” When we remember that we have eternal life, we remember that nothing can or will ever separate us from the love of God in Christ, not even death. No matter what is happening, He keeps our souls safe for all eternity with Him.

Romans 8:35-39, NLT, says:

35 Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? 36 (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) 37 No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us (NKJV says, “we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”). 38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen? Amen.

The sixth thing Paul tells us to do is not to “put on” another piece of armor, but to “take the sword of the Spirit”, which he explains is the Word of God.

So, we have five pieces of armor to put on, and now our weapon to take with us is the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures that make up our Bible.

Imagine being on the battle field with all that armor, your helmet and your shield, but with no weapon. And you are out there with no communication device to speak to your commander, your fellow soldiers or allies in this battle. You probably wouldn't last too long out there. We have been given all the armor and now we just need to put it on. But we must take a weapon for the battle, and our weapon is God's Word. His word is truth, it is alive, active and effective, piercing through the heart like a sharp, two-edged sword. It goes out and does not return without accomplishing what God set out to accomplish by it. Going through these verses in Ephesians, learning to put on the whole armor of God, is a perfect example of the wisdom, strength and power that we have available to us through His Word. It is the Word that spoke all things into existence.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 says:

3 We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. 4 We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. 5 We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

God's Word and our prayer life are the weapons we use to knock down the strongholds that the enemy has taken and to take them back in Jesus' name. These are our spiritual weapons.

So, that is the armor of God and our weapons to fight with, His Word and prayer. Prayer is like a communication device that a soldier might use on the battlefield to reach his commander or fellow soldiers. We must use prayer to reach our High Commander, and we must stay in close coordination with our fellow “soldiers.”

Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere (v. 18).

On the battlefield, we can be in constant communication with our Commander. Through prayer we can be asking for help, getting instructions and directions, and just being comforted and encouraged by Him. Prayer is key in this battle. Notice, Paul doesn't say, "don't forget to pray every once in a while." He says, "pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion." If a soldier is out in the battle and only getting the directives from his/her superiors every once in a while, how can they expect to have victory? We need to be in constant communication with our Savior for His strength, His wisdom, His power and His direction. Lord, help me to call on you more, even constantly!

And we should never forget the fellowship of the believers. Some of us have gotten into the habit of skipping church. And I'm not here to judge or beat anyone over the head, but my wife and I had missed church for some time when we moved to a new state, so we know firsthand. And now that we are back and plugged in, the blessings of our new friends in the Lord are indescribable. There is nothing like loving, Christian fellowship in the Lord. These are God's fellow soldiers on the battle field, and our brothers and sisters in Christ. They need you and you need them if you are going to have any victories in this spiritual warfare raging all around us, all of the time.

Okay, so to summarize, we found five pieces of armor to put on, one weapon to take with us, a communication device to stay in constant touch with our High Commander and the support of our fellow soldiers in Christ.

For armor, put on truth like a belt and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Gospel. Hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil and put on salvation as your helmet. Take the sword of the Spirit for your weapon, which is God's Word. And pray in the Spirit at all times and on all occasions for all believers everywhere.

Stay alert in this battle against Satan and his army. Both Paul and Peter exhort us to stand firm against the devil and to stay alert. And be persistent in your prayers for all of God's army everywhere.

By God's grace may He arm us, empower us and keep us through this battle. The war has already been won by Christ at the cross. Give us victory in our battles, Lord Jesus. And, may Your Kingdom come soon!

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