

The Armor of God *Ephesians 6:13-17*

Introduction

Because we have been saved from our sin and filled with God's Spirit, we resolve to fight the good fight of faith the armor that God has supplied for the battle.

Ephesians 6:13-17

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

As Christians, we are at war with Satan and the flesh and are completely dependent on Christ for strength, safety, and victory.

Review – Last week, as Christians, we are called to be strengthened in the Lord, to know our real enemy, and stand firm until the day that Christ returns.

Exposition - *In order to Stand Firm (to resolutely stand in opposition to an enemy):*

I. Christians must bring every aspect of their life into submission to the truth.

Let's consider this first phrase in verse 14, "With the belt of truth buckled around your waist." Some translations say "girding your loins" or "having fastened on, which means "to secure or tighten." In this case, the soldier's armor is held together by his belt. By having his belt fastened tightly, the soldier's armor would be held in place and he would be ready for battle at any given moment. Likewise, the believer is to orient every aspect of their life around the truth. But what is the truth that is being referred to herein the text?

It is God's Truth. When Paul writes of the Armor of God, He most likely has Isaiah 11 in mind, which states "Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness (truth) the belt about His waist." And in the context of Ephesians, it is none other than the truth of God as it is revealed in the gospel. (see 1:13, 4:20-24) As believers buckle on this piece of God's armor, they will be strengthened by God's truth as it is revealed in the gospel. And as a consequence of orienting themselves around God's truth, they will display the characteristics of the God in their attitudes, language, and behavior.

T.S. – As we continue through verse 14, we come to our next phrase, which teaches us that...

II. Christians must remember and trust the righteousness of Christ.

Let's look at this phrase, "with the breastplate of righteousness in place." When Paul talks about "putting on of the armor of God," it is often related to other commands in his letter to "put on the new self" and to "put on Jesus Christ."

So, we come to this text and ask two questions: What is the “breastplate of righteousness referring to? And how does one put it on?

So, what is the “breastplate of righteousness” referring to? Well, we already know from the last phrase that Paul had God’s truth in mind when he told us to fasten on the belt of truth. In this phrase, we should expect a similar focus, which is exactly what we find. For many of you, your Bibles have this section in italics or all caps, signaling that these verses reference the Old Testament. In this case, that reference is Isaiah 59:17, where we read that the Lord “put on righteousness as a breastplate.” Thus, the righteousness that is spoken of here, according to Isaiah 59, is the righteousness of the Messiah, and according to the previous verses in Ephesians 6, part of the armor that belongs to God. This “righteousness” belongs to God. It is said to be “of God.”

So how does one put on the “righteousness of God?” We put on the righteousness of God by Faith. To “put on” the breastplate of righteousness is to live with faith and love for Christ, trusting in His righteousness as the basis of your acceptance before God. The only weapon that the Devil has that can damn us is “un-forgiven sin.” We strip him of this weapon when we “put on” the righteousness of Christ. The only hope of the Christians, when faced with the “damning methods of the Devil,” is to look to the justifying righteousness of Christ, which produces the fruit of holiness which does not give provision for the lust of the flesh.

T.S. – The next piece of God’s armor is found in verse 15, which teaches us that...

III. Christians must be prepared to proclaim the gospel of Christ.

Here is the next phrase: “With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.” This phrase is most likely a reference to Isaiah 52:7, which says, “How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace, and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, ‘Your God Reigns!’” In somewhat of a paradox, Christians wage spiritual warfare by preaching the gospel of peace. And according to verse 15, we are called to be prepared for the announcement of the gospel of peace. This proclamation of the gospel of peace is to be made by those who have experienced its power. We, as Gospel-transformed sinners, are called on to further the kingdom of God through the proclamation of the gospel, which in turn devastates the kingdom of darkness.

T.S. – Verse 16 reveals another piece of the armor that we desperately need in this spiritual battle. This piece of armor is the shield of faith, which teaches us that...

IV. Christians must believe the promises of God for safety and satisfaction.

Consider the phrase in full: “Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” The idea of a “shield” here is that of a full-body length wooden shield that has a water-dipped leather cover on the front of it so as to extinguish the flaming arrows of the enemy. Note that for Paul, it is not enough to simply block the arrow; the fire must also be extinguished.

To take up the shield of faith is to trust the promises of God “on our behalf.” This is to believe the promises of God and to reject the lies of Satan. By believing the promises of God by faith and trusting him, the lies and the schemes of the devil are unable to both pierce or burn us. And according to this phrase, the battle against the evil one is a battle to believe.

T.S. – Next is the Helmet of Salvation that teaches us that we must...

V. Christians must place their hope for salvation in Christ.

We have already seen the allusion to this verse from Isaiah 59:17 where we learned that this “helmet of salvation” belongs to the Lord. We read similar language in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, which says, “But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”

When the apostle Paul speaks of salvation, more often than not, he has in mind “full (or realized) salvation” as opposed to “initial salvation.” This teaches us that as Christ has dealt the death blow to our enemies and has accomplished salvation for us, we can place our hope in Christ not only for initial salvation but also for our final salvation. (See Philippians 1:6 & Hebrews 12:2) According to this piece of armor, there is no other place for the Christian to place their hope for salvation except in the Lord Jesus Christ.

T.S. – With the next piece of armor, we see the role that God’s Word is to play in the Christian’s life...

VI. Christians must be saturated with the Word of God.

Here is the phrase: And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. All aspects of the armor of God up to this point have been defensive, but now the apostle Paul introduces the Sword of the Spirit. The Sword of the Spirit is nothing less than the very “God-breathed” scriptures. Hebrews 4:12 describes God’s Word in a similar way, saying, “The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edge sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

To use this weapon with power, one must be first filled with the Spirit who wields it. Notice, it is the sword OF the SPIRIT. Believers must read it, mediate on it, and memorize it. No soldier has ever been too acquainted with their weapon. Just as Christ defeated the temptations of the Devil by quoting the Holy Scriptures, so should his servants follow his example and resist the Devil by daily and thoroughly immersing themselves in His word.

Conclusion

Because we have been saved from our sin and filled with God’s Spirit, we resolve to fight the good fight of faith with the armor that God has supplied for the battle. Furthermore, we cannot fight this battle alone. The imagery that Paul uses for the battle is not an “Army of One” but an “Army of Many,” who are united around a common goal and purpose to glorify God. God, in His grace, has beckoned us to this warfare and equipped us for the work. Let us, therefore, take up the whole armor of God against our enemy and stand until the Day that our Savior and King fully delivers us from this present evil age.