



ephesians

a church becoming

Sunday, April 13, 2025

Ephesians 6:10-18 Part 2

Ephesians 6:10-18

'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the [b]wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of [c]the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 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.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...'

A few weeks ago, we finally started to hone in on the spiritual armour that Paul implores us as Christians to put on as our defensive strategy against the enemy. As we talked about the first piece of armour - the belt of truth - we learned how foundational this piece is to the whole outfit. In fact, so much so, that some theologians have suggested that it is the belt of truth that actually undergirds every other piece of armour. You see, in ancient times, the belt was necessary because it kept every other piece of armour in its place. Hence the correlation to the element of truth - truth is an essential element that connects every part of our lives. Without truth, the enemy is free to manipulate.

And being the master manipulator that he is, Satan will try and get us to veer off of the path of truth by telling us lies. He doesn't do this though, by blatantly comparing right vs. wrong - that would be far too easy for the average Christian to spot. Instead he targets 'what is right' vs. 'what is almost right.' This manipulation of half-truths can be hard to spot and often requires us to choose between Gods ways and societal norms.

In his book, *Live No Lies*, John Mark Comer highlights this aspect and points out that the most destructive deceptions are those that closely mimic the truth - those slight deviations that are, 'almost right but fundamentally off course.' This subtlety is why we, as Christians, must be vigilant not to let society set our standards of truth and must continually seek guidance through God's Word. The scriptures provide our baseline of truth - unchanging and steadfast - against the ever-shifting norms of society.

So as we step into the remaining pieces of armour today, we will be looking at the Breastplate of Righteousness, Boots of the Gospel of Peace, Shield of Faith and Helmet of Salvation all in one go. And because all of these pieces are undergirded by truth, then we must understand that part of Satan's strategy will involve an attempt to attack these areas of our lives by undermining the element of truth in each of them.

We can see this strategy right away with the Breastplate of Righteousness as Paul highlights its protection over the heart, linking it directly to righteousness, or right living. This connection is significant because for the first century Jew, the heart wasn't just an organ but the center of one's spiritual and moral life. The heart was seen as the source of one's true nature and decision-making ability. Jesus references this in Matthew 12:34 by reminding us, 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.' Thoughts and ideas may start in the mind but it is the heart that ultimately makes the decision on how to proceed. And often times the heart can get confused with feelings. And this is part of the strategy of the enemy. As the seat of our emotions and decisions, the heart is often where our deepest battles are fought. When our hearts are misled by feelings or half-truths, our actions and choices can easily stray from God's path as well.

Living righteously, therefore, means aligning our decisions and actions not with worldly standards, but with God's standards, allowing His truth to guide and direct us. This alignment is what protects our spiritual integrity and keeps us walking in a manner worthy of the calling we have received in Christ.

In his letter to the Romans Paul says that:

Romans 8:1 (NKJV)

'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.'

This verse is a deep reminder that as Christians, despite our daily failures and sins, we are not con-

demned. You see, because of the price that was paid for our sin on the cross, you and I are made right in God's eyes so we can stand in His presence with Grace and Peace knowing that God has washed us clean and is continually renewing us day by day. The enemy on the other hand will try and sow lies that say that, 'you sinned today - you're not righteous.' 'Are you still struggling with that?? You're not worthy...' Yet, the breastplate of righteousness tells a very different story though, doesn't it? It's more than a piece of armour; it becomes our new identity, reminding us that He calls us family. Yes there will always be ups and downs but always know that His Grace is sufficient for you and for me.

Paul now encourages us to shod our feet with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace - which draws a clear and steady connection to the call to Stand - for the simple act of standing requires the use of feet.

Have you ever had to stand for long periods of time? (Disney Birks vs. Sandals) Here's what I know about standing for long periods of time - it requires the correct footwear. If I don't have the right footwear on, my lower back aches and throbs. Spiritually, the same principle is applied - in order to stand as Christ is calling us to, we need to have the right spiritual footwear. In Paul's case, he says that we need the Gospel of Peace. It's the Peace of God that enables us to stand strong.

God's peace prepares us. No matter the battles we face, His peace - which is firmly anchored in His victory over sin and death - gives us confidence for the battle ahead. And, because He is victorious, we - his sons and daughters - are also victorious. This fact alone should bring great peace to our hearts and minds and gives us the strength to stand. He is in control for He has already won the ultimate battle.

And this is why Paul says:

Philippians 4:6-7 (NKJV)

'Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.'

The beauty of this peace is that it doesn't require us to have all the answers but is based on trust - that the One who does have all the answers, is leading and guiding us every single step of the way.

The enemy may try to tell you that you are defeated and that the struggles and trials you face are

insurmountable but those are all just lies. The truth is that we can stand firm, knowing that we are never alone and that our ultimate triumph is guaranteed by the One who has already overcome the world.

Paul now calls us to pick up the Shield of Faith which quenches the fiery darts of the enemy. For me though, this imagery though doesn't quite capture the full intensity of these spiritual attacks. (SHOW PIC NOW) Going back to my spiritual warfare Nintendo game - in all of its 8-bit glory -there were literal burning darts that were being flung at us as we engaged the enemy. When I was a kid, my brother and I used to take old match books and flick the burning matches at each other... that's what this feels like.

The original Greek word here for 'dart' is the word 'belos' which can mean dart, but often means arrow or spear and in some cases even missile. How true is that for us here today? The attacks of the enemy don't feel like darts for some of us, often times they feel more like arrows, spears, or even missiles. Which should now give us a much better picture of what this attack really looks like and the role of the shield of faith.

Notice that the shield is connected to faith. Why? Because in a battle, it is the shield that stops the weapons. Faith operates the same way. Faith is not wishful thinking. Faith is full trust. It actively protects us by intercepting and neutralizing the attacks of the enemy by trusting in the promises of God our Father. Just as a physical shield absorbs the impact of incoming arrows or spears, our faith stops and diminishes the force of spiritual threats, preventing them from causing us lasting harm. This protection is not passive though; it requires an active and ongoing relationship with the Lord, nurtured through His Word and prayer.

Notice also the language that Paul uses to describe the effect of the shield of faith on these targeted attacks. He says that they extinguish the arrows - not just stop them, but render them completely powerless. This is significant because it illustrates the incredible power of faith to neutralize the effects of these attacks. The attacks of the enemy often present themselves as doubt, fear, discouragement, and temptation, amongst others. The Shield of Faith renders what was intended to be destructive into something completely powerless as it is already built upon the unshakable truths of God's Word and His promises. Even though we may not see the victory on the horizon, we see it on the cross, and that is where our faith gets its deepest trust. After all, it was at the cross where every sin was forgiven, every fear was overcome, and every doubt was silenced.

Marching on....we come to the Helmet of Salvation which to me is really interesting. Helmets cover

the head and the head is where the brain is. In ancient times a helmet was crucial for a soldier's survival in battle. It protected the brain, the control center for the rest of the body, from lethal blows. Similarly, in the spiritual armour, the Helmet of Salvation protects our minds - the center of our thoughts and beliefs.

The mind is often the primary battlefield where spiritual wars are fought. Our thoughts can either align us with God's truths or lead us astray with the enemy's lies. The Apostle Paul understood this well, which is why he emphasized the importance of the mind in our spiritual health and warfare. In Romans 12:2, he urges believers not to conform to the pattern of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This transformation is critical because this is what gives us the ability to discern and follow God's will.

The Helmet of Salvation also guards our minds against doubts about our identity in Christ and the assurance of our salvation. If Satan can cause that seed of doubt to grow, then just like a cancer it will take over and bring about our destruction. The Helmet of Salvation shields our minds from these doubts, reinforcing our confidence in the truth of God's Word and securing our identity as saved and protected in Christ. This protection is vital, for a mind safeguarded by salvation remains focused and steadfast, no matter what temptations or trials may come.

In Philippians Paul reminds us of the things that we should be thinking about. These are thoughts that build up, encourage and that lead to peace:

Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)

'Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.'

At the end of the day, though I'm not sure if you noticed it or not, but even though each piece of armour has a specific role, it seems to me that they all need to be employed otherwise our defense is incomplete. You can't just put on the boots of the gospel of peace in order to gain peace. Peace is intricately tied to the truth that grounds us, the decisions we make, the thoughts we think and the faith in which we operate. There's an interconnectedness with the whole armour of God that requires us to embrace it all and not just a piece. Each component complements the others, creating a full system of defense and empowerment. And it is only through the complete armour that the full capability to stand firm can be realized.

So how do we employ this?

Basically, as you lean into the truth of God's Word and live it out daily, you can find peace by trusting God in every situation, and keeping your focus on Jesus.

The Belt of Truth requires us to acknowledge what is true, understanding that truth brings freedom. This truth sets a firm foundation for the Breastplate of Righteousness, which helps us to align our heart with God's truth. With our hearts rightly positioned, our actions must follow suit; thus, the Boots of the Gospel of Peace help to guide our steps. And as we walk in His truth, a profound peace follows us. The Shield of Faith and the Helmet of Salvation work hand-in-hand to protect our minds and spirits from the enemy's fiery arrows - those relentless doubts, fears, and lies meant to steer us away from the path of righteousness. Together, this armour not only defends but actively empowers us to live out our faith boldly and without hesitation.

We need to understand that as Christians who employ the armour of God, we have been given authority over the enemy. We don't have to approach this from a cowering point of view - we get to approach it from a victorious point of view instead. After Easter, we will step into the final section of Ephesians where we talk about the next part which is our spiritual weapons of warfare. As we step in the power and efficacy of the sword of the spirit and prayer, we will begin to see the power and authority that we as Christians really do have.

Ephesians 3:20-21

'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.'

Blessing

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