



ephesians

a church becoming

Sunday, April 27, 2025

Ephesians 6:14-24

All good things must come to an end, and today marks the very last and final message in Ephesians. If you have been with us since the beginning in September, we have learned so much. Paul has spent six chapters reminding us that our identity can truly be found in Christ - not only through redemption, but that as Christians, we are a part of the family of God and called to live lives that reflect that incredible calling.

In the last and final chapter, Paul drives the point home that as Christians we are in a battle - not of flesh and blood though but of powers and principalities and the hosts of wickedness in the spiritual realm.

It's a reminder that following Jesus isn't just about coasting through life; there is real resistance, real opposition, and real warfare happening all around us. And if we're honest, that reality can be overwhelming. It can leave us feeling fearful or unprepared. However, Paul has already established the fact that we are victorious because Jesus is victorious. And that is a fact that we are encouraged to stand upon.

Ephesians 6:14-24

'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 - 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

A Gracious Greeting

21 But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22 whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.

23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Now, we've already gone through the armour in great depth, but I want you to see one more thing here this morning before we go into the weaponry. If you look really closely at the five pieces of spiritual armour, it's not hard to see that together and individually they all actually represent Jesus.

Belt of Truth: Jesus is our Truth

John 14:6

'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'

Breastplate of Righteousness: Jesus is our Breastplate

2 Corinthians 5:21

'For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.'

Boots of the Gospel of Peace: Jesus is our Peace

Ephesians 2:14a

'For He Himself is our peace...'

Shield of Faith: Jesus is our Shield

Psalms 3:3

*'But You, O Lord, are a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.'*

Helmet of Salvation: Jesus is our Helmet

Acts 4:12

'Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'

This is actually a great way to view our spiritual defense and would be the reason that Paul actually calls us to, 'put on Christ' in his letter to the Romans.

Romans 13:14

'But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.'

That verse has always frustrated many Christians as it leaves us with an imagery that we can't quite comprehend. In this context it's easy to think of putting on Christ as a cloak or a jacket or even a shawl. But that's not what Paul is showing us here in Ephesians. When we put on Christ, we are putting on impenetrable armour. Kevlar....flack-jacket... Because its purpose is meant to protect. Protect from what? The Battle. What battle? The one that is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and authorities in the spiritual realm.

But notice this - Jesus' presence isn't just about protection. He's also, now, our weapon. Namely, two things: the Word of God and prayer.

Vs. 17-18 says:

'And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...'

Notice Paul doesn't call it the sword of the flesh or praying in the flesh? Why? Because everything in our weaponry is empowered by the Spirit - this is where we get our power from. It's the sword of the Spirit and praying in the Spirit.

This is key, because it takes us back to Paul's introduction of this section in verse 10, where he tells us to be strong - not in the power of our own might but in the power of the Lord's might. Not flesh or mere willpower. Neither are strong enough. And because Jesus died, rose again, and ascended to heaven, He's given us His Spirit - the Holy Spirit - to dwell within us. So when Paul says 'the power of His might,' he's referring to that same Spirit. The Spirit of God is the one who equips, empowers, and enables us to stand.

So Josh - are you saying that Jesus is our protection but the Holy Spirit is our weapon?

Yes - and not quite. When Paul calls us to put on Christ, he's speaking symbolically and metaphorically, not literally. He's referring to the nature of Jesus - His character, and His precepts. Too many people think the armour of God is some kind of magical aura that just falls on us at will. But as we've

learned, the armour is actually about aligning our lives with the ways of Jesus and living accordingly. Example: Peace/Boots. We gain peace when we are walking in step with the ways of God. To be clothed in Christ is a choice we make every day to stand for Him and to live according to His ways.

And the Holy Spirit is deeply involved in this process - He is the source of our strength. We cannot live this way through sheer willpower. The Holy Spirit is the One who wraps us in all truth, He is the One that grows righteousness within us, produces peace as He orders the steps of our lives, strengthens our faith, and secures our minds with the assurance of salvation. And it is now that same power that strengthens our weapons of warfare.

So, let's break this down.

The first weapon that Paul instructs us to use is the sword of the Spirit which he also refers to as the Word of God. This is interesting to me because Paul is drawing upon the Psalmist who essentially drew the same comparison. In the Psalms, David wrote that the Word of God 'divides rightly.' That means Scripture isn't just for encouragement or inspiration - it's your weapon. This is why everything we do must be grounded in God's Word. Because His Word is as powerful as a sword - it cuts, it convicts, it corrects, and it protects.

If you remember back to our Revelation series, we saw a great picture of this in Chapter 19 where Jesus comes riding victoriously on a white stallion and John says in vs. 15, 'out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.' Such vivid imagery! What is John seeing here? He is seeing the victory of Jesus Christ as pictured by the white horse and sword. This isn't a literal sword out of the mouth of Jesus, swinging and cutting and slashing, no. This is in reference to the words of Jesus, being sharper than a double edged sword and having the power to take out His enemies. Quite simply, Jesus only has to speak and his enemies fall.

Now listen - this is one of the great themes all throughout Scripture! And you don't have to look very far to see example after example after example of this. In the New Testament, Jesus spoke and Demons fled. Jesus spoke, and the blind received their sight. Jesus spoke and the sick were healed; the raging storms fell silent. Jesus spoke and the dead were raised. And for those that think this only applies to the New Testament, let me take you back to the Old Testament - all the way back to the beginning where God spoke the Word and life was created. Let there be light - and it was so.

John takes this thought even deeper by stating:

John 1:1

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

What John is saying here is that Jesus Himself is the Word. He wasn't just present at creation - He was the active force of creation. Jesus is not separate from the Word of God; He is the living, breathing expression of God's will and authority. So, when God spoke creation into existence, it was through the Word - through Jesus - that all things were made.

John reinforces this just a few verses later:

John 1:3

'All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.'

So when Paul tells us to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, (which John also says was in the beginning and was with God and was God) he's not just giving us a book to quote from in difficult times - he's handing us the living authority of Jesus Christ Himself.

So when the enemy comes at us with his strategies and tactics, it's the power of the Word of God that gives us the ammunition to fight back.

When the enemy says, 'you're not good enough' the Word says, *'You are fearfully and wonderfully made.'* (Psalm 139:14)

When the enemy says, 'you're a failure' the Word says, *'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.'* (Romans 8:1)

When the enemy says, 'you're all alone' the Word says, *'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'* (Hebrews 13:5)

When the enemy says, 'you'll never change' the Word says, *'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.'* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When the enemy says, 'your situation is hopeless' the Word says, *'With God all things are possible.'* (Matthew 19:26)

The problem with today's generation though, is not the lack of power in the Word, but the lack of knowledge of the Word. People don't read the Word, so they don't know the Word. This is the biggest tactic of the enemy. He convinces us that it's easier to listen to a podcast about someone preaching about the Word or to read a book about someone writing about the Word then it is to actually read the Word and digest it ourselves. And he feeds us these lame excuses all the time saying that it's too hard to understand. Or, you're not a theologian, this will never work for you. But this could not be further from the truth! These are all tricks of the enemy. There are dozens of translations out there to make it easier to understand if you wanna go down that road. But at the end of the day, the Bible is not a book that is meant to be read like a novel. It is the inspired Word of God, and it requires inspiration. So you must pick up this book with the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit and ask Him to bring clarity, understanding and application - and He will.

And so the Word of God is a powerful weapon that as the Psalmist says, rightly divides. And equally as powerful now, is prayer. But not necessarily praying in the flesh, Paul says. Praying in the Spirit is where our power as Christians comes from.

Now the term - praying in the Spirit - historically, has brought about a certain level of confusion depending on the church circle you find yourself in. Some would read this and immediately connect it to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and because of the presence of speaking in tongues as the Holy Spirit empowered them, they would suggest that this is exactly what Paul is referencing here. Then there are those that say that Paul absolutely doesn't have that in mind here and that he is simply referencing praying as the Spirit leads. And then there is a third option that I would lean towards that says Paul is not limiting this to a particular type of prayer like tongues, nor is he excluding it. Rather, he is emphasizing how we are to pray: whether it's in Tongues, Spanish, English or Russian, the language isn't the point for Paul, it's the dependance upon the Holy Spirit as we pray - that we are led, guided, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This third viewpoint gains strong support from the original greek that translates this phrase to mean that, 'the sphere or environment of prayer is to be the Spirit.'

Again, it's not praying as our will, desire or flesh leads us, but as the Spirit leads us.

And when we pray like this, something happens. Something always happens when we pray as the Holy Spirit leads. Maybe things don't happen immediately. And maybe not always in ways that are visible. But something always happens in the spiritual realm when the Holy Spirit of God leads and directs our prayers.

It's not to say that we can't pray according to our wills and desires though - we can pray anything that's on our hearts and God will hear our prayers. Praying as the Spirit leads though is a different kind of praying - which requires sensitivity to how the Spirit is leading. It's how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane when facing the cross. His prayer was, 'not my will but yours be done.' This example shows us that there is a complete submission of one's wills and desires when praying as the Spirit leads.

And all Jesus was doing in that instance was simply living out the teaching that He had already given His disciples on how to pray. He taught them to pray this way:

Matthew 6:9b-10

'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.'

This is the lifestyle of prayer that Paul is teaching here in Ephesians - and it's simply an extension of what Jesus already taught: that our prayers would be continuous, Spirit-led, and fully surrendered to God's will. Why? Because prayer is not just about asking for things - it's our lifeline, our personal connection with the Lord. The more we pray, the more we grow in relationship with Him. And the more we combine the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God - with prayer, the stronger we become.

Now watch this - I want you to see the connection that is now being drawn between our two weapons: When we read Scripture and pray it, not only is our offense strengthened, but so is our defense as our steps are strengthened, and our hearts and minds are tuned closer to His. It all works hand-in-hand together.

And here's where Paul brings it all together.

He's shown us how the armour works. He's shown us how the weapons work.

Now he shows us how it all plays out in real life - through perseverance, through prayer, and through lifting up one another.

Sometimes though, depending on the situation, we simply do not know how to pray. It's in moments like these where we ask the Holy Spirit to show us how to pray, and he will. Often times he will lead us to a quiet place where we can focus on him. Other times he may have you prayed directly in the midst of your storm. And still other times, he will call us to embrace fasting and praying together. But ultimately, the point is that he will lead you and he will guide you, and he will show you how to

pray. (Relate to self: current situation where I'm struggling how to pray but in the kissing that struggle it actually draws me closer to Him).

So, directly on his call to embrace a lifestyle of prayer that is rooted in the word, Paul now encourages the Ephesians to pray with all perseverance and supplication for all the Saints. What does this mean?

So, I can't help but think that this is somehow connected to the Book of Revelation. Follow me: In Revelation 8, John sees an angel come to the altar and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. The symbolism here is beautiful, that all of the prayers that we pray get offered up to the Lord as a sweet-smelling fragrance. He hears them all, He values them all, and He answers them according to His will.

Paul encourages the church to keep those prayers coming and he now calls us specifically to pray for our brothers and sisters, which is deeply significant because it reminds us that the Christian life is not just about me and Jesus. It's about us - the whole body of Christ. Think about it, this has been one of the major themes in Ephesians: that we are all brothers and sisters and part of the family of God so we need to keep treating each other as family.

When we pray for one another, we're participating in the strengthening and advancing of God's kingdom. And every prayer we offer - for encouragement, for protection, for boldness, for perseverance, for freedom - is gathered by heaven, added to the incense before God's throne, and used by God in His sovereign plan.

And Paul now gives them a real world example. Himself. He says pray for me, your brother. He doesn't see himself as superior. Though he has a teaching role, he is very much one of them - their brother - and in this battle, he too needs their prayers.

To need prayer is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength.

It's a recognition that none of us are meant to fight alone. We were saved not just from something - we were saved into something. Into a family. Into the Body of Christ.

We have a Good Father who loves us.

We have a Saviour who died for us.

We are co-heirs with Christ, partakers in the inheritance of eternal life, and brothers and sisters together in this faith.

We are family: Blood is thicker than water - and the blood of Jesus is stronger than anything that could divide us.

There is great power in that.

So as we conclude our journey through Ephesians, remember this:

You have been equipped with armour that is impenetrable, weapons that are unstoppable, and a victory that is already established. So...

Walk in it.

Live in it.

Stand in it.

And when you've done all... stand.

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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