

The Armor of God

- The Christian life is a battlefield, not a playground!
 - Paul uses military images because the first century Christians understood them; he is chained to a Roman soldier as he is writing Ephesians (6:20 – an ambassador in bonds).
2 Corinthians 10:4 – For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.
1 Timothy 6:12 – Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.
2 Timothy 2:3 – Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
2 Timothy 4:7 – I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
- Ephesians 6:10-12** Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
- There are no recorded cases of demon possession in the Old Testament, but you will find it is rampant in the New Testament. This is because the war that is being waged between God and the devil is a spiritual conflict for men's souls. Israel had a physical covenant; we have a spiritual one. We enter into its spiritual blessings, but also into its spiritual battles! That warfare moved from heaven to earth at the incarnation, and we are still fighting ground warfare even today!
 - The Bible calls our enemy: **Satan**, meaning "Adversary," the **Devil**, meaning "Accuser," **Belial**, meaning "Extremely Wicked," **Lucifer**, meaning "Angel of Light," the **Dragon**, the **Serpent**, **Beelzebub**, the **Evil One**, the **Tempter**, the **god of this world**, the **Prince of the power of the air**, and the **Ruler of this world**.
 - Satan has many **tactics** that he uses on the church to try to defeat us: he accuses (Revelation 12:10), he condemns (1 Timothy 3:6), he devours (1 Peter 5:8), he imprisons (Revelation 2:10), he ensnares (2 Timothy 2:26), he takes advantage (2 Corinthians 2:11), he even tries to steal the Word away (Mark 4:15).

- Satan is not eternal like God (he is a created being), so he is limited – he is not all-powerful, all-knowing, or everywhere present. So how does he accomplish so much evil simultaneously throughout the world? Through his organized kingdom of darkness: principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places.
 - No matter how our circumstance may look on the outside, our battle is not against human beings. We are wasting our time fighting people when we ought to be fighting the devil who seeks to control people and make them oppose the work of God. That's why the devil loves religious people who attend church – he uses them "on the inside" to bring wrong attitudes and actions into the Body of Christ.
 - The ancient advice of the king of Syria to his soldiers when they went out to fight can be applied to our spiritual battle:
1 Kings 22:31b Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king.
 - In Paul's day, a wrestling match was not mere entertainment; it was a fight to the finish with the loser having his eyes gouged out. Our battle with Satan is a life or death conflict with eternal consequences!
 - The bad news is that the devil is a formidable opponent, and you cannot defeat him by human strength or religious resolutions. But the good news is that you CAN defeat him – if you do it God's way!
- Ephesians 6:13-18** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;
- Did you get dressed before you came to church today?
 - Since we are fighting against enemies in the spirit world, we need special equipment both for DEFENSE and for OFFENSE. God has provided the "whole armor" for use, and we dare not omit any part. Satan is always looking for an unguarded area where he can get a beachhead in our lives from which to launch an attack.

Ephesians 4:27 (KJV) Neither give place to the devil.

Ephesians 4:27 (TEV) Don't give the Devil a chance.

Ephesians 4:27 (GW) Don't give the devil any opportunity {to work}.

Ephesians 4:27 (NIV) Do not give the devil a foothold.

THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH

- Satan is a liar, but the believer whose life is controlled by truth will defeat him. The girdle was a belt that held the other parts of the armor together, and it also held the sword. Unless we live the truth, we have no right (and no confidence) to use the Word of truth!

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

- The loins encircled by the girdle are the central point of the physical system, and in Scripture are described as the seat of power. "To smite through the loins" is to strike a fatal blow. "To lay affliction upon the loins" is to afflict heavily.
- To be truthful with God, with yourself, and with others is absolutely crucial! Once a lie gets into the life of a believer, everything begins to fall apart. For over a year, King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba, and nothing in his kingdom went right. Psalm 32 and 51 tell the terrible price he paid.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

- The breastplate was made of metal plates and covered the upper body in front and back. Satan is the accuser, but he cannot accuse the believer who is living a godly life by the power of the Spirit.
- The life we live either fortifies us against Satan's attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us. Yes, it is God's righteousness lived through us, but we must allow it to work in our everyday lives!
- **Ephesians 4:24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
- **Philippians 1:10-11** That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

THE SANDALS OF THE GOSPEL

- The Roman soldier's leather sandals bound around the ankle and studded with hobnails so his feet would not slip in the battle. If we are going to be secure in our relationship with God, we need to stand on the gospel.

- It's not the gospel of "peace" when you hear it, or even when you understand it – it becomes the gospel of peace when you OBEY it!

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel ... by which also ye are saved ... Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ... he was buried ... he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- I can stand firm against the attacks of the devil because I KNOW that I have obeyed the gospel – I am a child of God!

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

- The shield was large, usually about four feet by two feet, made of wood and covered with tough leather. It protected the soldier from burning arrows. The edges of these shields were constructed so that a line of soldiers could interlock them and march into the enemy's forces like a solid wall. If your faith is weak, stand beside me! Sometimes we just have to push through the enemy ranks!

1 Corinthians 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight:

Hebrews 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

James 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

- The helmet was originally of skin, strengthened with bronze or other metals, and furnished with a visor to protect the face. It refers to the mind that is controlled by God's Spirit, someone who doesn't live for God just by FEELINGS (up and down), but by their CHOICES (consistent). We must have God's protection over our minds!

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Romans 15:6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

- The sword is the only offensive weapon provided in the Christian's armor – but it is enough because it is the Word of God!
Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- Paul uses RHEMA instead of LOGOS here, in other words a SPECIFIC portion of the Bible that the Holy Spirit leads us to use in a specific battle with Satan. The Holy Spirit quickens the passage to "come alive" in our lives in order to withstand Satan's attack.

PRAYING ALWAYS!

- Prayer is the energy that we take into battle. We cannot fight against the devil in our own strength. "Praying always" doesn't mean "always saying prayers" – it means "always stay in communion with God!" (keep the receiver off the hook!) That way you'll be ready for any surprise attack from the devil.
- Don't just focus on yourself and your needs. Prayer for others can bring victory into your life!

Job 42:10 And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Ephesians 6:10-18 (MSG) God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

I had a battle fierce today
Right in the place of prayer.
I went to meet and talk with God,
But I found Satan there.

He whispered, "You can't really pray;
You lost out long ago.
You might say words while on your knees,
But you can't pray, you know."

So then I pulled my helmet tight,
Way down upon my ears,
And found it helped to still his voice,
And helped allay my fears.

I checked my other armor o'er,
My feet in peace were shod.
My loins with truth still girded 'round,
My sword the Word of God.

My righteous breastplate still was on
My heart's love to protect.
My shield of faith was all intact,
His fiery darts to deflect.

My courage mounted up afresh,
I gripped anew my sword.
"Old Satan, get behind," I cried.
Oh, Glory! Praise the Lord!

Again his darts came thick and fast.
Faith quenched and put them out.
And while he raised a new attack,
I raised the victory shout.

I called on God in Jesus' name.
I pled the precious blood.
While Satan sneaked away in shame.
I met and talked with God.