

In Ephesians 6:10-11 Paul writes, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*”

Last time we saw that Paul is speaking of a similar, personal and close-up encounter with the spiritual forces of wickedness where the devil and his demons try to tempt us and weaken us so that we might sin.

Spiritual warfare is an encounter with the spiritual forces of wickedness and the Christian must put on the whole armor of God and be on constant alert.

A confession: It is good to revisit Scripture and turn it over in your mind and heart. This series has allowed me to do just that.

In the past, when I have taught on the Christian’s spiritual armor, I have conveyed the thought and the responsibility of the Christian awakening each day to the task of putting on his or her armor—one piece at a time. I am not alone in doing this as many pastors have exhorted believers to do the same.

This week as I have reviewed this subject I was reading through, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* by Kenneth Wuest and found the following:

“Take unto up” is *analambano*, “to take up” in order to use, “to take to one’s self,” thus “take up” as one takes up armor to put it on. The verb is aorist imperative, which construction issues a command given with military snap and curtness, a command to be obeyed **at once and once for all**. Thus, the Christian is to take up and put on all the armor of God as a once-for-all act and keep that armor on during the entire course of his life, not relaxing the discipline necessary for the constant use of such protection.

It only makes sense that the Christian keep his or her armor on all the time. Is there a time when Satan is no longer concerned about stealing, killing and destroying us?

When Jesus was out in the wilderness and was being tempted by the devil, the Bible says in Luke 4:13, “*Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*”

Now we don’t find in the next verse something like, “Now when the devil left, Jesus took His armor off and rested because the battle in the wilderness made Him weary...” NO! The next verses, Luke 4:14-15 says, “*Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee... And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*”

When it comes to spiritual warfare there is no reason whatsoever to take off your armor. If you're a Christian you are to take up and put on all the whole armor of God as a *once-for-all act* and *keep that armor on* during the entire course of your life.

The Christian may want to check for chinks in his or her armor and look for cracks or gaps.

The point is that the believer doesn’t relax the discipline necessary for the constant protection that comes with the use of his armor. When it comes to this spiritual battle, it’s foolish to unwind. When it comes to

this spiritual battle, it's suicide to settle down and kick your feet up. We are called to a constant alertness; to be sober-minded, clear-headed and self-controlled.

1 Th 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

1 Th 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

1 Th 5:8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

1 Pet 1:13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

1 Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Pet 5:9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Last time we looked at the first two pieces of the Christian's armor:

1.) The Belt of Truth

Paul commands us to “*gird our waist with truth*” because the Belt of *Truth* holds all the other components of our spiritual armor in place.

The Roman soldier's belt was not merely for adornment but was an essential part of the his armor because it wrapped around the loins and passed by the end of the breastplate; it also was used to support his sword.

If Satan is going to be successful at causing us to trip and fall, he is going to attack us with his most potent weapon—the *lie*. If he can disable you in the area of truth, you become a sitting duck for his other attacks. This is why we must “gird ourselves with truth.”

This is why Jesus prays to God the Father in John 17:17, “*Sanctify them by Your truth...*” and then He goes on to say, “*Your word is truth.*”

“Truth” is exactly what our Lord Jesus used in the wilderness. Every deceptive thought, every treacherous idea that Satan tried to fill Jesus' mind with was lead captive by Jesus with the Word of Truth. Every argument, every theory and every satanic reasoning that was hurled toward our Lord by the Prince of Darkness was refuted as Jesus used the truth of God's Word.

Satanic reason sets itself up against the true knowledge of God and unless you know what that true knowledge is, you will be deceived and a stronghold will ultimately be set up in your life. This is why you and I need to gird ourselves with truth.

If you are a new believer, or if you have been a believer for a while but have never been challenged in your Christian life from the Word of God, the first thing you need to do is put on the “belt of truth.”

- “Putting on the belt of truth” means its your personal goal to learn the truth of God's Word and making it so much a part of who you are that you can't live without it.

- “Putting on the belt of truth” means hiding the Word of God in your heart so that when temptation comes, you won't fall apart or be crushed because you are wearing this Belt—this is the essence of what Paul is saying in verse 14—“*stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth.*”

2.) *The Breastplate of Righteousness*

The Breastplate of Righteousness protects us when Satan attacks our efforts to live righteously.

The Breastplate of Righteousness is securely on when righteousness becomes a way of life for the believer. You "put on" righteousness as you walk in the righteousness of Christ. As you walk in the righteousness of Christ you are protected.

Satan attempts to apply a fatal thrust to our hearts by tempting us to sin. The Breastplate of Righteousness is in force when our hearts are pure and we are living a righteous lifestyle.

As the Breastplate of Righteousness is in place, Satan won't be able to gain a foothold. Putting on the Breastplate of Righteousness is practicing righteousness. Practicing righteousness will serve to protect your heart from the enemy.

3.) *Feet are shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.*

(Eph 6:15 NKJV) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

This, I believe, is the willingness to go wherever our Lord leads with the good news of salvation.

“How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” (Romans 10:13-15.)

One commentator says that this piece of the Christian's armor is used offensively to free those who are held captive by Satan.

Remember, Jesus words when He walked into the temple? Recorded in Luke 4:18, Jesus says, *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed...”*

As ambassadors, God has called us to go out into all the world to make disciples—to share the life liberating Gospel to those who are held captive by Satan to do his will. As we go we will encounter obstacles to the expansion of the Gospel—We need to make sure we are wearing the proper footwear.

Having the right “footwear” for battle...

Each time our men have gone to play paintball wars, I've tried the best I could to make sure I had the right attire. I wore camouflaged clothing so I could blend in and not easily be targeted.

Another way I made sure I was fit for “battle” was my choice of footwear. I made sure that I wore shoes that not only protected my feet from the rocky and woody terrain but shoes that kept me from slipping and falling.

Remember that Paul was in all likelihood chained to a Roman soldier as he wrote the book of Ephesians. The shoes, or boots of the Roman soldier were designed to enable him to march long distances each day (up to 25 miles a day over rough terrain) while carrying a heavy backpack (up to 90 pounds).

In order for a soldier to accomplish this feat, he needed footwear that was designed to carry this weight, and still be able to keep his feet protected. The Roman soldier wore sandals, which were bound with thick leather over the instep and around the ankle. The sole of his sandals were outfitted with spikes and cleats because he needed to be sure footed, and able to move about quickly when necessary.

In the spiritual realm the Christian is in a battle. The devil, like a roaring lion, comes at the Christian seeking to devour—attempting to steal, kill and destroy. This is not the time to be wearing flip-flops, wedges and crocs. Imagine our brothers trying to play paintball with flip-flops or wedge heel shoes!

Have you ever had the strap of your flip-flop to break? Yet this is what many Christians are wearing when it comes to doing battle with our archenemy Satan and his demons. They have lost their surefootedness and are slipping and stumbling and stubbing their toes and crying and moaning and Satan is getting the victory.

So Paul writes, “...and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace...”

The “Gospel of Peace” is the message Christians are tasked with delivering and this is the message that Satan does not want people to hear.

The word “gospel” means “good news;” it is the Good News of Christ’s death, burial and rising from the dead to pay for our sins. Because of this good news men, women, boys and girls can have “*peace with God.*” Are you at peace with God?

For the follower of Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1 says, “*We have been justified by faith and as a result have peace with God.*”

For the follower of Jesus Christ this means that the enmity or hatred that once stood between us and God has been abolished. We are no longer enemies with God because of our sin.

When Adam and Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, they first hid themselves from God—their intimate fellowship and friendship with God was destroyed. Then God chased them from the Garden of Eden with a flaming sword.

Then man essentially said by his behavior, “*Oh yeah, if that’s what you want to play that way God, we’ll just start making “god” in our own image.*” (Romans 1)

But by faith in Jesus Christ, we who were enemies, are now made friends with God and have peace with God.

Roman 5:10 says, “...when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son...”

Colossians 1:21 says, “*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.*”

The Christian is no longer under the wrath of God because Jesus has already tasted death.

O what a relief it is to no that my sins are forgiven and I have a home in Heaven!

The song says:

What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms; What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, Leaning on the everlasting arms.

What have I to dread, what have I to fear, Leaning on the everlasting arms? I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, Leaning on the everlasting arms.

We have peace with God and this is the Gospel of Peace that Christians are charged with going all over the world and announcing to the lost.

But the word *peace* is used in another sense in the New Testament.

Philippians 4 says, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” (Phil 4:6-7)

Here we learn the Christian has the ability to go through life without a lot of stress and worry and anxiety knowing that the Lord has our back.

Psa 56:11 In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

Psa 118:6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

The writer of Hebrews quotes these Old Testament passages and expands on those truths in chapter 13:

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (vs. 6, 7)

In Matthew chapter six, Jesus tells us that we don't have to worry about what we are “*going to eat or drink or for our body, what were are going to put on.*”

In Romans chapter eight we are told, “*If God be for us, who can be against us...*” The passage goes on to say:

Rom 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

Rom 8:33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Rom 8:36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

Rom 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Rom 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Bible says, because followers of Jesus Christ have peace with God, they can experience the peace of God. Both aspects of this peace are offered to a lost world as we “*shod our feet with the Gospel of Peace*” and travel the streets of Baltimore spreading the Good New of Jesus Christ.

We are in a battle for lost souls. We need to put on the belt of truth. We need to put on the breastplate of righteousness. But then, as you start stepping across Satan's boundaries and offer freedom to those locked in bondage to sin, and pulling people out of the fortresses and strongholds Satan attacks more fiercely - which is why you need the next defensive item in the Christian's arsenal.

4.) The Shield of Faith

(Eph 6:16 NKJV) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

The analogy for the Shield of Faith again comes from the Roman soldier. He would take two pieces of wood about 2' x 4' and sandwiching them together and covering them with leather sometimes along with linen. The edges of the shield would be covered with bronze, effectively making something that would protect him from the arrows the enemy would shoot with his bow.

The enemy's bow would be a wooden stick with a sharp metal arrow at the end. Sometimes he would wrap that arrow with cloth, dip it in pitch and set it ablaze before firing it. Imagine the fear of being hit by one of those fiery missiles.

As a defensive precaution, in the event the enemy would deploy the fiery arrows, the soldiers would soak their shields in water before a battle in order to extinguish those fiery weapons when they hit the shield.

And so the Christian's faith (in God's promises) is what extinguishes the fiery darts of doubt, fear and lies that Satan throws at us.

The arctic polar bear's diet consists almost entirely of seals. No seal will allow itself to come close to a bear so sometimes the bear must resort to a bit of trickery.

The seal makes itself a fishing hole through the ice and if the hole is not too far from the edge of open water, the polar bear will take a deep breath, slip underwater, and swim to the seal's fishing hole.

He will then imitate a fish by scratching lightly on the underside of the ice. When the seal hears this sound, he dives in for a quick supper, only to find itself suddenly caught in the huge, hungry embrace of his predator.

The Bible exhorts us not to be ignorant of Satan's devices lest he take advantage of us (2 Cor 2:11).

The devil deceives us in a similar way. He baits us with some seemingly harmless pleasure and disguises the ugliness of sin with something that looks or sounds appealing. Then, when we've succumbed to the temptation, he catches us in his trap. This is why we need to put on and keep on "*the shield of faith.*"

Psalm 18:30 says, "*As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*"

Proverbs 30:5 says, "*Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.*"

Notice with me the encouragement found in Psalm 91:2-5: "*I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day"*

Sometimes Satan will use people as his fiery arrows. In 1 Corinthians 2:5 we are told that "*our faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*"

So how do you strengthen and build your faith? By trusting and believing what the Lord has said in His Word. Romans 10:17 says, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*"

By the way, have you noticed that all parts of the Christian's armor are for defense? Everything is fitted on the front of the soldier—there is no protection for his back. What does this tell us? It tells us that there is no room for retreat. We are called to resist the devil; not to retreat from battle.

5.) *The Helmet of Salvation*

(Eph 6:17 NKJV) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

The Helmet of Salvation is the last part of the Christian's armor we will have the time to look at today.

Again we are reminded that the battlefield of spiritual warfare occurs in the mind of the believer. The arena in which Satan attempts to introduce more doubt is in the believer's thoughts concerning his or her salvation.

Have you ever been in an airport and noticed the difference between passengers who hold confirmed tickets and those who are on standby. The ones with confirmed tickets read newspapers, chat with their friends or sleep. The ones on standby hang around the ticket counter, pace back and forth and are clearly uneasy.

The difference is a matter of confidence. The standby people have no assurance they will make the plane and reach their destination. It similar to those who know what the Bible teaches about this wonderful salvation that God provides to those who will by faith accept it. They have God's very word and are fully confident knowing that God has saved them forgiven all their sins and given them eternal life. Others live in a state of anxiety, never being sure they have been truly saved.

Do you know you are saved? Do you have the assurance that you will stay saved?

Let's look at those in the Bible who had assurance...

A. In the Old Testament...

1. In Job 19:25-27 Job said, *"For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"*
2. In Psalm 23:4 David said, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort..."*
3. In Psalm 17:13-15 we find the words of King David saying, "When I awake I will be satisfied with thy likeness." David had the assurance of his salvation and the resurrection.

B. Let's look at what Christ Himself said on the matter.

In John 17:1-3, *"Jesus spoke and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*

Verses 9-10 of this chapter state seven times that believers are given to Christ, by God. Jesus makes the point that believers are God's. Verse 12 emphatically states that none of those who follow Christ are lost and that Jesus keeps His children saved!

In John 3:16, Jesus uses the words, "everlasting life." What does everlasting life mean? It simply means that everlasting life that does not end. When does eternal life begin? When one receives it!

In John 10:27-29. Jesus said, believers are given *eternal life* and no one can pluck them out of His hand. Thus it is God Himself that keeps the believer's salvation secure!

If the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Savior, says that once a person believes and is saved, "has eternal life," how can anyone call Him a liar and say that eternal life is not eternal life?

In 1 Peter 1:5 we find that it is God who keeps us saved. Peter writes that Christians are those, *"Who are kept by the power of God, by faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

1 John 3:14 gives us the assurance that, *"We know we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."* John says we can KNOW we passed from death to life. Never does the Bible say a person who has been given "eternal life" in Christ loses it.

One of my favorite verses that teaches that the Christian can be assured that “once saved, always saved,” is found in 1 John 5:13:

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

And when you stumble into sin and the devil accuses you of not being a child of God, you can remember these promises of Scripture:

When God saves you, He saves you completely, permanently and eternally

Heb 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

When you sin, God forgives and cleanses you

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When God saves you, He gives you the free gift of salvation, He doesn't take it back

Rom 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

When you become a child of God this is because of God's decree, not because of man. Man will turn his back on you; man will lie to you; man will give up on you but the Bible says:

But as many as received Jesus Christ, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

When God saves you, you can have complete and full assurance that He accepts you:

Hebrews 10:19-23 says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.”

This is the Helmet of Salvation---the assurance and the confidence that the believer needs when the enemy assaults our standing in Christ.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 says, “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.”