

Strong

Eph. 5:10-24

*During the Korean War as enemy forces advanced, **Baker Company** was **cut off from the rest of their unit.***

For several hours no word was heard, even though headquarters repeatedly tried to communicate with the missing troops.

*Finally, a faint signal was received. Straining to hear, the corpsman asked, "**Baker Company, do you read me?**"*

*"**This is Baker Company,**" came the reply.*

*"**What is your situation?**" asked the corpsman. "**The enemy is to the east of us, the enemy is to the west of us, the enemy is to the north of us, the enemy is to the south of us.**"*

*... Then after a brief pause, **the sergeant from Baker Company** said with determination,*

*... "**The enemy is not going to get away from us now!**"*

*Although **surrounded and outnumbered**, Baker Company was **thinking of victory, not defeat.***

1. When to put on the Armor of God.

Notice the phrases: (v. 13) "take up", (v. 14,15) "having put on"

These verbs are in the past tense ... here is the point ...

... You don't put on the armor during the battle, you put it on BEFORE ...

- Putting on the armor takes preparation and time.

Even before the big battles begins there are a lot of skirmishes all along the way that we are losing...

... **impatience**—we get in stressful situations and (under our breath, in our minds) we say, “idiot”, “imbeciles”, stupid ...

... every time we become a little harder ...

When you encourage someone, they and you are strengthened, (made sweeter) when you do the opposite in your heart... YOU are hardened.

But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb. 3:13)

... **worry**—worry is often rooted in pride ...

... in difficult situations, when things aren't going well ...

... we think, “This should not be happening... I will have to take control.”

2. What does it mean to put on the Armor of God?

Verse 13 begins “*therefore*” ... based on the battle that we are in.

Because we wrestle with rulers, authorities, cosmic power, spiritual forces ...

... we are to **take up** the whole armor of God

Paul is writing to Christians and in the first three chapters of this letter ... he tells us that we already have everything in Christ Jesus.

So, why is Paul telling us to “take up” if we already have it?

Paul is saying that you are to take what is true of you (in Christ Jesus) and appropriate it as

- A belt
- Breastplate

- Shoes
- Shield
- Helmet
- Sword
- Prayer

Now that is six things, but the list is really 7 things if you include prayer in verse 18.

We are to “fasten on the belt of truth” ...

... We must learn to do what Paul wrote in Colossians 3:16 ... *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ...”*

The **belt of truth** is the foundation ... all the others are applications.

In Luke 8 there is an account where Jesus and the disciples are on a boat (Jesus is down in the boat asleep) and a terrible storm comes up ...

... they go and wake up Jesus and ask, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?”

Jesus wakes up and rebukes the storm (it stops) and then he rebukes the disciples ...

... he asks them “Where is your faith.”

... not “you need faith or more faith” but “where”

Jesus is saying, *“how dare you say I don’t care if you perish! ...*

... You know the truth, ... but you have not allowed it to shape your heart ... your thinking, emotions, or actions.” (your first instinct was to panic not trust)

The “belt of truth” is the foundational garment.

... it covers the soldier’s body from his neck down to his knees ... and all the other parts of armor go on top of it.

For lack of better way of describing it ... it is like a leather slip.

It is (truth is) the foundation for everything else that Paul is describing here.

Then Paul says we need to put on the breastplate of righteousness and shoes of the preparation of the gospel.

These are important for even the routine operations.

In every area of life, ease and conflict, joy and sorrow etc

... you need the breastplate of righteousness ... you must always protect your heart in every area of life...

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Prov. 4:23)

“Blessed are the pure in heart ...” (Matthew 5:8)

... you need the shoes of the gospel always with you, everywhere you are.

Imagine a fully armed soldier. ... He has his sword, his shield, his helmet, his breastplate and his belt...

... but his feet are completely bare.

... he would be handicapped both in stability and speed.

In Greek Mythology there is the legend of Achilles

Achilles was a mythological half human/god who seemed to be invincible.

The Legend goes...when he was a baby his mother, Thetis, dipped him in the river Styx which coated his entire body w/an invincible shield.

However, when she was dipping him, she had to hold him by one of his heels (thus not covering that spot).

It was there that in the course of a great battle during the Trojan War, that Achilles was struck in the heel by an arrow & he got infection and died.

The Roman soldier wore thick leather sandals, attached to his feet with thick straps. On bottom were hobnails, which were sort of like cleats.

To walk without fear of harm, wound or pain

To walk with power and confidence.

To walk over any terrain ... through every circumstance.

Shoes were about stability but also mobility.

No matter how skilled a soldier was, if he stood still, he would've been killed.

Caesar wanted his soldiers to be able to move ... the footwear he provided was the caliga (means half-boot) ... it was made of leather, lined with fur, left the toes free, had heavy studded soles,...

... These equipped him for long marches and for a solid stance... While they did not impede his mobility, they prevented his foot from sliding ...

... Paul using this as a metaphor ... we should appropriate what we are in Christ Jesus in our daily walk ...

The Gospel Peace-shoe covers our feet, protects our feet, stabilizes our feet, & mobilizes our feet...in the battle against evil.

Also, Paul says we need to put on the **breastplate of righteousness** and **shoes of the preparation** of the gospel ... these are important even in everyday life.

Then Paul says we need the **shield of faith** and the **helmet of salvation**.

The shield was rectangular, about 4'h x 2 ½'w and it was made of a thick plank of wood covered with leather-soaked w/water so that it would extinguish any of the fiery pitch on arrows shot at them.

Satan is the original source of doubt ...

... In fact, in the Garden of Eden that was his tactic against Eve, "Has God really said"

... the thing that Satan is constantly trying to attack in your life is your faith in God.

That is exactly what Satan tried to do to Jesus in the wilderness:

- a) Pssst, hey Jesus don't trust God to care for you, you've already gone w/o food for 40 days, take matters into your own hands & make a few loafs of Panera bread. [Don't think spiritual, think physical, you're hungry. Doubt God's faithfulness. Take a shortcut]
- b) Hey Jesus, Jesus, Jesus Why don't you Jump! God will take care of you. You're the Messiah remember? Angels will catch you, land you safely, & then all will be able to see.... you are the Messiah.
- c) Pssst Hey Nazareth boy ... Didn't God tell you you'd have all the kingdoms later? Why wait, come and worship me & I'll give them to you now.

The Shield of Faith and Helmet of Salvation will be essential when the battle is raging.

Because when the devil attacks it is usually and onslaught.

In Paul's day archers of the Roman army would put a cotton-like material on the tip of their arrows & soak it in pitch.

Before they shot the arrow, they would light it. It would burn slowly but it was very hot.

When the arrow hits its target, the pitch would splatter & start little fires on the shield and helmet.

Paul says the shield will quench all the firey darts that hit is but you need the helmet for what splashes over that.

- What are Satan's fiery darts?
- Impure thoughts
- Selfish/proud/arrogant thoughts
- Doubt/fear/disappointment
- Greed

The word for DART is the Greek "belos" and it means something that is thrown or projected in the general vicinity.

... In other words, this is not a guided missile.

You are in battle and the air is filled with these projectiles ... they are everywhere.

Satan is prince and power of the air.

You and I are living in an age where the very environment, the philosophical societal air is permeated with danger.

We don't just need a shield of protection ... we need our mind, our thoughts, protected by the assurance of our salvation in Christ.

Paul says we need to put on the **breastplate of righteousness** and **shoes of the preparation** of the gospel ... these are important even in everyday life.

But Paul also says, that when the battle is raging (when the devil attacks) we are going to need the **shield of faith** and the **helmet of salvation**.

Breastplate of righteousness reminds us of who we **Are** in Christ Jesus.

Shoes of the gospel reminds us of the **Joy** we have in Christ Jesus.

Shield of Faith reminds us of our **Safety** in Christ Jesus.

Helmet of Salvation reminds us the **Assurance** we have in Christ Jesus.

These are the particular aspects of the gospel we need to constantly remind ourselves about.

3. How to put on the Armor of God.

The last two elements of this spiritual Armor of God tell us how to put on the whole armor.

The **Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.**

... This is different from the belt of truth. Truth comes out of the Word of God—i.e. the Bible.

The word truth is the word “Alethia”

The word here is “rhema” and this is referring to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to your remembrance for use in time of need.

How can the Holy Spirit bring that scripture to your mind? ... Because you have hidden it in your heart.

And then Paul says, **“Praying at all times in the Spirit with all perseverance.”**

What are these two things? ...

This is Bible reading and prayer!

I know that seems overly simplistic, but that is exactly what it is.

It is through Bible reading (hiding God’s word in our heart) and prayer and supplication that we are able to appropriate what we are in Christ Jesus to fight the good fight of the faith!

There is an interesting account in Exodus 15.

The Israelites have escaped from Egypt and across the Red Sea ... and at this point the whole nation of Israel break into an antiphonal singing.

(v. 20 Miriam takes a tambourine and leads the women with rhythmic responsive singing.)

(Exod. 15:1-3) "I will sing to the LORD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea.² "The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him.³ "The LORD is a warrior; The LORD is His name.

As the Bible progresses Israel becomes evil and over and over again, we see that God goes to war against them ...

... even using outside nations like Assyria and Babylon to battle Israel.

God is not a tribal God ... He is a warrior against evil ... even when he finds it among His own people.

By the time we get to the prophets they are talking about a warrior that is coming to destroy all unrighteousness ... defeat the enemy of God's people.

Then Jesus comes and what did Jesus call himself: THE SON OF MAN

This is a figure that we find in Daniel 7 ... the Son of Man is going to lead an army to defeat the devil on the earth.

Jesus says He is this.

But, contrary to what the Jews wanted and expected, Jesus didn't defeat the enemy by destroying them ...

... but by healing.

... Jesus won the war not with a sword in his hands ... but with nails.

Jesus is the ultimate warrior and yet we are told to put on battle armor and fight.

Why?

I cannot fly, but when I put myself in an airplane and yield to its power, suddenly, I have the ability to soar into the air.

I cannot run 75 miles per hour, but when I get into my truck and yield to its power, I suddenly have the ability to achieve speeds that I could never achieve on my own.

Inside the airplane, I have the strength of the airplane.

Inside the truck, I have the strength of the truck.

When you are inside the armor of God, you have the strength of God!

And although we are in a daily battle with the forces of darkness ... there is this underlying foundational reality ...

... Jesus has already won the war and when you are in Christ ... so have you.