

Sermon: Ephesians 6:13-18
The Armor of God

Intro: Bullet Proof vest

We are in a spiritual battle in which the evil one wants to maim and destroy us, our family, our friends and our ministries.

How do we stand firm in the battle? Put on the Armor of God.

Remember, this is not our armor, this is God's armor. Remember the story of David and Goliath? David as a teenager goes to check on his brothers who are on the front lines of battle with the Philistines. When he gets there, the battle is stalled and Philistines are promoting a fight between their biggest dude, Goliath and the Israelites biggest dude. But all the Israelites are too chicken to fight. So David gets ticked off because Goliath is taunting God and taking His name in vain. So, David says that he will fight Goliath. King Saul offers young David is royal armor. David tries to put it on but it's way too big. It's not his armor. David needs the Lord's armor, which was a sling shot. The story says that David rushed at Goliath and nailed right between the eyes, Goliath falls down dead, David takes a sword and cuts off Goliath's head to prove that the Lord is stronger than all His enemies.

Let's take a quick look at each piece of armor to find out what its purpose is and how we can put it on today.

The Belt of Truth:

Without a doubt we live in a culture that has a low view of truth. We have talked about this quite a bit. Our culture has this view of truth that says,

"there is no absolute truth. We can all have our different beliefs and we can all be right. You can believe your ideas about religion and they can be true and I can believe my ideas about religion and they can be true as well."

So, the argument goes there is absolutely no absolute truth, it is all relative. The problem is that by making such an absolute statement the argument contradicts itself. So, based on their own claims the relativist is defeating themselves. Is your head spinning?

God has given us the true truth about Himself, about life, about you and me and the world around us. God makes truth very clear in Scripture, what is right what is wrong.

The devil tries to deceive us. He is called the great deceiver. The devil will throw lies at you to trick you and to try and destroy you. The devil wants you to believe that what he says is really true.

What are some lies thrown at us?

- God has given up on you because you keep screwing up.
- Your ministry is not making an impact
- To believe that Jesus rose from the dead is ridiculous, how could any person with common sense believe such hogwash?
- Looking at pornography doesn't hurt anyone.
- Prayer is nothing more than talking into thin air, it doesn't do anything.
- You need to retaliate with bitter criticism when you argue with your spouse.
- You need to care about yourself before you care about anyone else.

But these statements are just lies thrown at us to defeat and discourage us. To get us to stop trying to have an impact, to make us feel insignificant, to draw us away from Christ. God has given us His Word, the Bible, as Truth. In the Bible we find the truth about everything and we find Jesus who is truth. Remember, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me."

We need to know our Bible which is truth.

Illustration: Learning how to Kayak, 500 eskimo rolls.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Verse 14 says, "and having put on the breastplate of righteousness." This is not talking about your own personal righteousness. This is talking about the righteousness of Christ, the Redeemer.

Paul is quoting Isaiah 59:17 (Paul knows his Bible)

^{ESV} **Isaiah 59:16** Battle Language

"He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. ¹⁷ He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. ¹⁸ According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. ¹⁹ So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, ¹ which the wind of the LORD drives. ²⁰ "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the LORD."

We put on the righteousness of Christ: Let's go back quickly to Ephesians 4:20-24

^{ESV} **Ephesians 4:20** *"But that is not the way you learned Christ! - ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."*

Romans 13:14 *"May I put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision to gratify the lusts of the flesh."*

We put on the breastplate of the righteousness of Christ, so when the devil, the accuser, comes to accuse us of our sin and attempt to damn us, we are able to stand firm, nothing can break through the breastplate because our sins have been replaced with the righteousness of Christ. It is impenetrable.

As shoes for your feet: The Readiness given by the gospel of peace

Again, the imagery that Paul uses is from Isaiah, this time 52:7

^{ESV} **Isaiah 52:7** *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."*

Our feet need to be ready with the gospel of peace. The devil wants to knock us down, make us stumble and fall. Our footing needs to be sure and ready to move. To move forward with the gospel of peace. Remember, Satan wants to stop the advancement of the Kingdom of God. Since we are God's soldiers moving forward to advance that Kingdom then he wants to stop us in our tracks. But that will not happen if we are ready with the gospel of peace.

I Peter 3:15

^{ESV} **1 Peter 3:15** *"Always be ready to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence."*

The Shield of Faith

^{ESV} **Ephesians 6:16** *"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;"*

Now we begin to see that in this battle we are actually getting shot at. This is not a walk in the park. Satan wants to kill and destroy. He has his weapons of deceit, temptation, he has powerful forces of darkness behind him. He is limited but still powerful and will take no prisoners.

Being a Christian soldier and advancing the Kingdom of God is dangerous. Satan wants to destroy your marriage, he wants your kids to rebel against you and God, he will take shots at you. He will accuse you and use others to try and bring you down, try and damage your reputation, try and make you believe that being in ministry is not worth the toil and sacrifice.

So what do we do? We take this faith that has been given to us. This faith that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross to save us from our sins, and physically rose from the dead and now sits at the right hand of God. This faith that has brought us a new life, both now and forever. This faith that says, "No matter what happens I know that God is for me."

Remember, Rack, Shack and Benny from the book of Daniel? They were fighters, soldiers in God's army to advance the Kingdom of God. They had literally been taken captive and hauled off to Babylon to serve King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was an emissary of Satan. He forced people to bow down and worship him. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar, they were sentenced to be burned to death in the fiery furnace. And this is how they answered Neb.

^{ESV} **Daniel 3:16** *"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."*

The reason they could be so bold-faced was they had faith in God to deliver them, either before the fire or after. They knew that either way God would win. If they died then God would get the glory because they were obedient in not worshipping the king, if God spared their life then God alone gets the glory for the miraculous rescue. They used their shield of faith to fight off the fiery darts of the evil one. And their faith protected them, the passage says that not a hair on their head was singed nor did they even smell like smoke.

Take up your shield of faith to protect your family. It's ok to hide behind that shield. Grab your wife and kids and hide behind the faith of God that comes to us in Christ. He will protect you, no matter what happens.

Satan will shoot flaming darts at you:

- He wants you to gossip about your friends to destroy relationships
- He wants to stop this church from growing
- He wants you to feel burned out from serving
- He wants your daughters to think that their outward appearance is more important than their inward beauty
- He wants you to think that he has been victorious when death knocks on your door

But where O death is your victory?

where O death is your sting?

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our shield of faith can block these dreadful darts, so hold it up and fight and believe in faith that victory belongs to the Lord.

The Helmet of Salvation

The Sword of the Spirit

Praying at all times

I would like to put these last three pieces of armor together. When you think about fighting in a battle in New Testament times you have to remember, it was hand to hand combat. You were not just shooting arrows across a field at one another, at some point the battle came down to man fighting man, one on one. So your helmet was critical to protect your head while your enemy tried to whack it off with his sword. And your sword was your offensive weapon to try and kill your enemy. I know, this is not about pickin berries in a field. God says that we are fighting a battle and that Satan, the evil one, is trying to kill you.

This is not a time to hold up a peace sign and think that we can negotiate our way out of this battle. Here is how it is going to go down... It's a fight to the death.

God gives you the assurance of salvation so that you can rush into battle, just like David against Goliath and start swinging that sword, in order to kill and destroy your enemy. And when the enemy gets in a blow to your head, you will be protected because you have the assurance of your salvation.

But Jesus said that we need to love our enemies.

You can love people but you can't love the evil forces behind the sin of people. The dark spiritual forces must be destroyed. It's time to hack away at the evil around us.

How?

Again, we go back to the Word of God, the Bible is our standard for truth. So when we see evil then we can attack it.

Illustration: Girl's Life Magazine, 6 Ways to get a hot bod!

When we are tempted to indulge in sin, we hack away at it with Scripture

We soak our minds in God's Word so that we naturally and immediately can identify evil and counter attack it with the truth of God's Word.

And all the while, PRAYING. We pray constantly as we go into battle.

"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication."

Conclusion:

What are you going to do if someone comes into your house to steal your children, do indescribable things to your wife and then kill you? What are you going to do?

You are going to fight. You are going to fight to the death.

I am telling you that Satan wants to do exactly that. He wants to destroy you and your family. He wants to stop you from being effective in advancing the Kingdom of God.

So here's what you need to do:

1. Strap on the belt of truth
2. Put on the breastplate of the righteousness of Christ
3. Get you feet ready and on a sure footing with the readiness of the gospel
4. Hold up the shield of faith
5. Put on the helmet of salvation
6. Grab the sword of the Spirit
7. And pray like mad as you fight with all your might.