

# THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD - Eph. 6:10-20

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## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Preparation + Perspiration + Prayer = Success - The Christian life is not a playground, it is a battleground. The Christian soldier must be properly outfitted to defend himself and the Lord's church against the enemies. Just as a football player, a steelworker, a plumber, a professor, and a mountain climber must be properly equipped, the Christian soldier must possess and use the tools of his trade.
- B. According to Paul the Apostle the Christian faces three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1-3).
  - 1. The world - society apart from God. It caters to the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (1 Jn. 2:15-17).
  - 2. The flesh - that part of us that tends towards sin. The part of ourselves that can be enamoured with the world.
  - 3. The devil himself - more will be said about Satan in a moment.
- C. Christ has overcome the world (Gal. 6:14), flesh (Gal. 2:20), and Satan (Eph. 1:15-23). The victory through faith has been won by the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is our Christian vocation to spread the Gospel - the Good News of this victory - and defend the faith once delivered for all time.

## II. DISCUSSION

- A. The Enemy (vv.10-12) - The ultimate enemy of the church is Satan. He is out to divide the body of Christ and He will use every weapon available to him to try and achieve his purpose. The entire Bible is filled with warnings concerning Satan and his ways. It is our responsibility to remain constantly vigilant.
  - 1. The leader - is Satan the adversary, also known as the devil or "accuser." He is the "tempter," the "murderer and liar," and the "god of this age." While he *is not* the evil equivalent of the one good God, his powers *can* be unleashed against unwary Christians and churches of Christ.
  - 2. His helpers - While evil men are certainly doing the devil's bidding, we must also fight against the "world rulers of this darkness and the spiritual hosts of wickedness." The Bible teaches us that the devil indeed has his minions that do his bidding. How they operate in our world today is not clear, but they indeed operate through the previously mentioned conduits of our external enemy - the world and our internal enemy - the flesh. We know that Satan is not waging war against God in heaven so where are these heavenly places of v. 12? The obvious guess would be in the congregations of the Lord's people here on earth.
  - 3. His abilities - Satan has limited power, but he must not be underestimated. Verse 10 indicates that only through the strength of the Lord can he be overcome. This strength involves courage on our part based on our reliance on God and His promises. Jesus warns us in Jn. 10:10 that the purposes of Satan include thievery, murder, and destruction. The "wiles of the devil" pertain to his abilities, strategies, cunning, and craftiness. His assault is rarely a frontal attack, but instead guerilla warfare. His weapons and strategy is formidable. Albert Barnes made these comments concerning the devil's methods. "He presents the world in an alluring aspect; invites us to

pleasures that seem to be harmless, and leads us in indulgence until we have gone so far that we cannot retreat." (Barnes' Notes, Vol. 12 p.125.)

- B. The Equipment (vv. 13-17) - verses 11 and 13 indicate that our preparations to meet evil must include the "whole armor (or panoply) of God." This is not armoring that God wears, but armoring that God provides for us. We must renounce carnal weaponry in this spiritual fight. Only those weapons provided by God will bring success. We must wear the "whole" armor, not just the parts that suit us or we feel comfortable in. To lack one piece of God's armor could result in our spiritual downfall and the downfall of those we are directed to protect.
1. The girdle of truth (v. 14a) - Paul warned the Ephesians in 4:25 to "speak truthfully to your neighbor." It is openness and honesty that gird us (as Christians) together and it is misunderstanding and hidden motives that will divide the church.
  2. The breastplate of righteousness (v. 14b) - In Eph. 5:3 Paul warned, "there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed" among the church. It is through righteous living that we guard the very heart of our spiritual lives and that of this congregation of God's people.
  3. The shoes of the Gospel (v. 15) - It is the gospel that reconciles us to God and therefore puts us at peace with Him and with other Christians. Paul taught the Ephesians that peace is the bond that holds the church in unity. Unity allows the body (the church) to be responsive to the head (Christ).
  4. The shield of faith (v. 16) - Trust in God and His power extinguishes any doubts that we may have in the heat of battle. It is God who, "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work in us." (3:20)
  5. The helmet of salvation (v. 17a) - Our minds are protected by knowledge of our new identity as Christians. We have crucified (in our minds) the old man and have risen to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:6-9).
  6. The sword of the Spirit (v. 17b) - Most commentators feel that it is the sword of the Spirit that is the word of God (Heb. 4:12). Scripture is a vital tool and indeed is needed to wage a spiritual war. Nothing here indicates that the Christian soldier will be armed with spiritual powers beyond the Word. None are needed!  
(Larry Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary*, p. 932)
- C. The Energy (vv. 18-20) - Prayer provides the energy for the Christian soldier to wield God's armor. Our own power is not sufficient. When Joshua went into the valley to fight Amalek, Moses went to the mountaintop to pray (Ex. 17:8-16). It was the combined efforts of these men that caused the strength of God to work through them. Paul now explains the kinds of prayer that are needed to energize the Christian soldier. There has never been a bigger oxymoron than a prayerless Christian!
1. Pray always - keep the line to God open by repentance and confession. As Paul told the Thessalonians, "pray without ceasing." Have a constant attitude of prayer. Pray at all times, under every circumstance, on all occasions, in every state of mind.
  2. Pray with all prayer - using every type of public and private prayer: supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving.
  3. Pray in the spirit - Pray to the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit. This how we open the line to God.
  4. Pray with your eyes open - How many times does Christ implore his listeners to "watch and pray?" (NKJ - Three references, Mt. 26:41, Mk. 13:33, Mk. 14:38; NIV adds Lk. 21:36) Peter's example: Mk. 14:29-31, 67-72.
  5. Keep on praying - We must keep on praying if we are to pray with perseverance. In victory and defeat; when encouraged and when discouraged. When we continually

- pray we are not pestering God. Robert Law is quoted as saying, "prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven, it is getting God's will done on earth."
6. Pray for all the saints - If Paul needed the prayers of the Ephesians, then we all need the prayers of each other. We should pray for our brethren.
    - a. Because they are our brethren.
    - b. Like us, they are in need of the grace of God.
    - c. Nothing makes us tend to love another as to pray for them.
    - d. Many Christians are cold or lukewarm, so we need to pray that they become more devoted to the Lord.
    - e. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, avails much (Jas. 5:16).
    - f. Each day and each night Christians in physical, mental and spiritual anguish die.
    - g. We too, soon shall die and will be comforted in the thought that we have considered the dying in our own prayers.

### III. CONCLUSION

James Burton Coffman suggests that the last six words of verse 17 ("which is the word of God") are reflective not only of the sword of the Spirit but of the whole armor of God and its individual parts as well. (*Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 242) Consider the following:

TRUTH - Is not this the sacred Word?

RIGHTEOUSNESS - According to Ps. 119:172 righteousness is "all the commandments of God."

THE GOSPEL OF PEACE - This is the word of God.

FAITH - "Faith comes by hearing God's word" (Rom. 10:17).

SALVATION - "...the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. 3:15) What are these sacred writings that bring salvation? God's word!

THE WORD OF GOD - "...is sharper than any two-edged sword." (Heb 4:12)

It is therefore imperative that we study to learn what the truth is so that we might show ourselves approved of God.

Just as Jesus had texts of scripture at hand to meet his temptation in the wilderness, we need to be armed as well.

We cannot rely on our own wisdom, but arm ourselves with the wisdom of God's word. We must be ready to oppose a temptation of Satan with a positive command of God.

How shall the young secure their hearts? By the instruction in righteousness provided to them by their parents and this congregation. (Barnes, pp.132-33)

Coffman concludes: "No passage of scripture in all the Bible any more dramatically teaches the absolute necessity of the Christian's thorough knowledge of the word of God. Not having it he is naked, barefooted, bareheaded, and helpless before the enemy."

In addition to sources quoted above, the outline for this lesson was taken from Wiersbe's *Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 2, pp. 57-60.

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