

Ephesians 6:17b
The Christian Soldier's Sword
The Sword of the Spirit – The Word of God

As we come towards the end of this sermon series on the spiritual armor of God we come now to the sword of the Spirit.

Paul mentions it in verse 17 of chapter 6. **Ephesians 6:17b, "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."**

I tried finding a sword that was more like what the roman army may have used but all I could come up with was this one. It is more of a samurai style sword from Japan or China but it will work for our demonstration.

During my research for this sermon I read through a lot of descriptions of the different kinds of swords that were being used during the time when Paul wrote this letter to the church in Ephesus. As I read through these descriptions I can tell you that I am glad I was not born in earlier times, the times of the Bible.

Most of you have read through the Old Testament and you know that war was something that was just a part of life. Many of the individuals who lived during these times experienced being at war and because it was more barbaric, hand to hand combat with swords, bow and arrows and other more crude weapons of warfare, there was a lot of fatalities and a lot of wounded.

Being in this kind of battle was not for the faint of heart and if you were a swordsman, then you better have some skills or you were dead.

Likewise, the sword of the Spirit which we are given to use is something that we better be pretty familiar with or we can end up spiritually dead in a sense or at least pretty beat up.

I was reminded of a story I shared with you a few weeks ago about some men who had a little knowledge of Jesus but not enough to keep them from getting beat up. Look with me.

Acts 19:13-16, “But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying ‘I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.’ Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, ‘I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?’ And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.”

Having just a little bit of information about Jesus wasn't enough to keep them from getting beat up.

I think the same is true of Christians who have just a little bit of knowledge about Jesus. Some Christians get beat up in life more than they have to because they have not come to know Jesus through His Word. They have not come to know and see His power, His deliverance and His blessings working in their life.

As we think back to the beginning of this teaching Paul tells us that we can, **Ephesians 6:10, “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”**

We can be strong in the Lord by putting on the full armor of God on a daily basis. We can be strong in the Lord by picking up our shield of faith. And we can be strong in the Lord by picking up the sword that is available to us.

I cannot impress upon you enough how important it is to have all the tools, all the armor God makes available to us. We are in a battle. A battle of righteousness, a battle of right living before the Lord and as we live out our lives victoriously, not only are we blessed and protected, but God is glorified, the good news of Jesus and His love and forgiveness flows out of us into a world that is desperate for this healing He offers.

Satan is constantly attacking, trying to distract God's people with the pleasures, the worries and the riches of this life. But as Christians come into a deeper understanding of Christ, God and the armor and offensive weapons He gives us, then we will be empowered, fruitful and victorious.

Up until this point the armor of God has all been protective in nature. The helmet of salvation protects our thoughts, the breastplate of righteousness protects us against wrong living in a way that Satan can attack us for and the shield of faith helps us move in confidence in the truths we find in God's Word. All of these pieces of armor are defensive in nature. Deflecting the blows of Satan.

But the sword of the Spirit is different. It is offensive in nature. It has the ability to cut right through the offensive tactics of Satan.

Look with me again at the passage where it is introduced. **Ephesians 6:17b, "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."**

A couple of things I have noticed about this passage that I think are important. We know the sword is God's Word but look at whose sword it is.

1. God's Word is the Holy Spirit's Sword

When we read the passage about the sword of the Spirit and we read it is the Word of God most people automatically jump to the conclusion it is the Bible. And yes it is but it is so much more than God's written word.

I love what Cheryl Paxton said a few weeks ago about the shield of faith. When by faith you take up the shield, which is God's shield on loan to you, when you take it up by faith and your faith is paired with the power of the Almighty God then things really begin to happen. Your faith releases God's power into your life, through your life and into those people and circumstances around you.

You can read about this truth occurring over and over again in the lives of the men and women in scripture.

Faith paired with God's power produces heavenly results on earth.

Well, the same is true about the sword of the Spirit.

- 2. When the Spirit of God is paired with the Word of God then God's power is released from heaven into the world around you.**

How does this occur?

- a. First, you must have God's Spirit inside of you.**

Look at **John 14:16-17**, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."

As Christians we know that God's Spirit resides inside of us. I am going to assume that is true of each of you sitting here. If you have any question about this then we definitely need to talk. If you have, from

your heart, accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior then the Holy Spirit is a gift that is given to you.

b. The Holy Spirit will bring to mind the words of Jesus

John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

In one of the first sermons I preached here I made the statement concerning the Holy Spirit and the words of Jesus. I said the Holy Spirit cannot remind you of things you have not read.

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance of all that He said and taught. As we spend time reading and studying the Holy Spirit inspired word of God, the Holy Spirit downloads and stores it in our heart. When challenging circumstances come into our life and we stop and pray about them and then listen, the Holy Spirit will bring to memory the things we have read and studied.

This is one of the keys to living a victorious life in Christ.

It is kind of like this squirt gun.

Let's say this squirt gun is the Holy Spirit. It was given to me when I was saved. I have it in my hands but what is missing. What makes this squirt gun actually work for what it is designed for? It has to be filled doesn't it. I have to intentionally fill the tank of the squirt gun in order to it to be used to spray water on whoever or whatever it is I want to douse.

The same is true with the Holy Spirit and God's Spiritually inspired word.

Something powerful happens when the Holy Spirit takes His inspired Word from your heart, brings it to mind and then you directs you in how to apply it in any given circumstance.

You are able to douse the person you are in conflict with or the situation you are confronted with. You begin to see the power of God, His Spirit, His Word impacting your life and the life of those around you.

David's testimony

I believe what we are talking about here to be God given wisdom. The Holy Spirit takes the truths that you have in your heart and guides you in how to apply it.

- c. Wisdom is the Holy Spirit pulling from the tank of God's Word that is in your heart and applying it in life's circumstances.**

This is how the word of God comes to life off of the written page.

Hebrews 4:12, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than a two edge sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, joint and marrow, able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

When we have the word of God in our hearts, the Holy Spirit can take it and cut through the thoughts you have coming up out of your soul, your normal fleshy, selfish heart that can only come up with human solutions to the problems t we are faced with.

Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

How many times have you experienced a problem or challenge and when you applied your own thoughts to it things got worse instead of better? That is what happens when we determine to do things in our own power.

But look at 1 Corinthians 2 where Paul is teaching on the power of the Spirit. I would recommend reading through and studying the whole chapter but let's look at verses 12-13.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.”

Paul was speaking about the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through His teaching and preaching. But I believe the same thing occurs when the Holy Spirit takes His inspired word and combines it with the thoughts He puts in our minds.

What more powerful thing could occur? What more powerful outcome could occur in your relationships, in your circumstances, in your trials and troubles than having the Holy Spirit intervene, guide you and direct you.

So many people are looking for guidance from the Lord in their lives. Guidance will come as we spend time in the Holy Spirit inspired word of God and then seek the Holy Spirit to take the word that we have placed in our heart gives us direction from it.

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You can see this happening in the life of Jesus. In the desert, when temptations came, Jesus said what three times? It is written. He did not try and do battle against Satan with His own thoughts but the Holy Spirit brought to mind the appropriate scripture that Jesus had already read.

A lot of people seem to think that they don't have to study the Bible because the Holy Spirit will just pop a verse into their minds when they need it. While the Holy Spirit can do this, He most often doesn't.

I'll say it again, powerful, victorious Christian living comes to us when the Holy Spirit takes His own inspired word that we have placed inside of our heart and He uses it to attack or lead us into whatever it is that is facing us.

Back in Ephesians 4 we are told that God have gifts to humanity. Salvation through Jesus Christ being the biggest gift. But then we are given the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit inspired word of God.

These are tremendous gifts in the hands and heart of the person who knows how to wield them.

Next week we will look into the sword of the Spirit just a little more.

Let's pray.