

## **Ephesians 6:10-14**

### **The Armor of God – Empowering Us to Stand Firm Against the Onslaught of the Enemy**

As we continue our look at the letter Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, we find ourselves looking into the spiritual armor of God found in Ephesians 6.

If you were here last week then you know I have decided to skip over the last part of chapter 5 and the first part of chapter 6 as it has to do with the relationships we have in this life. Relationships with our spouse, with our kids and kids with their parents.

I think this is the best way to proceed as I believe a study of the spiritual armor of God will help us in these relationships.

So let's read our passage this morning found in

**Ephesians 6:10-14a, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm. Therefore, stand firm...”**

Do you see a recurring phrase here. I have underlined a couple. We see the phrase stand firm used three times here. That can be a challenge for us today can't it? With the onslaught of the autonomous society, a society who wants no part of God. A society that sees right and wrong but how they feel and think.

God has been left out and the only thing left in the vacuum is self. Selfish ambition, self fulfillment, lack of self denial and many other forms of self. The very thing God wants us to examine and surrender, even crucify, self.

There is a better life, a life that is blessed, fulfilled, purposeful and full of joy and contentment but it is only found in a relationship with our Creator.

For those of us who are on this journey this is where we find ourselves. In a relationship with the Almighty Creator. But as you know, having and living this relationship is counter-culture. At times it seems like we are swimming against the stream. At times we *are* swimming against the stream aren't we?

That is why Paul says to stand firm because most everything around you is trying to sweep you away downstream, down the current of popular culture. But we know that Jesus said the following in **John 6:44**, “**the gate is wide and the path is broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.**”

### **1. The only way a Christian can stand firm is by putting on the full armor of God**

The only way a Christian can stand firm is if they stay strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might and the only way to do this is to put on the full armor God has provided us.

I remember a story about one of David's mighty men, David of David and Goliath fame. David had thirty-seven fighting men around him that were great warriors, mighty men who did all kinds of incredible feats.

One of them, Shammah, experienced a great victory.

**2 Samuel 23:11-12, "...and the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines. "...but he (Shammah) took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the Lord brought about a great victory."**

The Philistines were gathered in a troop which could have been as many as 250 men. When the people saw this they fled in fear but not Shammah. Even though the army was large he stood his ground, he took a stand and through the strength and power of the Lord he and the Lord experienced a great victory.

I have no doubt that Shammah was probably an accomplished soldier but among the people who fled there might have been other accomplished soldiers. God just needed one person who would stand their ground. Who would stand firm in the lentil field and be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. He found that man in Shammah.

## **2. The Lord is looking for individuals who will stand firm so He can bring about a great victory**

The Lord is looking for those individuals today. Those mighty men and women who are willing to tap into the strength and might of the Lord and stand firm and when they do, there will be a great victory to be celebrated.

Now, thankfully we don't have to do hand to hand combat like Shammah. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but it is against who?

**Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."**

Our battle is not against the people, circumstances or government. Our battle is against one who is more powerful, sinister, darker and evil. He lurks around in the heavenly places which means the spiritual world around us.

Satan has been around for a long time, plying his trade of evil and destruction and he is good at it. If you want to know more about Satan and his origins, go to our web-site and you will find last week's sermon which was on Satan.

**In 1 Peter 5:8, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”**

Lions in the wild prey on the who? Those who are unaware of their surroundings and the weak.

We are told that we don't have to be weak. We can be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. We don't have to be unaware because as Paul said in Corinthians we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Look with me at that passage. Paul is talking about the importance of forgiveness and how Satan can use the lack of forgiveness in the life of a believer as a foothold in their lives where Satan can cause all kinds of chaos and mayhem.

**2 Corinthians 2:11, “so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”**

### **3. We are not ignorant of Satan's schemes**

We are not ignorant of Satan's schemes. That is where we need to be isn't it? That is where we want to be. **John 10:10, “The thief comes only in order to steal, kill and destroy.”**

But that is not going to happen to us and to what God is doing here in and through the Community Church.

It is not going to happen because we are not ignorant of Satan's schemes and because we know about and how to use the armor God makes available to us.

This morning we are going to do a quick overview of the armor of God and then beginning next week we will take a look at it piece by piece.

Let's begin by reading through the passage where the armor is found.

**Ephesians 6:14-18, 14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints..."**

So we have the:

- 1. Belt of Truth**
- 2. Breastplate of Righteousness**
- 3. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace**
- 4. Shield of Faith**
- 5. Helmet of Salvation**
- 6. Sword of the Spirit**

And one more I add that some do not and that is

- 7. Power of Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit**

Seven parts of Armor. If you go back to verse 11 it says, **Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.**

Paul didn't say put on one or two parts, or all but one part. No, he said to put on the full armor, all seven parts. And it is then that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

#### **4. We are to put on the FULL armor of God**

I remembered the story of the Greek god Achilles. Most of you remember him don't you. What was it that Achilles was known for? His heel.

The warrior Achilles is one of the great heroes of Greek mythology. According to legend, Achilles was extraordinarily strong, courageous and loyal, but he had one vulnerability—his heel. The story goes that Achilles mother dipped him in the river Styx which gave him his power and his invulnerability. But when she dipped him into the river she held him by his heel and it is this place where he was vulnerable.

So you know what happened. One of his enemies knew his weakness and he placed an arrow right into his heel and it killed Achilles instantly.

When a Christian is not properly and fully suited up each and every day, if they miss a putting on a piece of armor, they have that area of vulnerability and Satan knows it. It is that area that he will attack, injure and possibly take a Christian out of the battle.

So it is important that we know what each piece of armor is and what it is protecting us against.

- 1) Belt of Truth - The spiritual belt of truth protects us from the lies of the father of lies, Satan.**

**John 8:44, “... the devil, ...He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”**

The Belt of truth. I believe the belt Paul is referring to is not the little skinny belt we use today. The warrior's belt was wide and was designed for protection. It protected the some of the vital organs of the mid-section.

That is what truth does doesn't it? It protects us from things that might harm us. The spiritual belt of truth protects us from the lies of the father of lies, Satan.

As you will see when we examine the belt of truth more thoroughly, lying is Satan's biggest tool in his arsenal. The belt of truth helps the Christian from falling into the pits the lies of Satan creates and puts on their path.

## **2) Breastplate of Righteousness – Protecting our heart**

The breastplate of righteousness is a plate of armor that will again, protect some of the vital organs. Sometimes, even though we have all the other pieces of armor in place, Satan's blows might make it through and we take a hit. But because we have the breastplate of righteousness in place, it will hurt but it is not fatal.

The breastplate of righteousness is kind of like a armored vest. You may get shot, it will hurt and leave a bruise but you will be alive to fight another day.

## **3) Shoes of the Gospel of Peace - the willingness and preparedness to share the good news of Jesus Christ**

The shoes of the gospel of peace. I believe this is the willingness and preparedness to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Every Christian in some way is called to go out into the world and to make disciples, baptizing them in Christ and leading them into the teachings of Christ.

What this looks like for each Christian is different but the call is the same. As each Christian finds their God-given giftedness they are part of expanding God's Kingdom. They may be in a support role or they may be an evangelist. They may invite a neighbor to come to church to hear the truth and the good news of Jesus Christ but each Christian is to put on the shoes of the Gospel of Peace and as Nancy Sinatra sang, those boots, those shoes are made for walking.

**4) Shield of Faith - - The shield of faith is something that we must intentionally pick up and use**

The shield of faith is a bit different from the other items we have mentioned so far. The shield of faith is something that we must purposefully pick up and use.

**Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”**

Our salvation comes by faith. By faith Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses were moved to action.

**Hebrews 11:33-34, “by faith (men and women) conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.”**

Faith is our life line of salvation in Christ and the life line of blessings and miracles in and through our lives.



**5) Helmet of Salvation - The helmet of salvation is where the journey and battle begins and how a Christian is able to stand firm in their relationship with the Almighty.**

Without the Helmet of Salvation there is nothing to aspire to.

**6) Sword of the Spirit – The Word of God**

While so many people would say that the sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon and while that is true, remember that all the armor is more about standing firm than being on the attack.

We don't need to worry about taking the fight to Satan. If we are lifting up Christ and His kingdom the fight will come to us.

As Satan does attack though we remember **Hebrews 4:12**, “**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**”

**7) Power of Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit - Prayer and supplication is what keeps our intimacy and relationship with God and Jesus fluid.**

I think this one is pretty self-explanatory. Prayer and supplication is what keeps our intimacy with God and Jesus fluid, moving. Keeping the lines of communication open between us and our Creator.

In closing as we understand the armor, God's armor that He makes available to us, it is knowing what it is and having it on we will not only be able to stand firm against the attacks of Satan, experiencing numerous victories, but we will also experience great spiritual growth in our lives.

This is where we want to be and to live. Amen?