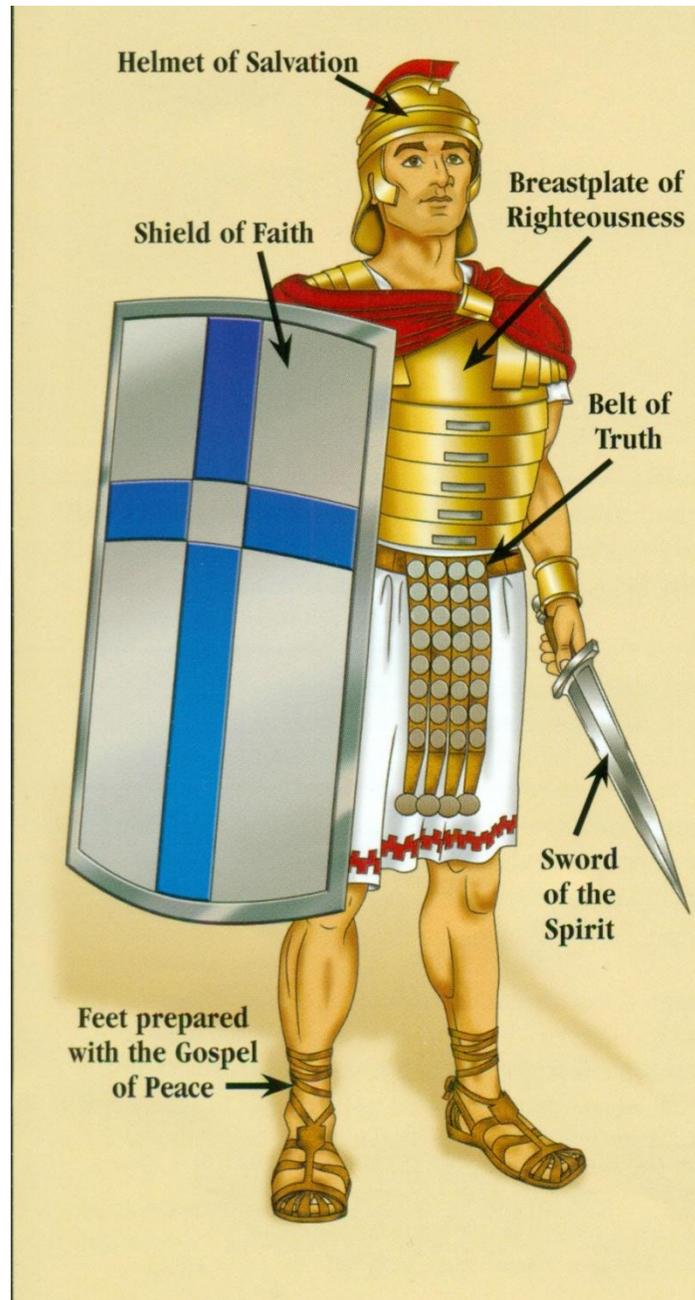


The Full Armor of God

A Bible Study



Ephesians 6:10-18

The Full Armor of God

Ephesians 6;10-18

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” Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18 (HCSB)

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” Ephesians 6:18 (NIV2011)

“ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;” Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

“Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.” Ephesians 6:18 (NRSVCE)

The Full Armor of God, Part One, Introduction

My goal in writing this lesson, with the help of Eric Hartzell's insight given in the Volume 88, Number 4, Issue 2001 of Forward in Christ, is to give us all a clearer understanding of the Full Armor of God. What does it mean for us? What do we have to do to be able to wear it and just what will it ultimately do for us? What are its benefits?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have provided for us and instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. AMEN

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

The Apostle Paul gave this clear instruction to the Ephesians and ultimately to us as we are now engaged in the same spiritual battle for our very lives. Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV2011)

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Notice Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, gives us the reason first as to why we need this Armor of God. We are not fighting earthly forces that could be overrun by earthly weapons but rather spiritual powers, powers that are invisible to our human vision. Paul warned the Ephesians and us to stand firm against the Devil and the powers that attack Christians, their families and their churches. In his instruction to the Corinthians Paul tells us that Satan and his followers can be very deceitful, showing themselves as angels of light. Therefore we are in need of something greater to fight this battle and be able to come out victorious. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15

What are these spiritual powers? Powers that are invisible?

Satan and his demons, the great father of the lie—see John 8:42-44

Temptations that are hurled at us every day from all directions -- our own sin--friends wishing to have company in their darkness--, our feelings of surety-- one time is not going to hurt anything-- I can do this by myself, etc, etc.---see 1 Cor. 10:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:25-26;

Satan has us already from birth; we are already sinners and subject to his desires through the inherent sin passed down to us from our first father. By ourselves we can be

nothing else or do anything to change our destiny. We are justly doomed to everlasting destruction; death. Rom. 6:22-23 *“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Paul goes on in v. 13 stating the same thing over again, stressing the importance of this FULL ARMOR OF GOD.

“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13

What does the Full Armor of God consist of--6 items. Ephesians 6:14-18 (NIV2011)

1. Belt of Truth around your waist
2. Breastplate of Righteousness
3. Feet fitted with the Gospel of Peace
4. Shield of Faith
5. Helmet of Salvation
6. Sword of the Spirit

Then we are told to *“pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”*(The Saints)

We are going to go through each piece of this armor and hopefully gain a better understanding of their value in our lives and the benefits to putting them on.

Give one good example of a well known death described in full detail in Scripture that could have been avoided if the Full Armor of God had been worn.

Jesus chose not to wear the Armor of God and in doing so He fell in the battle.

When I first gave this work to Pastor for approval, prior to bringing it to you, he questioned me on my statement of Jesus losing this stage of the battle and not having on the Armor of God. My response to him which, remains intact, is that He, as God, is the Armor. He was and is truth and righteousness. The other pieces of armor are found only in Jesus Christ. But we must remember why and how He came to be born as a human and to live with us and die for us.

Jesus came into this world as a baby. He came as a perfect human baby, without sin, yes, but nevertheless, as a human, not as God. He did not wear His Godly attributes, as it were, but appeared and was just like us, human, but without sin. He came with the purpose of bringing us the ability to wear this armor which is in Him; He came to die for

us as our only possible, perfect substitute. He is the only perfect man who ever walked the face of this earth, but as a human He put aside His Godly attributes and became fully human. He could and did die. In His not wearing the armor and dying for us He was able to leave this armor for us with the instruction to wear it in the spiritual battle.

1) What would have been the outcome if Christ had worn the armor?

Jesus knew from the beginning that He was in a very definite spiritual battle for our salvation. If He had won this battle we would all have lost everything He earned for us. He had to lose this stage of the battle and die to save us from our sins and also that He might win the ultimate battle by His resurrection. In His resurrection He defeated Satan and permanently won our great prize; our resurrection into everlasting life with Him and His Father in heaven. (Romans 5:6-8) *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* We have been justified through His blood and made righteous in the eyes of God through His resurrection.

It is more than safe to assume that had Jesus not lost this stage of the battle; had he won and lived; we would not be here studying this material. There would be no reason to be here, as we would still be lost sinners with nothing to look forward to but death. We need to be very thankful as we are again in this season of His passion, death and especially His resurrection that He did come as our Savior. He did die for the forgiveness of our transgressions. He was resurrected; His sacrifice was acceptable to God. Ultimately He opened the doors of heaven to us that we might join Him and His father and all those friends and relatives who have gone before us.

Beginning after Easter on April 12th and during the following weeks we will continue our study of each individual piece of armor and come to realize the need and result of wearing this Armor of God.

In the days to come, consider the following Personal Prayer as we continue to prepare ourselves, with Jesus' help, to fight this battle.

Personal Prayer: I am preparing myself to take my stand against the powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against these spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

The Full Armor of God, Part 2, The Belt of Truth

Review last session: In our last lesson regarding the question on a prominent death described in Scripture of one not wearing the Armor of God I need to extend my apology to Samantha and Cindy on their answer of Judas. It is true, Judas, though because of totally different reasons, obviously was not wearing the full armor, or he would have had the TRUTH that even his sins had already been forgiven. He would have displayed faith in the words of Jesus and might not have had such despair that he felt he had to hang himself for betraying Jesus. He would have had that truth from Jesus' words and been able to fight off the Devil's accusations. How often have you heard those same accusations? You are a sinner---God could never forgive you for what you have done---you can never be good enough for God!

I pray none of us ever feel such despair that we feel we need to end our lives because of the Devil's taunting. We must remember that Jesus removed our sins from us when He died on the cross; we are forgiven.

Join me now in this prayer for His guidance as we continue in this study of the "Armor of God"

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Jesus gave us God's armor that He could not wear and still gain salvation for us.

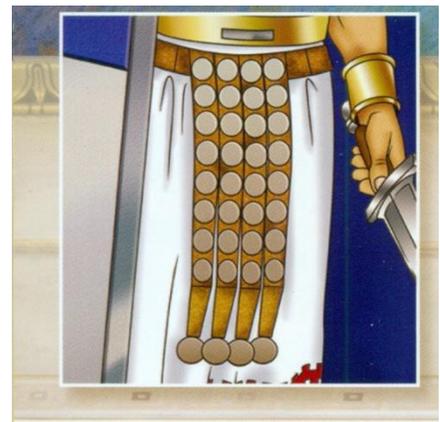
Let's view what resulted in His not wearing the full armor of God and what each piece can accomplish for us, item by item.

The Belt of Truth *Ephesians 6:14*

Description of armor: The "belt of truth" was named after the leather belt with an apron that hung in front of the Roman soldier's groin and lower abdomen.

Small brass plates were

attached to the apron to provide the greatest possible protection.



Historical Background: When preparing for battle, the belt would have been the

first piece of protective equipment put on by a soldier. It clung closely to the soldier and shielded some of the most vulnerable areas of his body.

Application: The belt actually prepared the wearer to be ready for action. It tied up the garments so that they would not get in the way of battle. In the case of the spiritual “Belt of Truth” we are going to see how it actually gives us the means to ward off the enemy.

How do we know Jesus did not have on the belt of truth? Mark 14:55-61

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any.⁵⁶ Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.’” Yet even then their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.”

This Scripture shows Jesus before the council being accused but not responding to their lies.

Think about it, Jesus was placed on the cross because of the lies of those who wanted Him dead. Even Pilate questioned “what is truth?” There was no truth in evidence as He was crucified for our sins and our salvation. I like what Eric Hartzell wrote in his article; *“The deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that Justice gave. No armor fended it off. There was no belt of protective truth for him. Pilate quipped, “What is truth?” Lies had their way as they pelted down on Jesus from his tormentors and splattered on the court walls and the cross.”*

What can this belt do for us? What is “truth?” Where is this truth found?

First we need to consider what a belt, any belt, is designed for. The purpose of a belt is to help hold something in place, to contain some object(s). We need this belt for exactly that purpose; to keep our thoughts together and on the same level with Jesus as John states *“thy word is truth” John 17:17.* Going back for a moment we look at Jesus under trial—He did not defend Himself with the truth, He didn’t even answer the accusations from His accusers or Pilate.

Remember how Pilate responded to this word---Truth. The only real truth for us as Christians is as stated in John 14:6. *“Jesus is the truth”* Timothy also gives very good instruction of where truth can be found in 2 Tim 3:16. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”* This is the truth and the only source.

Let's look at a couple more benefits of having this "Belt of Truth." See what Peter had to say about the value of truth recorded at 1 Peter 2:12, and again in 1 Peter 3:15-16

"...having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." 1Peter 2:12

"...but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." 1 Peter 3:15-16 (KJV)

What do these verses stress in our lives as to our purpose?

We need to know the good news about Jesus and the salvation He gained for us and explain to the lost souls why we believe in Him and how important this knowledge is to them also. We must remain persons of integrity, honest and trustworthy. We need to act out the truths that we try to teach others. If we are going to fulfill our commission and invite our neighbors to 'come and see' then we need to be sure we are here when they do come, that they can see our sincerity in our actions, not just our words.

What better reason than this to have on the Belt of Truth than to fight off the lies of Satan who is all lies?

The best possible reason is that it is a command of God for our protection. He gives us this belt of truth for our protection and tells us to put it on. I see no reason to refuse this gift for our victory. It is a 'free' gift, no strings attached, nothing we have to do or can do.

In conclusion of this portion of the "Armor of God", what must we do to be able to wear this belt, what is the first and foremost requirement? What must we do regularly and continually? 2 Timothy 2:15-16; Romans 12:2

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." **2 Timothy 2:15-16 (KJV)**

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2

We have to realize as we study this material that we cannot put on this armor if we remain in the grip and love of this world or continue to live in darkness. Delve into and

stay close to this truth, the Word of God, be teachable and take to heart the following Personal Prayer that I will add to as we put on each piece of the Armor of God in the coming weeks.

Personal Prayer: Lord, I am preparing myself to take my stand against the Powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against the spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

I buckle the Belt of Truth around my waist. Help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus' death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

The Full Armor of God, Part 3, The Breastplate of Righteousness

Last week we looked at the need for and the benefits from the Belt of Truth and what the outcome would have been had Jesus put on this belt. Today we are going to look at the next piece of armor, The Breastplate of Righteousness that Paul instructed the Ephesians to put on. Ephesians 6:14 As we pleaded with Jesus last week regarding the Belt of Truth: “Help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus’ death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.”

Let’s continue with this prayer for God’s help to become justified to wear this armor and for His protection in our ongoing battle.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have provided for us and instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. AMEN

The Breastplate of Righteousness: (Ephesians 6:14)

We could read about the physical breastplates and their attributes but we are more concerned with the spiritual breastplate of righteousness. We know that this armor physically protected the wearer from anything piercing his chest. How did the spiritual armor help? How does this show the same problem and the solution in the spiritual piece of armor?

Description of Armor: The Roman soldier would have fastened the breastplate around his chest. There were two types of breastplates. The first type was formed by joining several broad, curved metal bands together using leather thongs. The other was a type of chain mail, constructed by linking small metal rings together until they formed a sort of vest. Let’s look at the application.

Historical Background: The purpose of both types of armor was the same; to protect the soldier’s vital organs. If a soldier failed to use the breastplate, an arrow could easily penetrate the soldier’s chest, piercing his heart or lungs.



Application: In Isaiah 59, the Lord puts on “righteousness as a breastplate,” and goes to battle against injustice and corruption, restoring peace and order to the land. Let’s look at what Isaiah had to say, under inspiration about the terrible condition we display and His solution; beginning in Isaiah 59:1-4; 16-17. “*Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his*

ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things. No one calls for justice; no one pleads a case with integrity they rely on empty arguments, they utter lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil... He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm achieved salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.” We need to understand that before the Holy Spirit moved us to faith in our Lord, we all fit into this description. Sorrowfully there are some who still tend to follow the old dark pathways. God offers His own righteousness to every believer in Jesus Christ. This righteousness only comes from belief in our Lord, not by any good deeds we think we might accomplish. (Titus 3:5; Philippians 3:9)

“...he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit“
Titus 3:5

“... and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.” Philippians 3:9

Spiritual Considerations: Putting on the breastplate of righteousness can only be accomplished by believing in Jesus and standing firm against injustice. (Galatians 3:20-21)
“A mediator however, implies more than one party; but God is one. Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.” Let’s also look at **Leviticus 19:15**; *“Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly”* and **Hebrews 1:9** *“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy..”* Clearly by these passages we learn that we are saved by righteousness but not by OUR righteousness. It is purely a gift from God through Jesus. God will protect those who have faith in Jesus.(2 Thessalonians 3:3) *“But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one.”*

What would this breastplate of righteousness have done for Jesus, had he chosen to wear it?

According to Eric Hartzell’s study, *“The crushing onslaught of our iniquity broke his brave heart. The centurion’s spear found its mark.”* This is another clear indication that He was, as a human, unarmed.

Needless to say, had He been protected by this spiritual breastplate of righteousness, He would have lived and we would still be doomed, unforgiven and condemned.

How do we obtain this righteousness?

As we just read in Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:20-21, “A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one. Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.”

we can only gain righteousness through the blood of Jesus. If there were any other way His death would have been meaningless. This plainly refutes those persons stressing the need of good works for our salvation. Yes, we do need to display good works; good works out of gratitude for the salvation and righteousness we have already been given through Him.

What do we need to do in order to be able to put on this additional piece of armor?

“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” (Hebrews 1:9)
“Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

(Oil of Joy Psalm 45:6-7) We must continue to follow the ways we have learned; the ways of righteousness through Jesus. We must not revert back to our old ways of life from before we were redeemed by Him.

Do you ever get the feeling that you don't have His righteousness? That He has moved away from you?

Let's look at what Isaiah had to say about this. Has God really moved away? Or has something else happened to give this feeling of separation? Let's go back again to Isaiah 59:1-2 and see what has really happened.

Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear. Can you now see what the problem might be? It's not God who has moved away. Maybe it is you, your spiritual life and actions that are failing, causing this feeling of aloneness.

Additional verses for your consideration as you endeavor to wear this piece of God's armor: Isaiah 59(complete); Romans 1:16-17; Romans 3; 21-24

Let's close with the personal prayer for us in putting on the full “Armor of God”

Personal Prayer: Lord, I am preparing myself to take my stand against the powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against the spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

I Buckle the Belt of Truth Around My Waist. Help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow

Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus' death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

I Take the Breastplate of Righteousness. Thank you for giving me God's righteousness. Because I am not perfect, God graciously protects me with His own righteousness because I believe in Jesus Christ.

The Full Armor of God, Part four, Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace

REVIEW

What does the Full Armor of God consist of--6 items. Ephesians 6:14-18 (NIV2011)

Back in the beginning of this lesson on the Full Armor Of God, I made a very bold statement that our pastor called me on initially. I went on to explain to him and later in our lesson Jesus did not have on the full armor when He faced His accusers, His trial and execution. I made this statement with the full knowledge that as God, Jesus was truth, He had righteousness—His own-- and also as God He had all the other armor necessary for saving Himself.

But, when He faced His accusers He was fully human, He was not appearing as God but as the son of a woman, Mary, the very human person that we remember at His birth as a human baby. Had He put on the armor during His time of trial and death, He would not have died! We would not be reconciled to God! We would still be unforgiven sinners doomed to eternal destruction!

Ephesians 6:10-18 *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”*

1. Belt of Truth around your waist

Remember how Pilate responded to this word---Truth. The only real truth for us as Christians is as stated in John 14:6. Jesus answered, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* **Jesus is the truth.** Paul in his pastoral letters to Timothy also gives very good instruction of where truth can be found in 2 Tim 3:16. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”* **This is the truth and the only source.**

2. Breastplate of Righteousness

We need to understand that before the Holy Spirit moved us to faith in our Lord, we all fit into this description. **Sorrowfully there are some who still tend to follow the old dark pathways.** God offers His own righteousness to every believer in Jesus Christ. This righteousness only comes from belief in our Lord, not by any good deeds we think we might accomplish. (Titus 3:5) *“... he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”,* (Philippians 3:9) *“... that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is*

through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.”

3. Feet fitted with the Gospel of Peace

Now we proceed into the next piece of the armor, the preparation of our feet.

With the Belt of Truth around our waist and the Breastplate of Righteousness fastened around our chest we are ready to add to our Salvation wardrobe by “Preparing our Feet with the Gospel of Peace.”

According to the apostle Paul this was the next important piece of our spiritual armor necessary for our fighting and surviving this oncoming battle; the battle against Satan and the evil forces of this dying, sinful world.

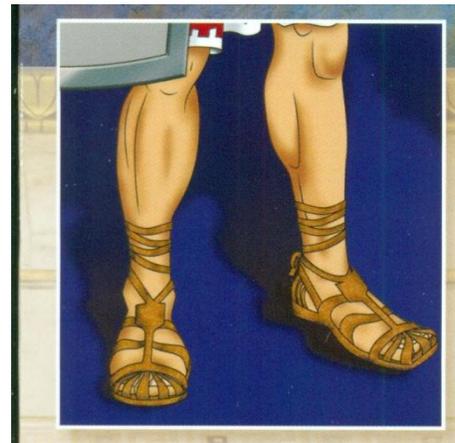
Let’s join in this prayer for the Lord’s guidance and direction in this study to fully understand what we are up against and how we may be triumphant.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have provided for us and instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15) The purpose of having the proper footwear should be quite evident for anyone contemplating going into battle as a foot soldier. The vast majority of the fighting men of this time were exactly that—foot soldiers. I have added the Description of Armor and the Historical background for the understanding of the gear worn for the physical battle and comparison to that of our spiritual battle.

Description of Armor: Marching was an essential part of a soldier’s life and no soldier would march far without sturdy shoes. Even before the Roman Era, the breaking of a soldier’s shoe was a metaphor for weakness or defeat.

Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal strap is broken. (Isaiah 5:27) The Roman soldier’s shoes were fashioned with thick leather and studded through the soles with hobnails.



Historical background: The studded soles enabled the soldier to stand firm. They kept the soldier's feet from slipping and allowed him to maintain his position against his enemies.

Where was Jesus' footgear 'the Gospel of Peace'?

There was no Gospel of Peace for Him. He walked that long journey carrying His Cross and the sins of all people of all time, yours and mine included. I doubt He was even allowed to wear His sandals. That would have been a kind gesture and no one was showing any kindness. Then came those horrible nails, piercing His hands and feet...no protection anywhere. Jesus was all alone creating peace for us, He was given no peace by His tormentors. No one wanted the gift He was preparing for them.

Application: The Greek word meaning "preparation" or "readiness" in Ephesians 6:15 can also be translated "prepared foundation"—this we will find is true in physical battle and especially in our spiritual battle.

This reminds me of that all time great hymn "How Firm a Foundation" I have included v 1 & 7 as I feel it very clearly states our position in this battle.

1. How a firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?

7. The Soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

I find a tremendous promise of victory, in this, if we just follow His instructions and wear The Full Armor of God.

Just what is this Gospel of Peace?

It is the good news that we can be at peace with our Triune God. Before we were brought to faith by the Holy Spirit we wanted nothing to do with Him. Before we were directed to Jesus we wanted to live for ourselves.

This word peace can have so many different applications. Describe some?

1 Thessalonians 5:13-14; "*Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.*"¹⁴ *And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*" **Be in unity with your brothers.**

John 20:19; "*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"*" **Have no fear.**

John 14:1; *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.”* **Don’t be troubled-don’t worry.**

Matthew 5:9; *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”*. Peacemakers are called sons of God

John 16:33; *“For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world”* **Lack of worldly tribulation-Jesus has overcome the world.**

We could go on and on with the great gift of peace we have been given. But how does this apply to our feet being prepared with the Gospel of Peace? What do we need to be doing continuously?

We need to look again at the hymn verses and take to heart and work at living our faith because of the wonderful promise given to the Corinthians and us by Paul at 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (NIV2011) *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”*

Reconciled/ reconciliation: Definition—*restore friendly relations between.-- cause to coexist in harmony--being made friends with, having found favor with –by God.*

We have been reconciled to God. We are at peace with Him. We can take all our needs to Him. He will give us the victory.

I want to end with this very familiar verse from Philippians 4:6-7; another of God’s un-deserved promises. *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Let’s close with the personal prayer for us in putting on the full “Armor of God”

Personal Prayer: Lord, I am preparing myself to take my stand against the powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against the spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

I Buckle the Belt of Truth Around My Waist. Help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus’ death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

I Take the Breastplate of Righteousness. Thank you for giving me God’s righteousness. Because I am not perfect, God graciously protects me with His own righteousness because I believe in Jesus Christ.

I Stand Firmly on Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace. Help me to resist temptation and stay away from people, places and situations that tempt me. Help me live in peace and unity with my family and other believers as much as it depends on me.

The Full Armor of God, Part five, The Shield of Faith

In our earlier lessons we have learned the value of having on the ‘spiritual’ belt of truth, meaning that we must always strive to be a person of truth, all the time. To do this we must know the good news about Christ and always be ready to explain and defend our reasons for our trust. That trust being solely in the righteousness of God that He has given us through the spiritual breastplate of righteousness. We need to always remember this righteousness only comes from God; we have none on our own.

Last week we continued our study with Preparing our feet with the Gospel of Peace spoken of by Paul to the Ephesians in Chapter 6, verse 15. We learned that the Gospel of Peace mentioned here is the realization that because of our reconciliation with God we are now able to be at peace with Him.

Before we continue with our study of the Shield of Faith; let’s join our hearts in prayer for God’s guidance that we might gain more understanding of our need and use of this armor to the glory of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have provided for us and instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. AMEN

Description of Armor: The Roman shield was made of goatskin or calf skin and stretched and secured over a sturdy wooden frame, four feet long and three feet wide. Iron rims were fitted to the top and bottom edges and an iron ring was attached to the center the shield. The boards of the shield were curved inward and a leather strap was fastened to the shields back for gripping by the soldier.

Historical background: Before going into battle, Roman soldiers would drench their leather covered shields with water. This would cause the flaming arrows that pierced the shields to be immediately extinguished.



of

The Romans knew who their enemies were; they could see them right in front of them. How does this differ for us?

Who are our enemies?

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

“...but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” Mark 4:19;

“...to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:18

Colossians 1:13 tells us that *“he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,”*

What are the ‘flaming arrows’ of the evil ones spoken of in Ephesians 6:16?

Sometimes those are the Oh so very innocent sounding temptations those things our friends try so hard to get us to ‘enjoy’ with them; things warned against by God.

I find for myself it’s not always my friends but myself with those innocent, harmless temptations. –Thoughts like I can miss this bible study once—it’s only one time. After all, I just heard Pastor’s sermon, do I really need more this morning?

How does the shield of faith come into this picture? Let’s look at a few Scriptures to get a clearer understanding.

“As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him”. 2 Samuel 22:31;

“My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart.” Psalm 7:10;

“You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your right hand upholds me; And Your gentleness makes me great.” Psalm 18:35.

I think this quote from Matthew Henry states our case very well. He says, “...all except believers in Christ, are enslaved in some respect or other, to the customs, opinions, or interests of the world. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armour by which we overcome. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of, and in opposition to the world. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains sway and dominion over souls.”

The Lord constantly tells us that He will take care of us if we have Faith in Him and His promises. This is clearly stated for us at 1John 5:4-5 *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

Following is a summary of what we have studied to date about what we have been told to do for our salvation through this spiritual battle. Let's review each one again briefly.

1. We must put on the Belt of Truth (Isaiah 11:5) *"Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist."*---We must know and believe His Word for our lives—His Word is truth(John 17:17) *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth."*
2. We must put on the Breastplate of Righteousness(Isaiah 59:17) *"He put on righteousness like a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head";*—His righteousness- given freely to us through no ability or action of our own as sinners.
3. We must have our Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace(Romans 10:15) *"How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!"* --- Peace with God through our reconciliation with Him totally by His grace.
4. We must carry the Shield of Faith(1 John 5:4) *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith"*—again faith in Jesus, that He will always keep all His promises to protect those who love Him.

I would like to rephrase a statement regarding the “works” we need to be involved in because of our faith in Christ and the salvation He has bestowed on us. This from C.S. Lewis in his book “Mere Christianity.” “[To have Faith in Christ] means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice...it should follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has saved you already. Not hoping to get to Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside you.”

In light of Pastor's sermon of last week and many bible lessons of our recent past; if we are to remain productive branches to the Vine, Christ, then we need to be directing those lost souls, the un-churched, our neighbors and friends to the Armor of God. We need to fulfill that divine calling we have received as His disciples,(John 15:7-8) *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples,"* We are to spread the word, give them the opportunity to put on the Full Armor of God and join us in the battle.

Let us close this week's study with the personal prayer to enable us in this ongoing battle that we may in the end, stand firm.

Personal Prayer: Lord, I am preparing myself to take my stand against the powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against the spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

I Buckle the Belt of Truth Around My Waist. Help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus' death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

I Take the Breastplate of Righteousness. Thank you for giving me God's righteousness. Because I am not perfect, God graciously protects me with His own righteousness because I believe in Jesus Christ.

I Stand Firmly on Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace. Help me to resist temptation and stay away from people, places and situations that tempt me. Help me live in peace and unity with my family and other believers as much as it depends on me.

I Lift Up the Shield of Faith. Help me to hold up the shield and stop the arrows of doubt, despair, and hopelessness that the enemy shoots at me.

The Full Armor of God, Part six, The Helmet of Salvation

In the past several weeks we have been looking at the individual pieces of armor our Lord has told us to wear. We have looked at His reasons for us wearing them and learned what happened to Jesus because He was not wearing the armor. Before going into the last defensive piece of armor let's join in the prayer for His guidance and direction in our study.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have provided for us and instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. AMEN

As we continue with the Helmet of Salvation, take note that this is the last defensive piece of armor we will be putting on for the battle. We have looked at the Belt of Truth, the truth that is in Christ and the Breastplate of Righteousness that is God's righteousness, freely given to us. We have shod our feet with the Gospel of Peace, the peace gained for us by Christ's sacrifice which made us reconciled to God and at peace with Him. We are carrying the Shield of Faith, faith in our Creator/Redeemer, faith that He has made promises to us and because He keeps His word we can rest assured they will all be fulfilled.

These pieces of armor, along with the Helmet of Salvation that we are going to look at today are all defensive objects. They are to protect us from the onslaught of Satan's temptations and accusations he constantly hurls at Christians. The final piece we look at next week is an offensive piece of the armor. It is used to actually defeat the enemy and save lives.

Description of armor: The helmet of the Roman soldier was generally fashioned from bronze or iron. There were two hinged panels on the sides of the helmet for protection of the sides of the head and face including the ears. The soldier generally lined his helmet with soft fabric or felt for comfort. At the time of Christ a plume of horse's hair was fastened to the top of the helmet.



Historical background: By design the helmet was crafted to protect the skull, neck, ears and forehead from his enemy's weapons. The plumes were later dyed to show the rank of the different officers.

Application: The helmet of salvation points to Jesus' victory over the forces of evil. Through Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead,

Christian believers now can rest assured in the freedom from our sins, knowledge of our salvation and the promise of life with God eternally.

Had Jesus been wearing this helmet of salvation He would not have had to suffer the vicious flogging, the crown of thorns pressed into His scalp or any of the other atrocities hurled at Him from His persecutors. Again, had He worn the armor He would not have died and we would still be souls lost to destruction.

Before going on to learn what this spiritual helmet will do for us let's review a couple of instances in Scripture where the actual helmet was not worn by one and probably improperly by another out of neglect and the consequences.

1) *"So Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and approached the entrance of the tower to burn it with fire. But a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head, crushing his skull."* Judges 9:52-53 There is no mention as to whether he did or did not have on his helmet.

2) *"And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth."* 1 Samuel 17:48-49 It is probably safe to assume that Goliath, in his arrogance, probably pushed back his helmet making visible and vulnerable his forehead to the stone that took his life.

In light of these two passages we can see what might happen with ill-worn armor. What other instance gives us sure need of wearing this armor? Isaiah 59:17 *"He put on righteousness like a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle."* Here we find God Himself putting on the breastplate and helmet before going into battle. If He saw the need and benefit, how much more so do we need to follow His example?

Putting on this Helmet of Salvation means what for us?

"He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time," 2 Timothy 1:9 Have assurance Jesus saved us not by our own merits but only through God's love.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 All believers are a 'new creation', no longer living for selfish reasons, but living for the Lord.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew

5:11-12. We must accept the facts; we're in a serious battle, we may be persecuted for believing in Jesus and if we keep the faith we will be blessed by the Lord.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16. Appreciate the eternal life we have received from our God through believing in Christ.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9. Know that God will forgive believers when they might fall and forgive all who come to Him in repentance.

In summing up what this armor has provided for us, let's go to Ephesians 1:12-14 *“...to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”*

It seems certain that if we listen to the truth of our salvation and realize we are sealed in Christ with the Holy Spirit who won us that salvation and that if we have been promised a pledge of our inheritance from God, that He has reconciled us to Himself and makes us holy in His sight through no work of our own.

Remember this helmet is used to deflect the constant barrage of temptations, scorn and ridicule thrown at us, it does not stop them. We must keep this armor on at all times to be protected. How could we not desire to put on the Full Armor of God in preparation of taking up the shield of faith and entering this battle with Christ on our side?

Let's close this session by joining in the Personal Prayer for having this armor and being able to wear it.

Personal Prayer: Lord, I am preparing myself to take my stand against the powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against the spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

I Buckle the Belt of Truth Around My Waist. Help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus' death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

I Take the Breastplate of Righteousness. Thank you for giving me God's righteousness. Because I am not perfect, God graciously protects me with His own righteousness because I believe in Jesus Christ.

I Stand Firmly on Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace. Help me to resist temptation and stay away from people, places and situations that tempt me.

Help me live in peace and unity with my family and other believers as much as it depends on me.

I Lift Up the Shield of Faith. Help me to hold up the shield and stop the arrows of doubt, despair, and hopelessness that the enemy shoots at me.

I place upon my head the Helmet of Salvation. Help me to know that no matter how tough life is Jesus has conquered sin, and I live with the assurance that I will one day be with God in heaven.

The Full Armor of God, Part seven, The Sword of the Spirit

Let's go back for a moment to our purpose in learning about this Full Armor of God and why we were instructed to put it on at all times. We started with Paul's words to the Ephesians and in effect to us as written in Ephesians 6:10-12

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

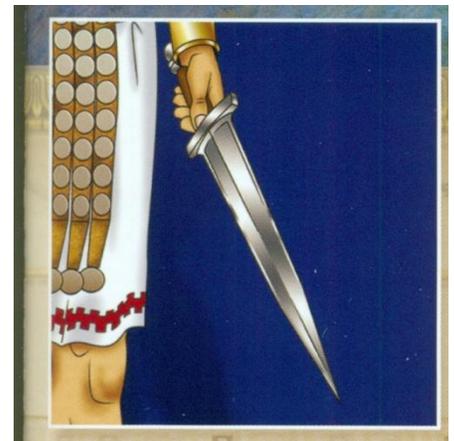
We learned further that Jesus did not have on the Armor when He was crucified as this would have protected Him and saved His life. We were reassured that He had to die as He did in order to be the atoning sacrifice for us, for our sins. He died without the armor and left that armor for us with instructions for us to properly wear it that we might be protected from the forces of evil. Before we continue with our study of the last piece of armor, The Sword of the Spirit, let's ask for our Lord's blessing, that His Holy Spirit might give us understanding and guidance.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, guide us as we delve into this study of the benefit and purpose of this armor that you have provided for us and instructed us to put on that we might be able to fight and win this battle with your help. We request your presence to be with us, that you might send a special portion of your Holy Spirit to guide us and show us how we need to bring our lives into a state that we might be able to wear this armor to your glory. We make this request through and in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen

Description of armor: The Sword of the Roman soldier was little more than two feet long and crafted of iron. The blacksmith hardened the iron blade by covering the red-hot iron with coal dust; the coal dust formed a very hard carbon coating on the blade. The sword handles were crafted from a variety of substances including iron, ivory, wood or bone.

Historical Background: In battle, rows of soldiers would press on against their enemy one step at a time with shields in front for protection and the swords as a means to move the enemy back. The blade was held flat and parallel to the ground.

As I mentioned last week, this sword is the only offensive piece of armor worn or carried by the soldier. It was used with one purpose, to defeat the plans of the enemy, thereby saving lives. All previous items were defensive pieces; carried or worn for protection from the enemy and their aggressive attacks.



Application: We are told at Ephesians 6:17 “To...take the Shield of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”

What is the Word of God as it pertains to this sword of the spirit?

The Gospel of the salvation in Christ. The good news that Jesus came to save us for everlasting life with Him in heaven. The Holy Bible

What did Paul have to say about this Gospel message? Romans 10:8-9

“Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him.”

After reading this verse, what is Paul actually telling us to accomplish with this sword of the spirit?

We need to use this sword for its ultimate purpose—to save lives. Tell of the good news of the Gospel of Christ.

What promise did God give us through Isaiah? Isaiah 41:10; *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”* Joshua 1:9 *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

Forget our fears, God will be with us and protect us.

What example did Jesus give us when He was being tempted by Satan? Matthew 4:10 *“Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written:’ ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”*

He used Scripture to refute the devil’s temptation, always using the Word of His Father.

Paul again gives us some satisfaction in knowing that we will never be put upon by any temptation that has not already been experienced by another, or that we will be tried beyond our endurance. God remains our faithful protector. 1 Corinthians 10:13 *“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it”*. I really appreciate the explanation given in the Amplified Bible (It attempts to take both word meaning and context into account to accurately translate the original text from one language into another.) The Lockman Foundation

1 Corinthians 10:13 Amplified Bible (AMP)

For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you *and* laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted *and* tried *and* assayed beyond your ability *and* strength of resistance *and* power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable *and* strong *and* powerful to bear up under it patiently.

What are we told to do with this Gospel? Mark 16:15 *“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.’”*

Preach it to all creation. Nowhere in Scripture are we ever told to just protect ourselves with the Armor of God. Jesus died leaving this armor for us for a two-fold purpose: to protect and defend ourselves from the powers of darkness and to save lives. This means, we must bring others to an understanding of how they too may put on this armor for their protection. Remember what we were told by Jesus in Matthew 9:37 ... *“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”*

There are many out there looking for knowledge of their salvation. This multitude needs to be gathered one by one; each one increasing the numbers of redeemed souls, realizing their salvation and joining us, wearing the “Full Armor of God”, making our task easier as we continue to see the fast-approaching end times.

Let’s close this session with the personal prayer as follows:

Personal Prayer: Lord, I am preparing myself to take my stand against the powers of darkness. Please help me to stand against the spiritual forces of evil that want to destroy me, my family and the church.

With the Belt of Truth around my waist: help me be a person of truth and reliability. Please give me the words to say when people ask why I follow Jesus. Help me tell about Jesus’ death and resurrection and His promise of eternal life to those who believe in Him.

For the Breastplate of Righteousness: I thank you that because I am not perfect, God graciously protects me with His own righteousness because I believe in Jesus Christ.

Keep my Feet Prepared with the Gospel of Peace: help me to resist temptation and stay away from people, places and situations that tempt me. Help me live in peace and unity with my family and other believers as much as it depends on me.

As I hold up the Shield of Faith: help me withstand the arrows of doubt, despair, and hopelessness that the enemy shoots at me.

With the Helmet of Salvation in place: help me to know that no matter how tough life is Jesus has conquered sin, and I live with the assurance that I will one day be with God in heaven.

Finally, as I clasp your Sword of the Spirit before me: guide me as your ambassador of truth to those souls hungering for your Gospel of salvation we have come to realize through the life, death and resurrection of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

Next week, in conclusion, I will have a transcript of this study available with additional references pertaining to our many temptations and scripture passages for our help and understanding. Remember, this is a VERY REAL battle we have become engaged in as believers in Christ. Satan, just like God, wants no one to be lost to him. God is offering an eternity of blessings that Satan is not capable of. Choose wisely.

The Full Armor of God, Part 8, Conclusion, Ephesians 6:18

Up to this point we have been dealing with the physical pieces of armor the Roman soldiers wore into battle and the corresponding spiritual armor that we have been instructed to put on. We viewed the five defensive pieces of armor and one offensive piece; the Sword of the Spirit.

What made this piece of armor different from the others? The first five pieces were strictly for protecting individuals from the onslaught of the evil forces of darkness, whereas the sword of the spirit was to be used offensively to push back the forces of evil and help save lives.

How can we as individuals help save lives in this spiritual battle? We need to be in the Word, constantly, so as to lead others to where they might also hear the Word and be equipped for battle with the Armor of God.

Let's read again the portion of Ephesians we have been dealing with for two purposes. One, as a review and refocus on the commands we have been given and, two, to see what other armor might be suggested. *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, **and** with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people, (the Saints)”*.

Do you see the other “armor” that Paul is speaking of? Yes, Prayer! We need to always remember the value and the strength of the prayers that might be sent to God for all His people that are taking part in this battle.

Let's look at these last words of admonition from Paul: *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.”* Ephesians 6:18

What does Paul mean when he says to “pray in the spirit?” James, the brother of Jesus give us some insight to this means of prayer at James 1:6-7; *“But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from*

the Lord.” The author tells us in his letter to the Hebrews that the most essential part of prayer is faith that God will answer us. 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.*” We have been taught time and again from the Word that our faith only comes to us as a free gift of God through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 2:18 “*For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*”

What does he mean when he says pray on all occasions? Paul is in effect telling us to pray continuously, as he has said before. This does not mean we need to go through life on our knees with our hands clasped. No! But it does mean to put ALL our requests in God’s hands. We are not to pick and choose which problems God might help US with, but to trust fully on Him and let Him make the decisions in our lives. He has given us a full set of rules and guidelines for a full and fruitful life and He says “*Let me do the worrying and problem solving.*”

We must always keep in mind that we are not fighting these battles as individuals, but as a united army of the Church Militant. We do battle alongside all God’s people on earth regardless of their “color, race or religious affiliation.”

We have come full circle in our look at the armor of God. We began with the Belt of Truth that is the truth of God’s Word; we donned the Breastplate of Christ’s Righteousness because without it we had none of our own. We were told to Prepare our Feet with the Gospel of Peace that peace we have with God through the redemption we freely received through Christ’s sacrifice. We, then, were nearly ready for battle as we took up the Shield of Faith, the faith we gain only and freely from the Holy Spirit to protect us from the flaming arrows of the enemy. At last we get the call to battle as we take up the Sword of the Spirit to drive back the forces of evil and help save lives.

At this point we realize and are re-assured that our Triune God is right beside us in this battle as we continue to pray in the Spirit for one another, all the Saints. God the Father, who has given us His peace and who controls all things, God the Son, Jesus, who came as a child, taught His followers to instruct us, suffered shame and death on the cross and was resurrected as our Redeemer and God, the Holy Spirit who gives us the faith, understanding and ability to believe in the truth of our salvation.

I want to conclude this Bible Study with the ending prayer from Paul at Ephesians 6:19-20: “*Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*”

Here is a brief table of the many schemes the Devil uses in his attempt to lead us astray. As we keep on in our efforts to defeat his attempts we can rest assured that God has already given us the necessary support through His Word. Continue to faithfully wear The Full Armor of God. With God at our side, we will come out victorious.

Devil's Schemes	God's Plan	Bible
"Me first"	God first	Matthew 6:33
Lies	Truth	Proverbs 14:25
Fear	Love	1 John 4:18
Discouragement	Confidence, Strength	Deuteronomy 31:8
Anger	Patience	2 Timothy 2:24
Condemning others	Putting up with others	Colossians 3:12, 13
Powered by alcohol	Powered by the Holy Spirit	Ephesians 5:18
Complaining	Contentment	Philippians 2:14
"My way"	God's way	Proverbs 16:25
Death	Life	John 5:24
Gossip	Confidentiality	Proverbs 20:19
Regret and shame	God's forgiveness	Acts 3:19
Greed	Giving	Luke 12:15-21
Cursing	Blessing your enemies	Luke 6:28
Revenge	Forgiveness	Matthew 6:14, 15
Hateful talk	Encouragement	Ephesians 4:29
Self-pity	Songs of praise	Ephesians 5:19,20
Laziness	Productivity, watchfulness	Proverbs 12:24
Unfaithfulness	Loyalty	Philippians 2:4
Irresponsibility	Dependability	Proverbs 14:14
Being rude	Being considerate	Titus 3:2
Worry	Rest	Matthew 11 :28, 29
Anxiety	Peace	John 16:33
Jealousy, envy	Abundant heart	James 3:16, 17
Using others	Sacrificing for others	I Corinthians 13:4-7
Rage	Self-control	Colossians 3:8-12
Sexual immorality	Sexual fidelity	1 Thessalonians 4:3
"My power"	God's power	Ephesians 3:16

