

TITLE: THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

TEXT: EPH 6:10-18

INTRO: Last week we studied our enemy, Satan. We discussed his mission, his weapons, his ultimate end, and the results of his work (i.e., his success or failure, and how it depends on us). We closed by talking about *how* we can defeat Satan. If we truly believe in God, His word, Heaven, Hell, and Satan, then this topic ought to be of extreme interest to us.

I. OUR CAPTAIN'S CONCERN (Armor Commanded) (v. 10-13):

- A. (v. 10) Finally (a conclusion to all the teaching & instruction he's given), be strong (empowered, enabled) in the Lord (no strength outside Him), and in the power of *his* might (strength). Be strong in *his* strength. You may think you're strong and capable. But don't miss this: You have **nothing** against Satan without Christ/Christianity.
*As Christians, we can look at this as simply a command from the apostle Paul, or we can look deeper and see it as his love and concern for us as we are left to face our enemy.
- B. (v. 11a) **How** to be strengthened in God's strength: Put on the *whole* armor ('panoply') of God (details of which will be given in v. 13f). Notice he doesn't say, "*Elders, or preachers, put on the armor.*" Paul recognizes that *all* Christians are in this battle.
- C. (v. 11b-12) **Why** we need to put on the full armor of God: so we'll be able stand against the wiles (trickery) of the devil. (v. 12) Many aren't even aware of who their enemy is. It's easy to believe the enemy is flesh & blood, since that's all we see. But Paul is telling us to see what we can't see physically. Our war is *not* physical; it's spiritual. Our enemy is Satan, & we aren't ignorant of his devices (2 Cor 2:11). He uses subtlety, trickery, deceit. His attack is not a head-on assault (not like a physical war). He presents evil to us in different packages (e.g., movies... Rated R, PG-13, etc. – people say, "it's just rated R for violence!" or "the language isn't *that* bad" etc.). These are some of Satan's weapons, and we need to be properly prepared for them.
- D. (v. 13) Again, take up the panoply (complete armor) of God (*nobody else can provide it*). So you will be able to withstand (stand against, resist, oppose) in the evil day...and having done all (everything required), you'll be able to stand (firm).

II. OUR CAPTAIN'S COMMAND (The Soldier's Tools) (v. 14-18):

- A. Armor Described (Defensive) (v. 14-17a)
- (v. 14a) Stand (prepare for combat)! How? Loins girt about (clothed) with the truth – men in the 1st century would wear a long robe/skirt. When it was time to work, he would pull it up and wrap a sash around his waist. This is preparation. The truth prepares us; God's word is truth (Jn 17:17). It's the word that tells us about our enemy, his weapons, our armor, & our weapons!
 - (v. 14b) Breastplate (protection) of righteousness – being 'right' in *God's* sight (believing in Him, believing & obeying Him in all things). How does this protect us from "the wiles of the devil?" Pursuing righteousness takes time & effort (reading, studying, encouraging, evangelizing, visiting, etc.). It takes time away from Satan. Every minute we *aren't* doing these things is a minute Satan can use! And he *will* use it! (TV, movies, etc.)
 - (v. 15) Feet shod ('bind under') w/the preparation of the gospel of peace. Without proper footwear, the soldier cannot pursue (or flee from) the enemy, the athlete cannot compete in the games, and the Christian cannot obey the gospel. This is not about becoming a Christian (they already are Christians). This is about *delivering* the gospel (Rom 10:15 – "*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*") Gospel of peace– because **only** the gospel will bring peace between man & God (& man & man).
 - (v. 16) Shield of faith – the Greek word for shield refers to the large shield that covered (protected) the whole body. Our shield is our faith – obedient belief in God. Faith represents everything we do as Christians. It's the **evidence** of what we can't see (God, forgiveness of sins, Heaven, etc.)(Heb 11:1), and it's the reason for our works (Jam 2:14-26). Our faith will protect us from (quench, extinguish) *all* the fiery darts (missile, etc.) of the wicked. **God has not left us vulnerable to anything Satan can do!**
 - (v. 17a) Helmet of salvation (1 Thess 5:8– "*for a helmet, the hope of salvation*")—salvation hasn't yet been received (Rom 13:11); it's something for which we hope. A helmet is protection, so like the breastplate of righteousness, our hope of salvation is a protection for us, as we focus on the final reward of Heaven. This hope causes us to live accordingly.
- B. Weapons Described (Offensive) (v. 17b-18)
- (v. 17b) Sword of the Spirit – here is the first of our only 2 offensive weapons – the sword that the Spirit provides. Paul makes it clear that our weapon is the Bible! What else do we have? What else do we need? This is all Jesus used against Satan (Mt 4:6-7 – "*cast thyself down...He shall give his angels charge concerning thee*" ... "*thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*"). Peter used it on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Steven used it in Acts 7. The Hebrew writer argues from the OT multiple times. So we too should use God's Word as our offensive weapon. Heb 4:12 – "*the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"
 - (v. 18a) The 2nd offensive weapon – prayer. Praying *always* (1 Thess 5:17). Don't give up on this weapon!
 - (v. 18b) Watching thereunto (in/through prayer), with all perseverance (stick to the goal, don't give in)! The armor doesn't do much good if you're not paying attention (watching). This is your inner strength – praying always.

CONCLUSION: Our enemy wants to defeat us any way he can. His methods are very subtle, and we need to be prepared at all times to defend ourselves against him. This means having on the whole armor of God, and having it on at all times.