

Ephesians 6: The Armour of God – May 7th 2017 – Tino Todino

We will be concluding our series on Ephesians today with Ephesians chapter 6 and I will be primarily speaking from verses 10 through to 20 which we will read now.

Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[a] against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

If you have been in church for a considerable time you will have undoubtedly heard other sermons on the subject of the Armour of God. If that's the case, hang in there. Don't sigh, despair, walk out, etc. because I'm sure God can reveal something to you.

Passage Background

The context of this passage is the teaching of the whole letter, namely the revealing of the riches we have in Christ (**redemption, forgiveness, inheritance, acceptance, adoption, wisdom, grace and the Holy Spirit**) and how we should walk as Christians in light of those riches (a walk that is worthy of the Lord).

As we come into Ephesians 6 v 10 we are presented with the opening words "Finally my brethren". Paul is encouraging us in what we need to ensure that we are able to witness to these riches in Christ and how to guard against becoming less than God intended us to be.

Put on the whole armour

In verses 10 we learn that Paul is encouraging us to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

- God is not looking for you to be strong.
- He is also not looking for you to be weak.
- He is simply looking for you to trust Him who is unfailing in His love, goodness, grace and wisdom.

If you can walk with Him and trust Him, then you need neither strength or weakness. Christ becomes our sufficiency in all things.

Verse 11 encourages us to put on the whole armour of God. Why? So that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

We put on in order to stand.

By inference therefore, if we don't put it on, we don't stand.

To put on requires an active engagement. It is not done through passivity or accidentally.

What are the wiles of the devil?

Generally, the same ones he used with Jesus in the temptation narrative.

- If you are the Son of God make these stones become bread – Temptation to meet your own needs (self-sufficiency, Pride)
 - You don't need Father God for your calling and mission. You can do it all yourself. He doesn't care about your needs.
- If you are the Son of God throw yourself down – Temptation to prove Himself (perform, power)
 - Prove yourself. Prove you have what it takes. Prove to the world you are who you say you are. Show you are powerful and should be taken seriously.

People love a good show. The sensational always draws a crowd. "Prove" God. Satisfy their curiosity with endless signs and wonders. Give people what they want – easy answers and a circus of the sensational. But Jesus said, no! Yielding to the second temptation turns God into an equation forever proving itself. It turns God into a circus animal doing tricks to entertain the crowd. God is to be worshiped; not tested, not made to prove himself, not made to satisfy our craving for the sensational.

- If you will worship me then I will give you all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour – IDOLATRY and POWER gained through ungodly means.
 - You can have the whole world in the same way I gave it to people like Caesar with the power of the sword.

- You can have the glory of being ruler of all these people without the humiliation of the cross.
- You don't have to do it the hard way if you will but bow down and worship me.

Jesus overcame these temptations. Yes, Jesus would become the world's rightful king, but he would do so not by the sword as Caesar did, but by the cross.

The spiritual war

Paul uses warfare metaphor to illustrate that we are in a spiritual battle. You may be asking why are we in a battle if Jesus is Lord and He has won?

Jesus is Lord. That is true, but He is not yet Lord of everything, including if we are honest **all aspects** of our own lives. There is still an element within us where 'we' are Lord (idolatry), and moreover there are still many people and places in the world where the reality of the rule and reign of God hasn't yet been made manifest. But even as God continues to expand and establish His Kingdom on earth through the church, the kingdom of darkness wars against it. In this spiritual battle with Satan and the principalities, Jesus in principle won the war, struck the decisive deathblow, vanquished Satan, restored humanity, and established the kingdom; yet some battles must still be fought before this ultimate victory is fully manifested. Hence Jesus did not just carry out his warfare ministry; he commissioned, equipped and empowered his disciples, and the whole of the later church, to do the same. He set in motion the creation of a new humanity, one that again exercises dominion over the earth, by giving us his power and authority to proclaim and demonstrate the kingdom just as he did.

So, we live in the tension between the Kingdom of God now and the fullness of the Kingdom of God yet to be revealed. Sometimes we catch glimpses of it when we see the supernatural manifestation of the power of God at work. The mission of the church is to make manifest that Kingdom and extend the rule and reign of God through it to the whole world. I have good news in this, we know from **Isaiah 9:6-7**

For unto us a Child is born,
 Unto us a Son is given;
 And the government will be upon His shoulder.
 And His name will be called
 Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷**Of the increase of His government and peace**
There will be no end,
 Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
 To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
 From that time forward, even forever.
 The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Jesus "disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them" ([Col 2:15](#)). It's our job in this battle to make progress in enforcing this victory and seeing the Kingdom of God established firstly in our own lives but then in the lives of all those

we are sent to. We do this until 'the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever'

We war against principalities and powers not people. People are not the problem, nor are they the solution. There are powers at work behind systemic sin and systems of oppression. These are the real enemy and they are taken down through prayer, forgiveness, reconciliation, mercy etc.

The Armour in practice

For this reason, "truth," "righteousness," "the gospel of peace," "salvation" and the "word of God" are all portrayed as various aspect of the "whole armour of God" used by Christians to wage spiritual war ([Eph 6:14-17](#)). Paul associates each with a different piece of armour in this way:

- The belt of truth
- The breastplate of righteousness
- Feet fitted with the gospel of peace
- Helmet of salvation
- Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God

In addition, faith itself is portrayed as a "shield" by which we "quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (6:16).

With all of this armour, Christians are to "stand firm." The first charge is to "hold your ground against" an assailing force, while the second is to be ever watchful of an ever-present enemy. The battle motif here is thick, one that pervades the whole of the Christian life.

While Paul does not specifically mention prayer as part of the Christian's armour, in this context it is most certainly seen as a warfare strategy, just as it was in the teachings of Jesus. Immediately after mentioning "the word of God" as the "sword of the Spirit" Paul adds "Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication" (6:18). Then he adds, "To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints."

The centrality of Jesus's conflict with, and victory over, Satan and the powers is evident in the fact that salvation in the NT is portrayed not primarily as a matter of individuals being forgiven their sin but as humans and the whole cosmos being delivered from the power of Satan. Every aspect of Jesus' life can be understood as part of his battle against, and victory over, the powers of darkness. Every one of Jesus' healings and deliverances, for example, should be viewed as an act of war that advances God's kingdom and diminishes Satan's kingdom. Peter summarized it by saying that Jesus "went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil." ([Acts 10:38](#)).

And we as the church are commissioned to do the same. This is spiritual warfare. Proclaiming and announcing the reality of the presence of the Kingdom of God.