

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 1/26/92  
Ephesians 6:14-17 "Life on the Winning Side"

**Intro:** Children's games--everyone likes to be on the winning side

Do you like to be on the winning side? I would venture to say you do.

Then why do many Christians live frustrated and confused Christian lives?

Why do so many of us seem unable to experience victory in Monday through Saturday Christian living?

Possible problems:

1. A lack of a genuine Relationship

Some who claim to be Christians are not "in Christ."

2. A lack of Knowledge

Some who have been Christians for a long time have never learned that God has given them spiritual armor. They have it. It's theirs. But it's still in the box, in the closet, unopened.

3. A lack of Appropriation

Challenge: I want to learn what I have in Christ. And I want you to learn what you have in Christ. That's why we are taking great care to investigate Eph 6.

Illust:

Truth: You can live on the winning side! Victory can be yours!

How do I know?

I Jn 3:8 "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (see also Heb 2:14-15)

Christ won the victory! Satan's doom is sure!

Q: But how can we experience victory over the Evil One?

A: We need the Armor of God.

Overview: There are 5 things we need to know about God's Armor, acc to Eph 6.

note: This is a new outline. . .

1. God's Armor involves a Person (10).
2. God's Armor involves a Purpose (11-13).
3. God's Armor involves Parts (14-17).
4. God's Armor involves Prayer (18a).
5. God's Armor involves Perseverance (18b).

1. God's Armor involves a **Person**--v 10

6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

6:11 Put on the whole armour of God--This is not some mystical chant. It's personal.

Rom 13:14 "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

2. God's Armor involves a **Purpose**--vv 11, 13, 14 **STAND!**

6:11b that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

What makes standing so difficult? The character and capacity of our Opponent!

6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities"

3. God's Armor involves **Parts**--6 Pieces of Equipment  
6:14-17 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. . .

next week. . .

4. God's Armor involves **Prayer**--v 18  
6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,

5. God's Armor involves **Perseverance**--v 18  
6:18b and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints

Q: What are the specific pieces of armor we need if we are to stand?

**Proposition: In Ephesians 6:14-17, Paul identifies 6 pieces of armor we need.**

- I. The Belt of Truth (14)
- II. The Breastplate of Righteousness (14)
- III. Gospel of Peace Boots (15)
- IV. Faith Shield (16)
- V. Salvation's Helmet (17)
- VI. The Spirit's Sword (18)

This morning let's quickly review the first 4 pieces, and then examine the rest.

### **I. The Belt of Truth (14)**

The soldier put on his belt first. Actually it was an undergarment, and not a piece of armor. Yet it was essential. He wrapped the belt around his waist in order to draw up his tunic and keep it from dangling down to his feet. He couldn't go to battle if his garment was loose fitting.

What is our belt as Christians?

V 14--"Truth."

The Christian life begins when we admit that Jesus is the Truth. And truth must characterize our daily living. Every day I must affirm that I will practice the truth.

Key Verse: Jn 14:6 "I am the truth. . ."

### **II. The Breastplate of Righteousness (14)**

"No Roman soldier in his right mind would ever go into a battle without his breastplate." The breastplate was a molded metal chest plate that covered the entire torso, from the neck to the top of the thighs, on both his front and back.

What is our breastplate? "Righteousness"

There are 2 kinds of righteousness:

- 1. Positional Righteousness--II Cor 5:21 "For He made Him. . ."
- 2. Practical Righteousness--Eph 4:24

### **III. Gospel of Peace Boots (15)**

A soldier needed shoes. But not just any shoes. The Roman soldier wore a battle boot. It was like a leather sandal with hob nails on the bottom, tied up with

leather straps around the ankels and shins (like a studded tire). Why the studs on the bottom? To keep the soldier's feet from slipping! In close, hand to hand combat, sure footing was critical. One slip and you're done.

What do our feet do for us? They give us Mobility and Freedom.

What gives us freedom and confidence to our spiritual footing?

V 15 "The Gospel of Peace" The gospel produces peace!

Rom 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

#### **IV. Faith Shield (16)**

The soldier's shield was large, usually about 4' by 2'. It was a big, thick plank of wood. It was covered on the outside with metal and even leather at times. The metal would deflect arrows, while the leather would extinguish the fiery pitch on the arrows.

What is our shield? "faith"

We are saved by faith (Eph 2:8). But the faith mentioned here is not saving faith, as much as living faith. The Christian life begins by faith, and must be lived day by day by faith.

I Jn 5:4 ". . . this is the victory that overcomes. . . our faith"

Q: Why do you need a shield of faith?

V 16 "with which quench the fiery darts of the wicked"

Satan and his hosts hurl "darts" at us. The word is graphic--an arrow, a bolt, a missile! Do you realize the severity of the battle that is raging around you? Do you understand the subtlety of the darts of the Evil One?

The Bible has much to say about Satan. His name appears 49 times in the Bible (not counting the appearances of his other titles). Let's look at a few to see his tactics.

1. Satan duped David into sinning.

1CH 21:1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2. Satan inflicted Job.

JOB 1:6-7 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it (see also 2:1-2)

3. Satan tried to use Peter to stop the Plan of God.

MAT 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

4. Satan wanted to destroy Peter.

LUK 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

What did Jesus say? V 32 "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

5. Satan manipulated the believers Ananias and Saphira.

ACT 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

6. Satan tries to hinder Ministers of the Gospel.

2CO 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: we are not ignorant of his devices.

1TH 2:18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

7. Satan's doom is sure!

REV 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (Read 12:7-12) (REV 20:2)

We have a real enemy! No wonder we need God's Armor! We need the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Gospel of Peace Boots, and the Faith Shield.

Illust:

Tran: We're still not fully prepared for battle yet. . . We need #5.

## V. Salvation's Helmet (17)

V 17 "And take the helmet of salvation"

"take" = Imperative; a command; the tense (aorist) indicates we are to take the armor, put it on, and leave it on!

"helmet"--The Roman soldier's helmet was made of a tough metal-like bronze or iron. It was obviously heavy. The inside was lined with sponge or or felt to make it bearable to wear. Nothing short of a blow from an axe or hammer could penetrate the helmet.

Why did a soldier need a helmet? To protect his HEAD.

Why do you need a helmet? To protect your Head, your mind!

Key: Perhaps the most vulnerable target a Christian has is his/her mind. Satan knows that. And he attacks your mind with all the ammunition he can muster.

Illust:

How can we protect our minds? Paul says, "Put on the Helmet of Salvation!"

What's Paul saying? Is he telling us to "Get saved!" No. He's talking to Christians. He's talking to people who are already in God's army, who already have access to God's armor. Paul already discussed the issue of salvation.

Eph 2:8-9

A Christian is one who has been "saved." A person who is saved is one who has admitted he was lost as a sinner and condemned to suffer God's wrath. A person who is saved is one who accepted the teaching of the Bible that Jesus Christ lived and died in our place, taking God's wrath for us. A person who is saved is one who has placed the full confidence and trust in Jesus Christ. That's a saved person.

Q: What then does it mean to put on the helmet of salvation?

A: We need to learn to THINK like a saved person!

Key: Christians think differently than non-Christians. Let me restate that. Christians who are successful in overcoming the Evil One think differently! They think

differently about goals in life, about money, about entertainment. Their desires are different. Their ambitions are different.

Ph 4:8 "Whatever things are true. . . honest. . . just. . . think on these."

Listen. When you put on the helmet of salvation, what you're doing is this-- You are making a decision that you are going to think differently than you used to, by God's help. You're choosing to think like a saved person.

Do you do that in the morning?

Illust: Of a "Christian" who doesn't think like a saved person. . .

Challenge: It amazes me the kinds of things I see Christians taking into their minds. We are being bombarded continually with vile, godless thoughts.

eg--Entertainment Industry

eg--Commercial advertising Assassination Guns and headpieces so our children can "play" a game of killing each other! Dads and moms, when you see that come across the tube, do you talk with your kids about it? Do you tell them, "We are Christians. The Bible says we think differently. Jesus expects us to be pure."

eg--Music

Young people, be careful what you take into your mind! Be discerning about the music you listen to!

Quote: I read an article in the Port Times last week. Lewis Grizzard (I seldom agree with his crass sense of humor but this time he hit the nail on the head) remarked about the horrendous effects of the violent lyrics in contemp music, "One generation ago young people listened to their music, and some ended up getting pregnant. They listen to the music that's around now and end up getting killed."

Illust: Suicide of H.S. student I heard about. . . When his mother found him dead, the music was still blaring. . .

Challenge to Young People:

Do you want to be pure and victorious? Then memorize and live this verse. . . Ps 119:9, 11 NIV "How shall a young man keep his way pure? Thy word have I hid in my heart. . ."

Challenge to All: We need to practice II Cor 10:4-5

II Cor 10:4-5 "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. . . Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. . . every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Philips Modern: "Our battle is to break down every deceptive argument. . . We fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ."

Do you think like a Christian? Would Jesus Christ think the thoughts you think in a day's time? Listen. We need to be aggressive with our minds!

Illust:

Tran: One final piece of armor.

## VI. The Spirit's Sword (18)

V 17 "And take. . . the sword of the Spirit"

This is the only offensive weapon. A Roman soldier had 2 swords. One was the large broadsword which was more than 3' long. It was double-edged and heavy, and took both hands to use. That's not the word Paul uses in v 17. The one he has in mind is the short sword (6-18 inches). The dagger. A soldier carried it in his sheath. He used it for hand to hand combat.

Illust: Peter used the later to cut off the soldier's ear (Mt 26:51)

Q: What is the Christian's sword?

A: V 17 "which is the Word of God"

Listen. As we preach the Word, we are invading enemy territory. Right now, the sword of the Spirit is at work, releasing the victims of Satan from the clutches of his wicked grasp.

God's Word is our sword. But its value is not just for preaching on Sunday. God's Word is sufficient and authoritative and powerful for living.

II Tim 3:16 "All Scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable.

Ps 119:133 "Order my steps in your Word, and let not iniquity. . . dom"

I Pt 2:2 "As newborn babes desire the Word. . . grow thereby"

The Word of God is the Spirit's Sword. It's what God uses to defend us, and defeat the attacking enemy, and deliver others who need help.

Problem: Most of us don't know the Word very well!

Illust: What would have happened if the soldiers in Desert Storm had paid the same attention to the commands of General Swartzkoff as we do to our Commander, Jesus Christ? Can you imagine a soldier saying, "I really didn't hear what the general said. I think he said the enemy was to the north (or was it the south?). And I think he said the enemy was using swords (or was it poisonous gas?). It won't matter. . ."

No! A soldier is expected to Know the orders of his Commander. A soldier is expected to know the strength and strategy of his enemy. A soldier is expected to prepare himself with the necessary equipment for battle.

Listen. If Satan's strategy is to attack our minds, and it is, we're in real trouble if our minds are empty. That is, if you don't have God's Word stored away, you're prey for Satan's deadly darts.

Illust: Cult researcher Walter Martin has observed a common tragedy. It's this. A 90 day wonder from Jehovah's Witnesses can take apart a Christian in 30 minutes. We don't know the Word like we should. We can't defend ourselves.

Do you know what verses to use in order to. . .

--Defend yourself against Discouragement

--Overcome the temptation of Lust

--Lead a person to faith in Christ

What do I need to do? Saturate my mind with God's Word. Memorize it. Allow it to soak to the very fabric of my being.

For starters. . .Memorize the 6 pieces of armor in Eph 6, and put them on daily

Challenge: Some coming to church on Sunday AM are "seekers." You're searching. You feel good when you come and hear God's Word. You leave pumped up, filled with hope. But then you don't receive an ounce of spiritual nourishment for the next 6 days. Only Satan's darts. You don't use the shield of faith that could protect your mind. And Satan is having a heyday with you. By Thursday you are overwhelmed with feelings of doubt and discouragement. You begin thinking, "Where are you God? What's wrong? Why doesn't Christianity work?"

Listen. The problem is not with Christianity. The problem is with YOU. God offers you all the equipment you need to be on the winning side in life.

Q: What are you doing with the armor of God?

Illust:

### **Conclusion:**

Q: How practically do we put on the armor of God?

1. By Instruction from the Word (10-17)

\*\*You must know what you have.

2. By Prayer (18)

\*\*Prayer is how we claim what we have in Christ.

Daily Challenge:

Handout: Warfare Prayer--Pray on the Armor of God daily

Challenge: We need the armor of God.

Why? So we can stand against the Evil One and his demonic hosts. It's tragic, yet true. Not everyone stands.

Illust: Biblical examples of those who fell to Satan's attacks. . . (David, Peter, Ananias and Saph)

--Hymenaeus and Alexander

1TI 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1TI 5:15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.