

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 19 May 2019. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Christian's Armour (Part 2)

Ephesians 6:15-17a

Last week I preached the first of a three-part series of messages on Christian warfare, from **Ephesians chapter 6**. As the Apostle Paul was wrapping up his teaching about Spirit-filled living, he reminded his readers of a sobering truth. He reminded them that every child of God is engaged in a fierce battle with Satan and his angels.

What is at stake in this battle? Well, should you be saved, **it is not your salvation that is at stake!** If you have been saved, then you have had Christ's righteousness imputed to you. From God's judicial standpoint, you are "**justified.**" You are clothed with a robe of imputed righteousness, which does *not* come off. Thank God, you cannot lose your salvation. However, what *is* at stake in this battle is **sanctification.** What is at stake is a life of spiritual victory over sin, or a life of spiritual defeat.

Furthermore, the eternal destiny of others is at stake! Will your loved ones spend eternity with God, in the Lake of Fire? Your steadfastness in the battle may make all the difference in whether they will come to Christ, or not. If your lost loved ones see that you have the same old bitter, angry spirit that non-Christians have; or, that you have a gossiping spirit, a covetous spirit, a rebellious spirit, or a critical spirit; or that you tell convenient lies; or that you watch the same old fleshly, worldly movies that they watch; or that other pursuits in your life are clearly *more* important to you than reading your Bible, praying, and being in church all the time; or that you seem to be *ashamed* to talk to them about the Lord, then how will they ever see *their* need of Christ? They won't. You will do your part in helping them to **reject** God! Brethren, much is at stake if you be not putting on the armour of God!

In last week's message, we also saw that our power for this battle must come from God, and not from ourselves. Paul said, "**Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.**" We also saw who our enemy is. Our real enemy is not flesh-and-blood opponents to the Gospel, but rather *Satan and his demons.* Paul said, "**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.**" Satan is extremely powerful, crafty, and wily. In fact, he is undefeatable—if we be relying upon our own strength, instead of upon Christ's strength.

God is infinitely more powerful than our enemy; and He has given us everything we need to defeat the devil. Two of these pieces of spiritual armour (which we examined last week) are the **girdle of truth**, and the **breastplate of righteousness.** This week, we will examine three more pieces of our spiritual armour—the **footwear of preparation to witness**; the **shield of faith**; and the **helmet of salvation.**

The title of this message is ***The Christian's Armour (Part 2).***

Read Ephesians 6:10-17.

I. The footwear of preparation to witness (v. 15)

The next piece of armour that we will be examining is extremely important. It is not a protective piece of armour, nor is it an offensive weapon: yet, *it is essential for both offense and defence*. What is it? The footwear. (**Read verse 15 again.**) It was necessary for the Roman soldier to have the right kind of footwear in order to stand his ground as he was being attacked by the *enemy*. Yet, the same footwear which enabled him to hold his ground also enabled him to move forward *against* the enemy!

Sad to say, this part of our spiritual armour is overlooked by many believers. Too often, we focus on holding our ground against Satan, and not falling into sin; but we forget that we are not merely to be holding our ground; we are to be *advancing against the enemy*!

Read Matthew 16:18.

Jesus said, “*Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” The idea is not that *we* are defending *our* city gates against Satan’s siege: it’s just the opposite! *We* (this church), should be attacking *Satan’s* strongholds, and expecting victories. What will the victory consist of? Lost people being freed from Satan’s prison-house, and being translated into Christ’s kingdom! Will there be large numbers of people saved? Perhaps. Perhaps not. However, we can expect that until Christ comes, souls *will* continue to be delivered from Satan’s kingdom. Christ has promised it!

The footwear that we read about in **verse 15** is a picture of *offensive* manoeuvring against Satan and his angels. Paul commands us to have our “*feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*” In other words, we must be prepared, at a moment’s notice, to share the Gospel with others. Peter said, “*Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.*” Of course, this is not an easy task, because the people that we are trying to reach with the Gospel are imprisoned in spiritual strongholds. We must be prepared to break through the line of spiritual opposition, and to break down walls of false teachings and worldly philosophies, in order to break into the stronghold of their hearts, and reach them with the Gospel.

By the way, Paul isn’t the one who came up with this “footwear” analogy; he got it from the Old Testament. Let’s examine those Scriptures.

Read Isaiah 52:7-10.

Read Isaiah 40:9-10.

The passages that we have just read are prophecies that have not yet been fulfilled. These prophecies will be fulfilled in the future day when Christ returns to earth to set up His 1,000-year Kingdom. Just after Christ’s return to earth at the Battle of Armageddon, swift messengers will *literally* run throughout the cities of Judah to proclaim that the Messiah has come to earth to set up His kingdom. (Remember, there won’t be any T.V. or radio to proclaim the message, because the world’s infrastructure will be completely destroyed by the seven years of Tribulation judgments!) The messengers will say, “**Behold your God!**”

People will *literally* be able to behold their God, in the person of the God-Man, Jesus Christ! I'd say those are "good tidings of peace," wouldn't you?

Now, if the saved survivors of the Tribulation be the ones who will proclaim this good news of Christ's return to earth, then why does Paul apply this prophecy to *us New Testament-age Christians*?" The answer is simple. Though this prophecy will have a *fulfilment* in the future, Paul is *making an application* of this truth to us believers who live in the church age.

You see, *we* have "good tidings of peace" to proclaim, as well! Christ has not returned to earth yet; but until He returns, He has commissioned *us* to proclaim the "good news" that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again to seal our justification. He has commissioned us to tell people how they may have "peace" with God.

By the way, what kind of *enthusiasm* should we have as we proclaim the Gospel? Well, put yourself in the shoes of the believers who will be living during the Tribulation. Imagine that it is the end of the Tribulation, and you are a Jewish believer. The cities of Israel have been reduced to rubble by the worldwide earthquake that recently struck. The Antichrist is surrounding Jerusalem with his armies, to wipe out the Jewish people. You yourself are hiding in the wilderness. Then, all of a sudden, the Lord Jesus Christ descends from heaven in a blaze of glory, followed by millions of saints and angels. As He descends from the eastern sky, His feet touch the Mount of Olives, and the mountain cracks in half. He speaks a word, and the Antichrist's army is slaughtered. He proceeds to the walls of old Jerusalem, and walks through the ruins of the Eastern Gate. He then sends out His angels to the four corners of the earth, to gather all His elect to Zion; and He sits down on a throne to judge the world. Soon, *you* are gathered by the angels, and are brought before the throne; and for the first time, *your eyes behold your Saviour!* Do you think you might consider it a privilege to be one of Christ's messengers? Do you think it might be an honour to run throughout the devastated cities of Judah and proclaim, "Hey, everyone! That bright, blinding light you saw in the Eastern sky was the Sun of Righteousness! The Antichrist is overthrown! The kingdoms of this world are cast down! Behold your God"? If *you* were one of those footmen, do you think you might be charged up about your message? You'd be almost beside yourself with joy, wouldn't you?

Well, guess what? *That* is the kind of enthusiasm that you and I should have as we spread the good news of salvation! Do we *really* believe that Christ is risen from the dead? Do we *really* believe that He is coming again? Do we *really* believe that Christ saves sinners to the uttermost? If so, then why do we treat our witness for Christ as though it were a heavy burden to be borne? Yes, spreading the Gospel is serious business; and yes, we are in a battle. However, we should be *filled with joy* as we toil to break through Satan's host. We should be filled with joy as we proclaim the message of deliverance to people! They should be able to see, in our faces, that we really believe this message, and that it has changed our lives. Just as a soldier must be ready to move about quickly and expertly, so we should be prepared to deliver the message of the Gospel at a moment's notice—to catch someone at what *they* think to be an inconvenient time, and give them the Gospel. We should have Scripture passages committed to memory, on the edge of our tongues, and ready to deliver.

Romans 10:15 says, "*As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*" Christian, are your feet shod with

the preparation of the Gospel of peace? Or are you sluggish to share the Gospel with people? Do you speak in hushed tones about the Lord, as though you were ashamed? If so, ask the Lord to deepen your love for Him, and your faith in Him, so that you will *not* be ashamed! Brethren, we have the most wonderful message to proclaim. Put on that footgear of the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and advance against the enemy!

II. The shield of faith (v. 16)

(Read verse 16 again.) The importance of the **shield of faith** cannot be overstated! Without faith in Christ's overcoming power, Christians are wide open to Satan's fiery darts. By the way, when Paul mentions the "*fiery darts*," he's talking about a psychological tactic that the soldiers of his day used. Roman soldiers would wrap incendiary materials around their darts, set them on fire, and launch them at their enemies, with the darts fully aflame. The purpose of the fiery darts was twofold. First of all, it set things on fire (including the enemy's clothing). However, its purpose was also to cause panic, so that the enemy might be tempted to turn and run, instead of standing safely behind his shield. As soon as an enemy turned his back, he was dead meat. The Roman soldier could then hurl a spear at the enemy, and finish him off. Of course, it wasn't merely the Romans who used fiery darts: *every* army in that part of the world in those days used this warfare tactic. So, how did soldiers prepare to deal with fiery darts? It's simple. They covered their shields with leather doused in water, so that when the fiery darts hit their shield, they would sink into the wet leather, and be extinguished. However, the key was that they *had to stand fast, and not run*. They *had* to stay behind their shield. They had to stay together, too. As the soldiers advanced toward their enemy, they would lock their shields together, and thus form a giant "wall" of protection. If anyone would break rank and retreat, the other soldiers in the line were more vulnerable to attack.

Christian, every day Satan's minions are hurling fiery darts at you. You must be ready with the shield of faith. You see, the enemy knows when you are not walking closely with the Lord, and when your shield of faith is not in hand. *That* is when he will strike. When your faith is weak, he will attack you with a relentless barrage of fiery darts.

Now, what do these darts represent? Do they represent the adverse *circumstances* that Satan throws at us—such as the calamities that Satan brought into Job's life? No. Satan certainly *can* bring adverse circumstances into our lives; but *he can never do so without God's permission!* Calamities are often *carried out* by Satan, in cruel malignity, for the purpose of trying to weaken our faith in God; yet God, in love, *allows* such things to happen, for the purpose of *strengthening* our faith in Him! Sometimes God allows adverse circumstances into our lives for the purpose of chastisement and correction, because we are straying from Him; and at other times, God allows adverse circumstances simply to teach us to trust Him more, so that we will grow in our Christian lives. Therefore, adverse circumstances are *not* the fiery darts. Satan certainly may *attack us* during times of calamity, with the hope that our faith will fail; but the calamity itself is not the fiery dart that destroys us. In fact, Satan can use times of prosperity, ease, and *good circumstances* to destroy believers much more effectively than he can use *bad circumstances*! Why? Because in good times, we easily tend to stop trusting in the Lord. Instead, we start trusting in our bank account, or in our own talent and wisdom, and so on. Circumstances certainly can *affect* us—but only if we *let* them do so. Christians who

hang onto the shield of faith may descend even into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, yet still confidently say, “***When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.***”

So, if the fiery darts do not represent evil circumstances, what do they represent? **They represent Satan’s lies**, which cause us to *doubt God’s Word*. The lies that Satan hurls at us are many. For example, Satan whispers to you that “God doesn’t really care for me. If God really loved me, He wouldn’t allow me to suffer.” Satan tells you that “Serving the Lord isn’t worth it.” He tries to get you to doubt that being sold out to God will really bring you joy. He tries to convince you that you will be *much* happier in living a relaxed, lukewarm Christian life, in which you are free to pursue your own desires. He tries to get you to doubt that playing with that little sin will really be all that harmful to you. In fact, when you let down your shield of faith in God’s Word, and you get hit by one of Satan’s darts, you usually don’t even *realise* that you have been hit! That is why Paul urged Christians to “***exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin***” (***Hebrews 3:13***). Satan’s lies are deceitful! They are delusional. You may be living what you *think* is a spiritual life, when, in fact, you are not living by faith at all. Satan’s lies have pierced into your heart, and you don’t even know it!

In an article entitled “Do You Have a Critical Spirit—the Hidden Sin?”, Dr. Terry Coomer relates a tragic story that a pastor friend told him about a deacon in his church. He said that this deacon and his family “came faithfully to every service of his church for years. Their children grew up in church. On the outward appearance, everything ‘looked’ right....The children went to the church’s Christian school, and graduated. As soon as they left the home, they got involved in all kinds of sin. The daughter was involved in drugs and prostitution. The son was involved in drugs, robbery, and eventually was put in jail. Dad and mom were devastated. ‘Pastor, where did we go wrong?’ The pastor went down to the jail to visit the son....The Pastor asked the boy, ‘Why did you do this thing?’ The son shocked him by saying, ‘I don’t want to talk to you. I hate you!’ the pastor said, ‘Why do you hate me? What have I done to you that you would hate me so much?’ The answer was revealing. The son said, ‘Every Sunday going home from church, my sister and I listened to my dad and mom discuss how much they disagreed with you, and how bad you were.’....These...parents, who attended a fundamental Baptist church, destroyed God’s work in the lives of their children, little by little every Sunday, because of their critical spirit....I am sure there were many Sundays when the Holy Spirit spoke to their heart to change this behaviour; but in their mind, this was part of their spirituality. Obviously, their lives were miserable, and they made their children’s lives miserable, and affected their lives for all eternity.”¹

Folks, Satan is the father of lies. If you let down your shield of faith, he will get you to doubt that God is able to help you to overcome that besetting sin in your life. He will cause you to doubt that serving God with your whole heart, at this point in your life, is wise—because, “After all, I’m under a lot of stress, and I have a lot on my plate right now.” He will try to get you to doubt that God really knows what is best for you, or that He is really in control of the situations in your life. Perhaps the most paralyzing doubt that Satan can launch at a Christian is the doubt of whether he is really saved! When a Christian has been living after the flesh for a good while, Satan throws it back in his face and says, “Do you actually think you’re a

¹ Terry Coomer, *Hope Baptist National Biblical Counseling Training Conference* (Sherwood, AR: Hope Baptist Church, 2017), pp. 159-160.

Christian? How can you be a child of God, when you're thinking those things, and doing those things, and living this way?" He causes you to wallow in doubt, fear, and misery.

Pastor H.A. Ironside defined the shield of faith in this way: "It is not *what* you believe, but *how* you believe." In other words, it is not merely *intellectual agreement* with doctrinal teaching that will sustain you during Satan's attacks; it is *complete confidence in Christ* that sustains you. It is one thing to *sing* "Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word"; but it's another thing actually to *trust* Him! Let's see where Paul's trust lay.

Read Romans 8:35-39.

Read 2 Timothy 1:12.

Paul was "**persuaded**" that no power on earth or in heaven (including the devil's angels) could separate Him from "**the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" He was "**persuaded**" that even if he had to face "**tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,**" His Saviour would still be with him. How could he be so sure of this? Because he personally *knew* His Saviour. In **2 Timothy 1:12**, Paul said, "**I know whom I have believed.**" Paul did not say, "I know all *about* Jesus": he said, "I know *him*." That Greek verb "know," as it is used here, is the word *oida*; and *oida* refers to having *absolute certainty* of something or someone. How could he have such certainty? Because he *personally knew* Christ. In **Philippians 3:10** Paul said, "**That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.**" In this verse, the word "**know**" comes from another Greek verb, *gnonai*; and *gnonai* refers to a *personal, intimate* knowledge of a person.

When did Paul's intimate relationship with Christ begin? On the day he was saved! However, it didn't stop there. The relationship continued to grow, as he daily communed with Christ. Having come to know His Saviour so well, Paul was fully persuaded that Christ was able to keep that which he had "**committed**" unto Him until the Resurrection Day. What had Paul entrusted to Christ? His *soul!* Paul had complete confidence in Christ—and not just in regard to his eternal destiny. He was confident that Christ was able to keep him from falling into temptations. He was confident that Christ could bring him safely through fiery trials. Why? Because he *knew* His Saviour well! Let's see what Christ said about this "knowledge."

Read John 17:1-3.

Did you notice how Jesus defined "**eternal life**"? He said, "**This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ.**" According to Jesus, "**eternal life**" is a personal relationship with God, which lasts for eternity. To have eternal life is to have a *personal relationship* with the Father and the Son, through faith in the Son.

You who are saved have entered into that personal relationship with God. However, is your relationship continuing to grow? Through daily communion with Christ, are you learning to trust Him more and more? Are you taking up the shield of faith, and protecting yourself from Satan's darts? The Apostle John wrote, "**For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith**" (**1 John 5:4**).

III. The helmet of salvation (v. 17a)

(Read verse 17.) Last, but certainly not least, of the pieces of armour is the “*helmet of salvation*.” Now, the Apostle Paul is not the one who came up with this analogy. The Holy Spirit gave this metaphor to **Isaiah** seven hundred years before Christ. Let’s examine it.

Read Isaiah 59:15-19.

Notice that in this passage, it is not an ordinary man who is wearing the armour; it is the LORD Himself. He is talking about the future day when He will defeat the armies of the Antichrist at the Battle of Armageddon. **This is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!**

Now, the question is: why does Christ picture Himself as wearing a “*breastplate of righteousness*” and a “*helmet of salvation*”? Is Christ *lacking* in righteousness, and in need of receiving it? Is He a sinner in need of salvation? Of course not! His righteousness is His *own* righteousness. It was Christ’s *own* perfect righteousness which protected Him from temptation when He was on earth: and, as we saw in our study last week, Christ is able to *impart* His righteous character to *us*. Well, guess what? It’s the same way with the helmet of salvation. Christ imparts His helmet of salvation to *us*. He gives *us* His own helmet to wear.

So, what, exactly, does it mean for us to “put on the helmet of salvation”? *Salvation itself* cannot be taken off and put back on. We know, from countless promises in Scripture, that we cannot lose and gain back our salvation. What does it mean, then, to “put on” the helmet of salvation? Well, as always, we need to let Scripture interpret Scripture.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

In this verse, Paul’s meaning is crystal clear. The helmet of salvation is the “hope of salvation.” This helmet is the *full assurance in your mind* that you are saved. Think about Christ Himself. *He* wore the “helmet of salvation” all the time. Of course, the Lord Jesus didn’t have any *sin* to be saved from; but He did have the *sure hope* that His Father would save (or, deliver) Him from His enemies (including Satan). In **Psalm 22** (which is a prophecy of Christ’s crucifixion), Jesus said, through the pen of King David, “*But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*” The wicked enemies who nailed Jesus to the cross were like savage, wild beasts; and Satan himself was like a roaring lion. Yet, Jesus had on the helmet of the “hope of salvation.” He knew that the Father would deliver Him from His awful suffering.

It’s the same way with your salvation from *sin*, Christian. If you be truly saved, then in God’s eyes, the case is settled. The books show that you have had Christ’s perfect righteousness imputed to your account. That cannot, and will not, change. **However**, what *can* change is *your own inward assurance* of your salvation. There may come times in your Christian life when Satan will succeed in making you doubt your salvation. That is why you must put on the *hope of salvation*—the full assurance that you are saved—every single day. If you are going around doubting your salvation, you cannot possibly live a victorious Christian life.

You cannot *expand* your faith, because you are paralysed with doubt about your own standing with God. How can you lead others to Christ if you are not sure that *you* belong to Him? How can you have faith in the trials of life if you are uncertain of your salvation? **You need the helmet of the hope of salvation, Christian.** How can you have this sure hope? By learning the promises of God's Word! Read your Bible every single day! Commit to heart Scriptures that give you the assurance of salvation. And, while you're at it, keep your heart clean. When you are not right with God, God will not hear you; and in the silence, Satan can hurl doubts into your mind that you are really saved. Don't live that kind of defeated life. Put on the helmet of salvation, and keep it on!

Conclusion: Christian, are your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel? Are you bearing the shield of faith? Is your head protected by the helmet of salvation? If not, put on these pieces of armour, and keep them on! To some of you I would ask: **Have you been saved?** Has there been a definite time in your life when you repented of your sin (had a change of mind and will, to turn from sin and self to Christ)? Have you let go of your own self-righteousness, and simply asked Christ, in simple faith, to save you? Are you trusting in Him alone? If not, repent and believe on Jesus today! He will clothe you in His spotless robe of righteousness; and then He will help you to put on the armour of God.