

The Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10-18

Lesson 1

What is Armor?

Do you know what armor is? [Teacher, print the word for the class to see. Give an opportunity for response. If possible, build on children's answers.] Armor is a special kind of suit worn for protection. Today deep-sea divers wear a kind of 'armor.' Spacesuits can be considered armor. Even football players wear a type of armor.

During the time the New Testament was written, Roman soldiers wore armor to protect themselves in battle. In Ephesians 6, the pieces of a Roman soldier's armor are used as an object lesson to help you and me understand the protection God offers us in our battle against Satan.

Where to Find Out About the Armor of God

Ephesians 6:10 - 18 tells us about it. As Christians we are to be '*strong in the Lord and in the power of His might*' by putting on '*the whole armor of God*' (6:10,11). We need to do this to '*stand against the wiles* [all the tricky schemes] *of the devil*' (v 11).

Why Christians Need Armor

The Devil is God's enemy. And ours! He's not eternal — as God is. He doesn't know everything — but he knows a lot! He can't be in more than one place at a time; but Satan has a whole army of demons, and they can be many places at many times. They are always active in fighting against God and His children.

Satan is not as powerful as God, but he is a strong enemy. He is more powerful than you and I. The only way we can defeat him is to fight God's way. We are soldiers in God's army — an army that isn't

fighting against other soldiers — that's what '*flesh and blood*' means. Rather, we fight against Satan and his armies — '*spiritual hosts* [armies] *of wickedness in the heavenly places*' (v 12).

How can we ever protect ourselves against Satan and his armies? How can we win the battle? God, our Commander-in-Chief, tells us exactly what to do, and that is where the armor of God comes in. God has provided this 'suit of armor' — wonderful protection to defend us (v.13) and an offensive weapon which, if used correctly, will defeat Satan in every battle.

What to Do with the Armor

There's a command in verse 13. Can you find it? '*Take up the whole armor of God.*' God has provided the armor we need, but it's up to us to take it up. '*To take it up*' means to '*put it on*'— and use it. Learn to put your armor on each day. Your quiet time with God is a good time to do it.

God makes us a promise: He says that if we will take up His armor — the special protection He's provided for us — we will '*be able to withstand in the evil day.*' When Satan attacks us with temptations, we will not give in and sin. We will be able to stand and not fall before the enemy.

What God's Armor is Like

If God gives us the command to take up His armor, we need to know what that armor is. Spiritual armor can't be seen with the human eye. So to help us understand what this armor is like, the apostle Paul compared each piece of God's armor to a piece of the armor a Roman soldier wore in his day.

LESSON #2

The first thing Paul mentioned was....

The Belt of Truth

'Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth' (Ephesians 6:14a)

The Roman soldier wore a strong, wide piece of armor around the middle of his body like a belt. It not only protected his vital organs, but it held all the others pieces of the armor together. With his belt on, the soldier could move around with confidence, knowing his other pieces would not slip out of place.

As Christians, we are to put on the '*Belt of Truth*.' How do we do that? There are two ways.

First, we put on the Belt of Truth by learning as much as we can of the Bible's truths. How can you learn God's truths? (By going to church and Sunday school; by having your quiet time; by memorizing Bible verses and thinking about them.)

What are some things you know about God that make you confident in our battle with Satan? (God's love and salvation, John 3:16; God's presence always, Hebrews 13:5; God's promise of victory, 1 Corinthians 15:57.) If you are learning God's Word and putting on the Belt of Truth each morning, then you will be ready to face Satan. When he tempts you to doubt God's goodness, the Belt of Truth will help protect you because you can remember what you have learned about God and His promises.

Another way to put on the Belt of Truth is to be sure that you are always truthful in everything you do. The Lord Jesus called Satan the '*father of lies*' (John 8:44). Satan is happy when you tell even a small lie. Jesus said, '*I am the ...truth*' (John 14:6). Jesus is your protection against Satan's temptations to lie. Ask Him to help you tell the truth (Psalm 19:14; 119:29). When you have a clear conscience because you've put on the Belt of Truth, you can face the enemy without fear and be confident of victory.

LESSON #3

The next piece of armor God has for us is...

The Breastplate of Righteousness

'Stand...having put on the breastplate of righteousness' (6:14).

In human armor a breastplate covered the soldier's body from his neck to his waist — in the front and back. It was made of metal plates or chains so that no sword or arrow could go through it. What is the most important part of your body that the breastplate covers? Your heart.

As Christians, you and I need protection for our hearts. And that protection comes from our righteousness.

It's true that not one of us is righteous (Romans 3:10). We are all sinners (Romans 3:23). But when you accept Jesus as your Savior, God stops seeing you as a sinner and sees you as one who has never sinned. Your sins are forgiven (Ephesians 4:32). God credits you with the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21). From the moment you are saved, you are accepted by God the Father; for when He looks at you, He sees the righteousness of his Son (Ephesians 1:6).

That doesn't mean you don't ever sin again. You and I will fight sin as long as we live on this earth. The battle against sin is one of the hardest for Christians to win. We must always be alert and watching for Satan. He is always trying to tempt us and trick us into sinning. In our fight against sin, God wants us to wear the Breastplate of Righteousness. When Satan tries to make us think that God rejects us, we can resist him by remembering that God accepts us — even when we fail — because we have Christ's righteousness.

We can also put on the Breastplate of Righteousness by living our lives as 'rightly' as we know how. Choosing to tell the truth instead of lying. Choosing to be kind instead of hateful. Choosing to obey instead of disobeying. God gives us power to choose right and do it. That's righteous living. By choosing right instead of wrong, you will be protecting your heart with the Breastplate of Righteousness. The kind of life you live is important. It will either make it easier for Satan

to attack you or harder for him to defeat you. Ask God to help you choose right each day.

LESSON #4

The next part of armor is for the feet. Have your...

Gospel of Peace Shoes

'And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace' (6:15).

It's important to have your feet in good condition if you're going into battle, isn't it? If your feet hurt, it's hard to stand, much less walk or run into battle. Then, too, if you have slippery soles on your shoes, you'll easily fall down and be trampled. Roman soldiers wore heavy protective foot gear. Their sandals had hobnails in the soles. Their shoes made them sure-footed and stable in the battle with the enemy.

God says our feet should be covered with the gospel of peace. The Bible says that '*He [Jesus] is our peace*' (Ephesians 2:14). We strap on the Shoes of Peace when we gain peace with God by accepting His gift of salvation (Romans 5:1) and begin to live in a way that is pleasing to Him. Then as we walk through each day, our lives can show the good news of God's peace.

First, we can have peace with ourselves by seeing ourselves as God sees us — loved by Him (Jeremiah 31:3), forgiven (Ephesians 4:32), and accepted forever as a member of His family (John 1:12). Then we can have peace with others — being kind to them, forgiving them (Ephesians 4:32), doing our best to build them up and not tear them down (Ephesians 4:29). And we show that we are walking through life with the Shoes of Peace when we share God's love with those who do not know the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

LESSON #5

Then we need...

The Shield of Faith

Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one' (6:16).

The Roman soldier's armor also included a large shield made of wood. It was about 21/2 feet across and 4 feet long, so it offered double protection for almost every part of the soldier's body. To get to him, the enemy's arrows had to get past the shield first and then pierce through the armor that was worn on the soldier's body. The sides of the shield were made to hook together with the shields of other soldiers so that an army could use them to form a wall of protection.

The enemy used everything they could think of to defeat the soldiers. Knowing the soldier's shields were made of wood, the enemy often set their arrows on fire before they shot them. Roman soldiers covered their wooden shields with cloth and tough leather, then soaked them in water so that when a flaming arrow landed on the wet shield, the fire would immediately go out.

Satan, our enemy, shoots flaming arrows, or '*fiery darts*,' at us, too. Some of the darts Satan shoots are lies, hateful thoughts about people or the desire to sin. We don't know when Satan will shoot one of his darts. He's like a sniper who shoots when we least expect it. We must always have our Shields of Faith in hand and be ready to use it.

Satan wants you and me to doubt God. He wants us to doubt God's promises, His faithfulness, His goodness, and His power.

We need to surround ourselves with Christian friends so that when we are tempted to give up our faith, we can 'hook on' to their shields and let them encourage us (Hebrews 10:23-25). Hold your Shield of

Faith high by trusting the truths you know about God. Even when things seem to be going wrong, believe that God is your always present, all-powerful, loving Father, working in your life for your good — even when your feelings tell you something different. Faith is acting on what you believe even when you have doubts.

LESSON #6

No matter how much armor you have for your body, it will do you no good unless you protect your head. The armor God has provided for your head is...

The Helmet of Salvation

'And take the helmet of salvation' (17a)

Who wears a helmet? Football players, skateboarders, bicycle and motorcycle riders, soldiers...

They all wear helmets for one reason — to protect their heads. If your head gets hit, your brain gets hurt and you lose the battle.

Satan wants to attack the mind of the Christian. We need to let God control what enters our mind. We have to be careful what we think about, what we read, what we watch on TV or what we listen to in music.

We need to think often about the salvation, or deliverance, that Jesus offers to us as Christians. When He died on the cross, Jesus saved us from the punishment for our sins (Romans 8:1a). Now Jesus is with us every day to deliver us from the power of sin (2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 4:13). And when we die, Jesus has a place prepared for us in heaven where we will be delivered forever from the presence of sin (John 14:1-4; Revelation 21:27).

A soldier's helmet protected his head and gave him confidence that he was safe from the enemy's attack. You put on the Helmet of Salvation when you believe the Lord's promises of salvation — past,

present, and future — and confidently expect Him to deliver you (1 Thessalonians 5:8). In the New Testament, the word *hope* means to wait for something with confidence (see also Romans 8:24, 25).

Remember, the Lord Jesus is more powerful than Satan (1 John 4:4). Satan cannot possibly win when you put on the Helmet of Salvation and guard your thoughts.

Finally, we are completely covered from head to foot. If we put all of God's armor on, Satan cannot harm us.

LESSON #7

However, we now need something with which to fight back when Satan attacks. So we have...

The Sword of the Spirit

'Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (17b)

With our armor on, we're ready to pick up our swords and go into battle. Our sword isn't made out of sharp steel because we're not fighting against flesh and blood. We're fighting a spiritual battle — one that can only be won in God's power.

Our sword is the Word of God. This sword is different from metal swords. The more you use a steel sword, the duller it gets. But the more you use God's Word in the battle of life, the sharper and more effective it becomes.

That means we should be learning verses from God's Word so the Holy Spirit can bring them back to our memory when we are tempted to do wrong. Each verse that you put into practice is a powerful weapon that God can use to attack Satan and put him on the run.

LESSON #8

There is one more thing we need and that is...

Prayer...Watchfulness

*'Praying always...being watchful to this end with all perseverance'
(6:18).*

A good soldier is always in touch with his commander. He doesn't act on his own. As good soldiers in God's army, you and I need to be in constant communication with the Lord. We need to ask for His direction and follow His orders. Prayer is something that should come naturally to us.

And we need to be ever alert — watching for an attack by the enemy. We must put on each piece of our armor every day so that we are not caught with a weak place exposed for Satan to wound us.

We are soldiers in God's army. God has given us everything we need to be victorious. But we must take up the whole armor, stay in touch with our commander, and be ever alert for the enemy's attacks!

'But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Corinthians 15:57).