

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Ephesians 6

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this very powerful letter – that the Apostle Paul writes to the saints in Ephesus and by extension – to you and me this morning about who we are and what we are in Christ.

The spiritual riches that the believer has – in Christ – not when we die, but right now.

The same power that rose Jesus from the dead is made available to the believer

For the purpose of walking in His will, being obedient to what He has called us do.

Walking in His love, and in His wisdom and shining His light as we abide in Jesus and allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit in everything we do.

We are to live spirit filled lives – day by day.

We are to submit to each other

Embrace the roles that God has designed for us – because everything points to Him

But God also understands that we are all a work in progress.

And sometimes – we get distracted and stumble – and the enemy comes in to discourage us – to take our eyes off Jesus, we begin to listen to the lies, we begin to

think that our right standing before God is dependent upon our own righteousness and what we do for Him.

Paul reminds us that we are in a battle –

Spiritual warfare – whether we like it or not –

Whether we grasp it or not

Our battles are not against flesh and blood – they are against Satan and his minions.

And if we fight spiritual battle with our flesh – we are going to be tossed to and fro.

We are going to live defeated Christian lives –

But God – has given us His armor.

He gives us Jesus to put on.

We put on Jesus!!!!

Two weeks ago – we looked at spiritual warfare

Last week, we looked at the first three items of the armor of God

In our study this morning, we are going to look at the last three items in the armor of God that point to Jesus.

The shield of faith

The helmet of salvation

And the sword of the Spirit which is His word.

Let's pray...

Read Ephesians 6:1-10

All believers have been given a command

We to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and we are to put on the whole armor of God, and we are to keep it on.

The armor of God is not like a rain jacket hiding at the end of the closet.

We put it on, and we leave it on

And we leave it on because Satan and his minions – they are cunning / they have wiles / schemes

And he uses these weapons in an effort to deceive the believer and to defeat the believer.

We are to put no confidence in the flesh

And by flesh – I want to make sure that we understand that the flesh is anything we are apart from Christ.

Even the good things

Even the giftings

Our confidence is in Christ

We have our strength in the power of God and the grace of God

And without the full armor of God we are left fatally unprotected.

Satan is the father of lies – that is his weapon of choice –

He always keeps deceit close by

He lies about the character of God and the nature of God

From the garden of Eden – throughout the scriptures and even today – with much success

He is always causing people to doubt God.

Let's look at our text -

[Eph 6:16-17 NKJV] 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

The first thing I want to point out –

Is that when Paul says here, above all – made you make a note of it.

We might begin to entertain the idea that Paul is saying that the shield of faith is the most important piece of equipment in the armor of God – that's not what Paul is saying

When Paul says, above all –

He is speaking about the importance of this piece of equipment

But he is also stressing the intrinsic necessity of the shield of faith in the battlefield.

This should never be neglected

This should never be ignored

It should never be refused

Why?

It's the piece that covers all the other pieces.

The shield covers the entire soldier.

Faith is the key to all spiritual armor

You see,

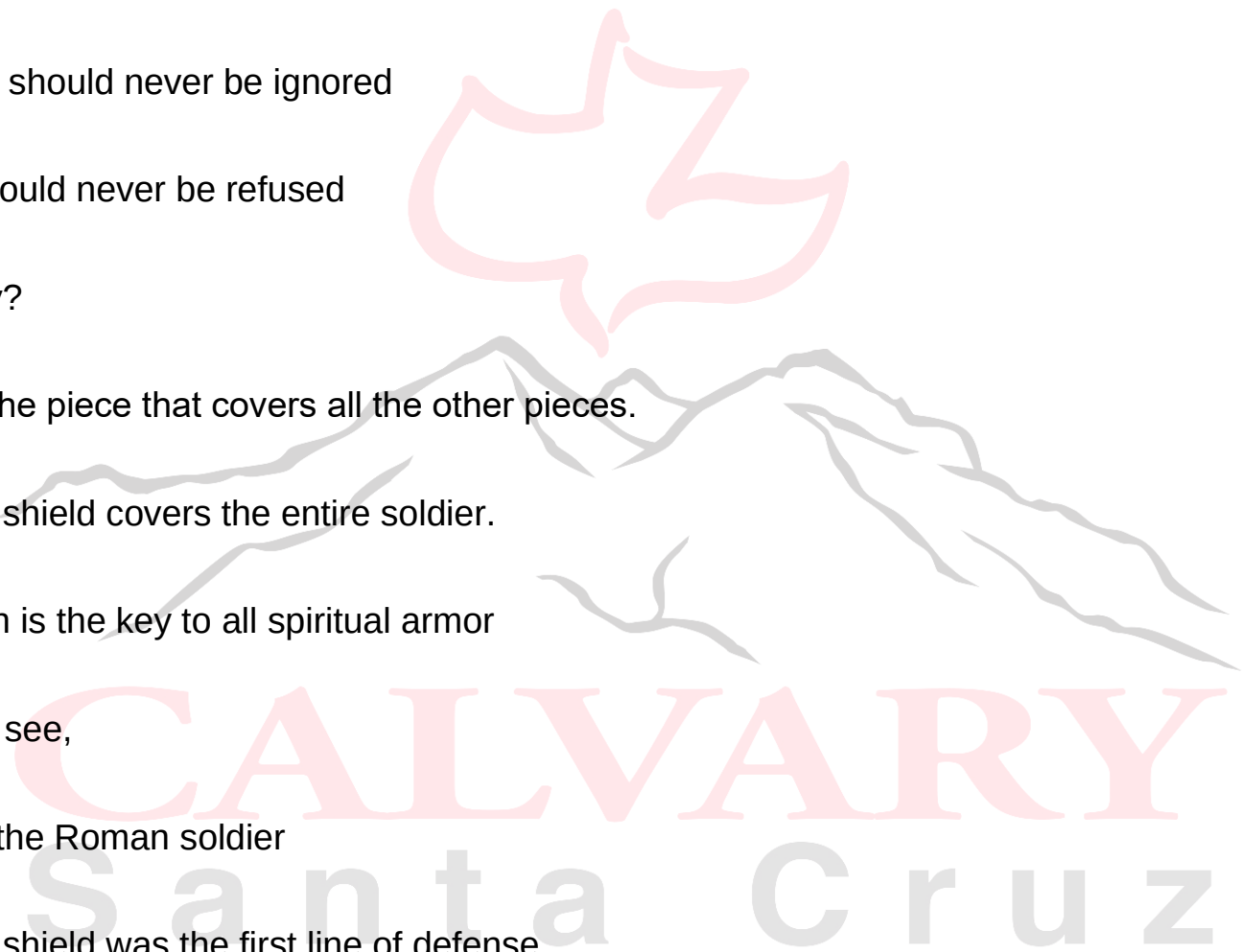
For the Roman soldier

The shield was the first line of defense

The Roman shield was typically about 4' high and 2' wide and slightly curved

It was made of wood and banded with metal strips and covered with leather

In ancient warfare, arrows were often dipped in tar and then lit on fire.



When they struck, the tar would fly forward and burn whatever it touched

But the leather covering on the Roman shield did not burn, so the fire went out

The shield was designed to protect the whole Roman soldier – (I guess there were not many tall Italians back then)

The Roman shield not only protected the individual soldier – it protected the soldier to the left or to the right of him.

The shield could be used when the soldiers would advance in columns

The Roman soldier could literally link their shields together – and in the ancient world, they could create a moving wall of shields.

So the enemies of Rome – would see a wall of shields with all these arrows stuck to them (like a moving wall of porcupines) and this wall would advance toward them – and they would run.

In ancient Sparta – mothers would tell their sons going to battle – “bear your shield or be born on it.”

Which means – trust your shield to carry you – or it will one day carry you.

You see – these shields were also used to carry the wounded and dead back from the field. No man left behind -

And so – our faith is supposed to be like that

Our faith is something that we bear and it bears us

And in this instance –

Faith means personal confidence in Christ.

Turn to Psalm 91

[Psa 91:1-4 NKJV] 1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, “[He is] my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler [And] from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth [shall be your] shield and buckler.

Our faith should be able to do three things

1. Cover us – so that no portion of our Christian walk is exposed unprotected. What does this mean?

This means that our faith doesn't end when we walk out of those doors. Our faith continues in the world in which we live. Our faith continues in the relationships that we have.

Our faith covers every aspect of our lives

Our faith informs our thinking

Our faith informs our feelings

Where we work and what we do

2. The second thing our faith should do is link forces with our brothers and sisters.

In the same way that the Roman soldiers were able to link their shields together to combine their strength against their common enemy - as believers, we are to do the same thing.

This is why we are gathered here this morning – We come together through fellowship and relationship.

This how we begin to discover each other's needs and concerns – so that we can bear one another burdens – so that we can divide the sorrow and fulfill the law of Christ.

We unite our confidence in Christ so that we can serve and protect one another.

Now – there are believers who insist that their faith is very personal and very private – and it very well may be personal and private.

But we have to understand that it was always meant to be shared.

It was always meant to include others

3. Faith isn't concerned with the self – faith's focus is Christ.

Jesus is the object of our faith

That means that we look to Him

Jesus is also the subject of our faith

The Holy Spirit is faith's power.

- In Galatians 5:22 - the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Faith is the channel by which God's person and God's promises are made available.

[Rom 10:17 NKJV] 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Don't lose sight of this church –

Some teachers will give you the impression that “faith” is some sort of magical power that some people have.

And they say that if you have “enough faith”, that you will be able to do amazing things and even be able to twist God's arm so He has to do what you want Him to do.

There is nothing “magical” about the word “faith”.

It simply means to “trust”. Do you trust God? Do You trust His word?

It's trusting in God even when you don't understand how it's going to work out.

It's counting on God even when you don't know why things are happening.

I am protected from the enemy's destructive, flaming arrows by trusting, by counting on God.

For example, when we go through a rough time, the enemy will often fire a flaming arrow that sounds something like this ... “God certainly must not love you, look at what just happened.

Maybe it’s because you did that horrible thing a couple of years ago ...”

Once again - Will the arrow penetrate our armor?

Will the flaming tar seep into the cracks and burn us?

Because for the believer – these fiery darts – are demonic missiles that want to destroy our walk in Christ.

These fiery darts are going to burn everything that doesn’t consist of biblical faith

That means everything that is the product of our imagination

Everything that we have made up

Everything that is man made and not spirit led – all are going to catch on fire and burn away

These fiery darts can come in the form of temptations, depressions, discouragement, fear or anger or guilt or shame or persecution

This is why Paul writes 1 Thes 3:5 – to the church in Thessalonica -

[1Th 3:5 NKJV] 5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

Paul cared about their faith

Paul wanted to know whether or not they were still standing strong

Did they really believe what he had shared with them

Were they encouraged?

Or had they allowed the fiery darts of the enemy to penetrate their hearts.

The real issue is, will we trust God?

Turn with me to Psalm 27

[Psa 27:11-13 NKJV] 11 Teach me Your way, O LORD, And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. 12 Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; For false witnesses have risen against me, And such as breathe out violence. 13 [I would have lost heart], unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.

David's faith in God and God's promises kept him from quitting.

David's faith kept him from not giving up ground

It kept him in the midst of God's will.

Charles Spurgeon once told of a pastor who was sent to see an old lady and while he was there thought he would give her some precious promises from the Word of God. Taking her Bible and turning to one, he saw written in the margin "P" and he asked, "What does this mean?" "That means precious, sir," she replied. Further down he saw "T and P" and he asked what those letters meant. "That," she said, "Means tried and proved, for I have tried and proved it."

Put God to the test. Trust Him.

Let Him show you that you can trust Him.

Add those "T's" and "P's" in your Bible.

Trust God's Word.

This is what Paul is telling here –

Next verse -

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Let's talk about the helmet of salvation first.

The Roman soldiers wore a helmet

It consisted of a leather covering – much like those old football helmets of the 1920's

And they would attach metal plates to protect them even further.

The helmet was there to protect their head against a smashing broad sword

Remember – in spiritual warfare – the enemy has a sword –

Lies and discouragement are the edges of the sword.

And one of the ways that Satan will attack the believer is to get him to question his or her salvation.

If Satan can get you to wonder whether or not you really are a Christian, then he has you right where he wants you.

Useless.

Here, Paul calls it the helmet of salvation; but in 1 Thes 5:8, it is the helmet of the HOPE of salvation - that gives us an insight into how the helmet pictures salvation

it's our hope in the final victory of Christ over Satan

As Christians, we can fight on, because we know that every victory we secure brings us one step closer to the consummation

And that is why the hope of salvation is a helmet - it protects our mind!

The helmet of salvation that God has given to the believer – means everything that salvation includes.

He has saved us from the penalty of sin, He has saved us from the power of sin and one day soon – the believer will be saved from the presence of sin

God's saving power is our defense against the enemy of our soul

You see – for the believer, it is Jesus who has placed this helmet of salvation upon the believer's head with His nail pierced hands

Not only does it provide protection – it is intended to provide confidence – so that we can stand, so that we are not frightened by those who oppose us.

The very presence of the helmet of salvation upon the believers head is a reminder to the enemy – that they are going to be destroyed.

The helmet of salvation gives us confidence in the battle

Even in the Old Testament –

Even in the oldest book of the bible – we find Job putting on his helmet of salvation – when he says

[Job 13:15 NKJV] 15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

God wants us to know for sure whether or not we have eternal life.

(1 John 5:11-13 NKJV) And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. {12} He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Remember beloved that your salvation is not dependent upon what we do, but what Jesus does.

It's not whether we were good enough to go to heaven, it's whether Jesus' blood was enough to pay for our sins.

There will be times when we will sin.

There will be times when we blow it.

But that doesn't change the fact that Jesus' blood is enough to pay for our sins.

It's simply a matter of whether or not we took that step of trusting in Him, believing in Him, turning our life over to Him.

Remember that Satan has already lost the war, and in Christ, we have already WON!

So we stand –

And now we come to the last piece – the sword of the Spirit

Up until now – everything has been defensive – until now.

Now we are given a weapon that is both offensive and defensive

The Roman sword was a brilliant piece of work!

it was short, only about 2 ft. long from tip to end of the handle

it was double edge, so could swing both ways -

though it was usually used in a thrust rather than a hacking motion

Paul calls it the Word of God

And the writer of Hebrew provides us with the same picture -

[Heb 4:12 NKJV] 12 For the word of God [is] living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This is the sword that the Holy Spirit wants to use in our lives.

It's not just carrying your Bible around that's important. It's understanding your Bible and using your Bible. It's learning the principles and learning to "speak" them, to use them in your life.

We see Jesus using the Word of God defensively in Luke 4 in the temptation in the wilderness

We see Jesus using it offensively in His confrontations with the religious leaders and in His sermons to the multitudes

in Revelation we see a sword coming from the mouth of Christ as he deals with His enemies once and for all at the end of the age

for us, the Word is both defensive and offensive

1) we use it in defending against temptation and error

2) we use it in encouraging one another and in winning the lost to faith in Jesus

The enemy wants the believer to be ignorant of God's will

The enemy wants the believer to be impatient with God's will

The enemy wants the believer to act independently of God's will

This is why this weapon is so formidable

This is our defense

The inspired word of God

And when we study the bible – we learn how to grip our sword.

When we learn how to handle the sword properly - it cannot be easily removed from our hand.

Without the word of God active in our lives, we cannot put on truth, righteousness, readiness, faith, or salvation because we only learn these things through the word of God. Without the word of God we would not know that we had armor given to us by God that gives us the strength to stand. The word of God empowers us to stand against all that Satan throws at us.

So, we are to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and we take and we put on the whole armor of God – and we keep it on.

Amen!

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Jhn 6:63 NKJV] 63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and [they] are life.

If we do not use the sword, it is of no value to us.

How easy it is for us to neglect the armor God has given us to stand and then we fail in our faith and we do not understand why.

But the reason is clearly given by God.

We are not relying upon the armor God has given to us.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

