

Bibles???

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

Pray for fathers -

Turn your bibles with me to Ephesians 6

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing and powerful letter that the Postle Paul – under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – writes to the saints in Ephesus and by extension – to you and me here this morning – about who we are and what we are in Christ – right now.

Paul has laid out for us – these powerful principles –

The fullness in the glory of God that has been given to us – through grace and fellowship and then the challenge to walk in it faithfully.

The challenge to walk in His wisdom

His love

His light

Serving and submitting to one another –

As believers - we are challenged in the light of God and in God – how He has called us to where He has called us –

to love the way He asks us to love

to stand and show this beautiful model of what it is like to be surrendered to God as we learn how to submit to each another.

[Eph 5:21 NKJV] 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.

This fear of God is a fear and trembling of who we serve – that leads us to submit and love one another

And in the midst of submitting and loving each other – as we saw last week, we understand that there will be conflict.

These are things that are going to happen because

Our flesh gets in the way

Our pride gets in the way

Sin gets in the way

And that it when the enemy and his minions – fan into flame our own flesh, our own sin, our own brokenness and cause conflict right where we are.

Spiritual warfare –

Paul wants us to understand that walk of the believer is going to lead to warfare of the believer

What Jesus has united in His glorious life, in His atoning death, in His glorious resurrection – Satan seeks to divide and deceive and destroy

But the amazing thing loved ones – is that we have a God that extinguishes that wind as we stand in Him.

And this what we are going to begin looking at this morning – as we begin to look at the Whole Armor of God

If ever there was a tie for us to believe in the Word of God and to pray to the God of the Word, it is now –

And my prayer for us all – is that as we go through this section – we might fully understand the resources that are available to us – in Christ.

Let's pray...

Read Text – Ephesians 6:10-17

Just want to take a step back and do a little review regarding spiritual warfare -

“Finally.”

This is how Paul begins this portion of his letter -

It's a term that can mean “for the remaining time,” or “from now on.”

I want you to think about the context – that Paul is saying this -

Jesus has been crucified

He has risen from the dead

He has ascended into heaven

He is seated at the right hand of the Father

Paul is saying -

From the time that Jesus left to the time that Jesus will return –

Until that time comes – from now on – your Christian life is going to include unceasing conflict

We are going to be in the midst of spiritual warfare.

These are commands –

These are marching orders

be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might

Put on the whole armor of God – so that we might stand against the wiles of the devil.

God is not going to command us to do something if He doesn't enable us and empower us to do them.

The moment that Paul writes, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might

The believer can rest assured that His strength and His power is available to him or her.

And so when Paul commands – put on the whole armor.

He is saying, “Take and use everything that God has made available to you”

We are to put it on – once and for all.

Unlike a police officer who might take off his or her vest after the shift is over –

The believer never takes his or her armor off

This is something that we wear at all times

The implication being – once we put it on – it stays on

Because spiritual warfare is not temporal

The armor of God is supposed to be our lifelong companion

Because the armor of God gives us supernatural protection

Spiritual warfare requires a spiritual solution – God has provided us with that spiritual solution.

This spiritual battle is personal - Paul uses the word "wrestling" means this is a personal contest

Spiritual warfare is a face to face struggle

"mano a mano," hand to hand combat

It's the picture of two locked in each other's grip, swaying back and forth as they push against one another looking for an opening

And the text makes it clear that all believers are in the fight

We are all in the struggle

And we are not going to make it – unless we put on the armor of God

Paul wants to help us understand that the stakes are high

Apart from Christ, apart from His Spirit, apart from His word – we are no match for Satan and his demons.

Because the bible says – that apart from Christ, everyone lies in the lap of the wicked one. 1 John 5:19

Many believers – from the early church – until now have tried to resist the devil and promote God's plan by ways other than the spiritual ways.

We fight spiritual enemies with spiritual weapons

Unfortunately – there are many people – people who go to church, people who read the bible – who come to this portion of scripture and think

That spiritual warfare is all hyperbole

That it is an exaggeration

That all of this is not to be taken literal

They say – there is no devil, there is no war, there is no conflict

This is make-believe armor and make-believe weapons

But nothing can be further from the truth

Let's look at our text -

[Eph 6:13-15 NKJV] 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The therefore here – is in reference to what Paul told us in our study last week.

That we have a supernatural foe – who wants nothing more than to distract us / he wants nothing more than for us to deviate from God's will.

So once again – Paul gives us the command to take up the whole armor of God.

And as Paul is going to share with us –

The armor of God is linked to our salvation experience and the sanctification process.

We take up the whole armor of God for the purpose of being able to stand.

We hold our spiritual ground – the space that God has assigned to us (our lives).

And we stand – only if we have taken full advantage of the power of God and the provision of God.

I had you make a note of evil day –

When is the evil day that Paul is talking about?

Here is something that might surprise us –

Every day is the evil day until the evil one is permanently cast into the lake of fire.

How can we tell who the victor is when the battle is done?

He or she is the last one standing!

Paul says, "When all is said and done - when the battle is finally over, make sure YOU are the one who is standing victorious, and the enemy has either fled the field or lies dead at your feet."

But there's only one way we can stand like that - there is only one way to resist the devil and his minions - And that's by taking advantage of the strength the Lord gives us

The enemy is looking for the unguarded Christian

He is looking for the person who is vulnerable to attack

He is looking for the person who will ignore what is being said

The day is evil and the enemy is evil – but if God is before us – who can be against us.

So let's take a look at the first two items of the armor of God here in verse 14 -

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Once again – Paul repeats the command.

To stand!!!

To not give up the ground that has been assigned to you.

And the first item we have here is this belt of truth

Once again – Paul is writing this while in prison.

He is chained to a Roman soldier

Part of the armor of the Roman soldier was his belt.

Now – in today's world, belts for the most part – are simply a decoration piece of our attire.

We look in the mirror to see if this belt goes with what I am wearing

Yes, some of us wear belts to hold our pants up.

but by and large, they are ornamental

But this wasn't the case for the Roman soldier.

The Roman belt was more like a girdle in that it held things together

It looked like a back brace – like those things that a weightlifter wear

And so – for the Roman soldier, his belt held all his equipment together.

it was the integrating principle, if you will, of all the rest of the armor

It held the scabbard of the sword

it held the bottom of the breastplate to the body –

Because it was wide – it provided protection against blow to the kidneys

As the soldier prepared to enter conflict he would hike up his skirt/apron and tuck

it into the belt to allow greater freedom of movement

Paul likens the belt to truth and it is very fitting he does because truth is the integrating principle in the believer's life - truth is what holds everything together

It is not the belt of feelings

It is not the belt of fads

It is God's eternal, constant truth that holds and girds everything together.

That's what we hang the rest of our life on.

You see, the bible teaches that God is a God who is both truth and reveals truth

Christianity is meaningless – unless it is true

Jesus – speaking to His disciples

[Jhn 16:13 NKJV] 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

In other words – the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth –

He speaks to us on behalf of God –

He points us to Jesus

And because God is immutable – meaning He never changes

Truth never changes

Everything that The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit says – is irrevocably true

Without truth – we are helpless and vulnerable

We can't face our enemy

We live in a culture and a society that doesn't believe that there is such a thing as truth

–

It is all relative

It is unknowable, uncertain and unclear

Don't lose sight of this loved ones –

Paul mentions truth first – because the enemies only weapon is deceit.

in Col. 2:15 we read that Jesus has disarmed the devil and his minions

and though he is without any weapons, he still speaks

and what he speaks are lies

he is without power, except what we give him by believing his lies

Satan is a liar – and the father of lies

His lies focus on the revelation of God – in other words, what God has said about Himself in His Word

His lies also focus on the nature of God and the character of God

The very first lie that was ever spoken – in the book of Genesis, in the Garden of Eden was – “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”

Eve abandoned the belt of truth – it laying on the dirt – with the scabbard that held the sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of God –

So we see the fall of man

So the Christian who knows truth, embraces truth, speaks truth – won't be deceived

The next item in the Armor of God – at the end of verse 14

Is the breastplate of righteousness

The Roman soldiers would have a breastplate of interlocking chain or thick leather

The breast plate is the covering that would go in the front of the body

This would cover and protect the vital organs of the Roman soldier during an attack

So if a Roman soldier failed to wear his breastplate – an arrow would be able to penetrate the soldier's chest – and pierce the heart / pierce the lungs.

A spear thrust would become a fatal wound.

The breastplate protects the heart.

So what is Paul saying here

The breastplate symbolizes our righteousness – or our right standing with God through Christ Jesus our Lord.

God offers His own righteousness to every believer – in Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul writes to the church about not having a righteousness of his own. Phil

3:9

Because righteousness means having a right standing with God

And the one thing that allows someone to have a right standing in God – is the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.

Because it is there where Jesus bears our punishment

It is at the cross where Jesus bears our penalty

According to the bible – Jesus takes our unrighteousness and imparts to us – His righteousness

The only provision that God has made for our sin – is the sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross.

And if there is one thing that makes the world angry – it is the Christian's claim that it is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary that makes us right with God – that it does away with our sin.

That this is the one thing that gives us the ability to have a right relationship with God.

This is why Satan – from the beginning, has tried to pervert what it means to be righteous.

“One can be righteous by following a list of do's and don'ts” - lie

“One can be righteous through church membership” - lie

“One can be righteous by simply being sincere in what they believe” – lie

“One can be righteous by trying to be good people” – lie

When the bible says that -

The only righteousness that comes from God is the righteousness that comes by faith.

Here is why we need the breastplate of righteousness

I know this is something we have all experienced: we are going through a trial, and we call out to God for help.

and then this thought pops into our head,

"I have no right to ask God for help - I'm a wretched sinner! In fact, I'm probably going through this because God is upset with me. Yeah - this must be His judgment. I can't ask God for help - I'm not worthy!"

Loved ones – this comes from the pit of hell.

We are to put on our breast plate of righteousness

We are righteous before God because He gives us His righteousness – in Christ

when the enemy seeks to make us feel unworthy - agree with him, WE ARE

UNWORTHY in ourselves - but WE are not standing against him, IN OURSELVES

We are standing IN CHRIST, and that means you are righteous in GOD'S EYES!

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

The Roman soldier's combat shoes were not exactly the most comfortable things in the world!

they were made of leather and had nails driven through the soles to provide a solid footing – they resemble golf shoes.

this footwear helped the Romans win many key battles because their armies were able to stand when their adversaries were slipping and sliding on a bloody or rain soaked field.

The Roman soldiers were constantly marching –

So the point that Paul is making here is that the believer is always supposed to have his or her marching shoes and be and marching where the people are hungry for the gospel.

Could be at home or at work

You see, what Paul is saying is that we need to keep a wartime mentality that sees things as they really are

We must be ever ready to proclaim the gospel which brings peace to the lost

Because before we came to Jesus – we wanted to live for ourselves

We didn't care about God's plan or God's will

We were at enmity with God

We were alienated against God

The Gospel is the news that God comes in the person of Jesus Christ so that we can experience forgiveness and hope in Christ

This is why it is called the gospel of peace – because we are no longer at war with God

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Any other gospel is not a gospel of peace

Because the biggest fear of a JW or a mormom or anyone who holds on to a work based gospel is – have I done enough

The bible says that peace is the inevitable result of the Holy Spirit controlling our lives.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and.... Peace

In a very real sense – church

In every conceivable way – I don't know if anyone has picked it up yet –

Paul is connecting the dots -

Paul wants us to understand that Jesus is our armor

Jesus is the truth we wear – John 14:6 – I am the way, the truth and the life

Jesus is our righteousness.

Jesus is our peace – Ephesians 2:14 - **[Eph 2:14 NKJV] 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,**

He is our faith

He is our salvation

He is the Word

Here is the point -

When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior – we received our armor.

We put it on

We never take it off

David's biggest failure – happened because he took off his armor and went home.

His greatest danger was not in the battlefield – it was when he went home

And the enemy was there -

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.

Christian: Are you ready to get in the fight?

Put on Jesus, go where you're commanded, stand in strength and victory and confidence that the Lord will do what He has promised in you and through you.

[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.'

