

ALWAYS BE PREPARED / Sunday, February 22, 2015

Unifying Topic: CLOTHED AND READY

Lesson Text

I. **The Soldier's Charge** (Ephesians 6:10-12)

II. **The Soldier's Equipment** (Ephesians 6:13-17)

III. **The Soldier's Supernatural Provisions** (Ephesians 6:18-20)

The Main Thought: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Only proper preparation can give assurance that certain things are accomplished. What does one do to be prepared? Putting on the whole armor of God teaches that in order to best serve God. Christians need to fortify themselves with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer.

Lesson Aim: To examine the epistle's teaching of spiritual warfare and putting on the whole armor of God.

Life Aim: To value the feeling of being prepared spiritually to fight for the Lord.

HISTORY:

Chapter 6:5-9 The concern in these verses is the relationship between slaves/servants and masters, or in every age employees and employers, for the apostles insisted that the slaves were the source of trouble. It was not an economic problem, but a spiritual problem. There were millions and millions of slaves in the Roman Empire during the days of Paul. Since many slave owners and slaves became Christians, the early church had to deal straightforwardly with the question of master/slave relations; how to live together in Christian households. And in Paul's day, women, children, and slaves had few rights. Paul gave firm directions! The servants were to obey, that is, follow the instructions of the masters, even those "*according to the flesh.*" This means carnal (*the fallen human nature*). Employers are to be obeyed in matters involving the workplace. The Spirit of God leads in every area. Christ's authority and Christ alone shows us how. Six instructions are given to the Christian workman:

1. The Christian workman is to work with fear and trembling. It is not with dread, but with respect for authority and anxious to leave no duty undone. It means that the godly servant strives to do what is right out of a fear of disobeying God. Did you do all, that was in your ability to do the job right, while respecting to serve the employer? (v.5a)
2. The Christian workman is to work in a singleness of heart, as to Christ. Singleness of heart means with purpose and focused attention, in sincerity and without any pretense or hypocrisy or slack. It also means that the workman does not beat time; he is totally committed to his work. There is no fakeness, no pretending to be a good workman. The reason is that you are offering your labor to the Lord. "*For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's*" 1 Cor.6:20. "*If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land*" Is.1:19 (v.5b).
3. The Christian workman is not to work with eyeservice (*Serving them better when under their eye than at other times*) as a manpleaser (*rather please man*). That is, he is not to work only when the boss is looking. Such standards rob your labor you're offering, and bring ill character to the Name of Christ. It is a job as if Jesus Christ were your Supervisor. Therefore, as Christian employees, the question should be: did it please the Lord? Don't let it be said, "*For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*" Jh.12:43. But instead, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*" Matt.5:16 (v.6a).
4. The Christian workman is to work as the servant of Christ, doing the Will of God from the heart. From the heart means with interest and energy. It is the opposite of routineness and listlessness, of having no energy or heart for the work. It was His Will that placed you there, whether it looks like it or not. Now, I ask you again, was the will of God done from the heart? (v.6b).
5. The Christian workman is to work with good will, and it must be done as to the Lord, and not to men. This would mean not with resentment, but with enthusiasm and a generous spirit (v.7).
6. The result of such diligent labor is to be a reciprocated (*shared*) reward. The Lord is the One doing the giving! He will give exactly what the employee has put into his day to day work. We work for Him and it is Him we should try to please. If he has diligently worked as though he were working for Christ, he shall be abundantly rewarded. If he has been working for men and for self, he shall go the way of all men and end up eternally lost. If he has been sometimes slack and sometimes diligent, then he is going to receive a piecemeal reward (v.8).

There is to be mutual honor and respect between masters and slaves. Therefore, the employers are not exempt from their

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treatment of the employee. They are to accept the same Christian principles with the same attitude, and the same regard to the Will of God, and to the authority of Christ! Although Christians may be at different levels in earthly society, we are all equal before God. The employer (1) is to treat his employees with respect; (2) forbear threats; leave off the evil practice of threatening shorter hours, lower wages, and loss of employment by such harsh compulsions and retain them like possessions. The reason is, knowing that God, is Master in heaven and God is going to judge everyone. He is ruling and reigning, and He keeps excellent records. *There is no respect of persons with Him*, meaning, God does not have a double standard. He weighs the unfaithfulness in servants and the unkindness in masters in the same scales of divine equity and justice (v.9).

LESSON:

Ephesians 6:10-12 The Soldier's Charge

6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. As a final note, here is a charge to prepare the Christian soldiers; the brethren, not the world.

1. The believer must be strong not in himself, but in the Lord, and in the power of **His** might. It is a necessity that we hear this: It is the Lord's power and the Lord's might that we are strong. Stop depending upon your own strength.

The word "*strong*" means power, might, strength. The word "*power*" means his unlimited power and dominion over all. The word "*might*" means strength, force, ability. It is **His** ability we're using; **His** strength and force wisely, in perfection. The critical point is that the believer's strength is not of human or fleshly strength, but it is the strength found in a living dynamic relationship with the Lord. It is a drawing we get from Him when we get in prayer. "*I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me*" Phil.4:13.

6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

2. The believer must put on the whole armour of God, not half or part that leaves you exposed to the enemy. Once the believer is assured within, he is ready to be clothed with God's whole armour, for he must know what to do with it. It's nothing you can see, that's why he has to believe that as he wages war against the enemies of life, he is covered from hurt or danger. Again, the armor must be put on. Why? That the believer may be able to stand, and not retreat against the strategies; the schemes of the adversary. Stand by being unmovable and steadfast; an unshakeable posture!

The enemy is the devil/Satan who works through strategies (wiles)—deceits, craftiness, trickery, methods used against the believer to wage war. He will do everything he can to deceive and capture the believer.

- a. There are strategies that appeal to the lust of the eyes. Satan will see to it that something crosses the eyesight of the believer, something that is very appealing to the flesh and the pride of life.
 - i. Food – attractive person – exposure of the body – cars, houses – positions – authority and power.

But God! "*For with God nothing shall be impossible*" Lk.1:37. "*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*" 2Tim.1:7. "*Fear thou not; For I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*" Is.41:10.

6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (3.) Warfare takes place against the Christian soldier.

The warfare is not human or physical, but spiritual. In the word "*wrestle*" (pale), Paul uses a Greek athletic term. The 11th verse says we stand against the wiles of the devil by putting on the armour of God; and this verse says we wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. One we stand; one we wrestle, meaning one has to do with our position and the other has to do with our struggle. Our fight is to exert to throw the other down and hold him down. But the fight is only done in the spiritual realm. We wrestle because first of all, it's a struggle. Although we have authority, we have adversaries in the spiritual realm, because of **whose** we are! His Word says, "*Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy...*" Lk.10:19.

- against principalities: high ranking hierarchy of demonic authority. This conveys the idea of a large number of evil forces who are struggling against the believer.
- against powers: invested with authority.
- against the rulers of the darkness of this world: rulers in revolt against God and limited to this darkness here on earth. "*Darkness*" in the Bible means the ignorance of truth and reality, of the real nature and purpose of things. The rulers blind the minds of men lest they believe the glorious gospel of eternal salvation. "*Light*" is knowing God and

His Son, Jesus Christ. Light is knowing the truth and reality of man and his world: that God created all for Himself, and that He loves and saves all to live with Him eternally. If we just only believe and trust in that, we will be fine!

- against spiritual wickedness in high places; the army of invisible wicked spirits in which the sphere of this conflict is in the heavenlies, where life in Christ is lived.

All are spiritual forces; fallen angels and demons over whom Satan has control, and they possess unbelievable power that he sends against us and we wrestle against. We are soldiers in a battle with evil, but God has given us every piece of armor, defensive and offensive, which we need to survive and win. As we speak the Word; apply the Word to the forces of the enemy, we are in a battle, but we are victors in this fight because of the One who gives us the power within to stand; enabling us to come against, never in our own strength, but in His power and might. So, concentrate on the armor and the power of Christ, not on the demons.

Ephesians 6:13-17 The Soldier's Equipment

6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Paul emphasized again the necessity of the Christian's appropriating God's full spiritual armor by obedience in taking it up and putting it on. Why? *"That ye may be able to withstand (stand your ground) in the evil day."* What is the evil day? It refers to today—to the onslaught of evil; unusual temptations and trials that is in the world today. And having fought to the end, still stand your ground; stand firm against the enemy without wavering or falling.

6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,— We must remember that Paul was in prison under constant guard when writing the letter to the Ephesians. For day in and day out, he was able to see the soldier's armor. He had an ideal picture of the armor that would be needed by the Christian believer to combat the forces of evil. If you didn't get it before, he writes the command a third time—**Stand!** How? *"Having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."* There's a belt used to hold the soldier's clothing. The loins are the hip area and abdominal region of the body. The Lord charged Job to *"gird up now thy loins like a man"* Job 38:3. The soldier wore a tunic of loose-fitting cloth. This kept his loose-fitting clothing from flapping about, and allowed him freedom of movement. In other words, it was meant to belt one's robe; pull in the loose ends in around the waist to shorten them in preparation for running in preparation for battle. The belt strengthened and supported the body. For the Christian believer it is called the *"belt of truth."* So, what specifically is the belt of truth? What is God's truth that the believer is to stand with?

1. First, Christ is the truth. The believer is to put on Christ so he can stand (Jh.14:6; Eph.4:24).
2. Second, the Word of God is truth. The believer is to be filled with the Word of God so he can stand. He is sanctified by the Word of God (Jh.17:17; Eph.5:26).
3. Third, speaking and living a life of truthfulness is the truth (Zech.8:16; Eph.4:25).

Truth does several things for the believer:

- It keeps him from flapping about from one thing to another, from being tossed to and fro by every attack of the enemy.
- It keeps him from becoming entangled with the affairs of this life.
- It supports him in the battles and trials of life.

6:14b ...and having on the breastplate of righteousness;— The breastplate covered the soldier's full torso from the neck to the thighs, and other vital organs both front and back, made of metal plates or chains or a tough sleeveless piece of leather or heavy material with animal horn or hoof pieces sewed on covering the soldier. It was used to protect the heart. The believer's heart is focused upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness, and that focus must be protected. The sign of the Christian soldier is righteousness. When a man is saved, God imputes the righteousness of Jesus Christ to him, or to say it another way, God counts him righteous. However, it is not enough to stand in the righteousness of Christ. The Christian soldier must protect his heart from the vulnerability of the schemes of Satan. He must live righteously, which keeps the heart from ever being wounded and losing its focus.

6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;— The sandals or boots on the soldier were a sign of readiness to march and to do battle. These sandals or boots were made with nails that gripped the ground firmly, even when the ground was sloping or slippery. Therefore, the sign of the Christian believer is readiness; equipped; being prepared to march with a firm footing and sure steps; prepared to do God's Will; ready for duty to bear witness the glad tidings of the

gospel of Christ which brings peace. We must be at peace with God and know that He is on our side to assure others of His message. By knowing Christ and believing Christ, you can make Him known to others wherever He takes you, causing change! Isaiah wrote, *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!"* Is.52:7. Satan will conquer through guilt and discouragement, but, God conquers through His Good News of peace and hope!

6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. The shield the soldiers depended on was a great oblong wooded shield held in front of him to protect his body from the spears, arrows, and fiery darts thrown by the enemy. These darts were dipped in pitch (*burning tar*) or some other combustible material and set afire. The edges of these shields were so constructed that an entire line of soldiers could interlock shields and march into the enemy like a solid wall. The *"shield of faith"* quenches every fiery dart of the wicked (Ps.84:11; Heb.11:6). This is not *"saving faith"* but this is living action faith; a trust in the promises and power of God. You put it before you *"being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, he was (is) able also to perform"* Rom.4:21. "So, faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God" Rom.10:17. Therefore, what you hear, you speak. To quench the fiery darts of the enemy you shield those darts by speaking God's Word; His promises! Such fiery darts often assault the mind—one after the other (doubting and evil thoughts)—fighting against the will of the believer; struggling to get a hold of the mind and subject it to doubt or evil. The fiery darts of Satan; those things that cause the believer...

- to question his salvation; his call; if he is worthy; if he can really serve; to doubt and wonder; to become discouraged, depressed, and defeated; or to burn with passion and desire when the shield was down.

Faith is the victory that overcomes whatever the world throws at us! 1Jh.5:4.

6:17 And take the helmet of salvation,— The helmet covered the head and the mind of the soldier. The sign of the Christian soldier is the helmet of salvation (deliverance). Unless a man has been saved, his mind cannot be protected from the fiery darts of temptation. The mind of the unsaved man is focused upon this earth. The unsaved man sees nothing wrong with being his own person and doing his own thing just so he is reasonably considerate of others. But, it is not so of the saved man. The helmet of salvation means the knowledge and hope of salvation; knowing that we are saved and hoping for the glorious day of redemption.

- Stirs us to keep our minds and thoughts upon Christ and off of sin and this world.
- Arouses us to focus upon Christ and His mission to carry the gospel to a needy and dying world.

Remember, we are in a saved relationship with God (*those who have accepted Him*). Satan cannot take anything that God has unless you allow him! Rom.8:38-39.

6:17b ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:— The sword was a weapon used for both defense and offense. The sword was used both to protect and to fight off and slay the enemy. The sign of the Christian soldier is his use of the word of God. Remember Jesus Christ Himself overcame the onslaught of the devil by using Scripture. The written Word is the one weapon that assures victory for the Christian soldier. For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.

Ephesians 6:18-20 The Soldier's Supernatural Provisions

6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;— The constant supernatural provision of the Christian soldier is prayer. This means no period or season of life should be without prayer, especially in a battle. And as he enters into conflict fully dressed and armed, a constant spirit of prayer is going forth with great confidence, assurance, and courage.

1. He must pray always, meaning, don't allow your connection with God's presence and care to be broken. You are maintaining openness; His relay of power to come forth. 1Thess.5:13 says, *"Pray without ceasing."* Why? Because you are in a battle! Therefore keep the lines of communication open to the Captain of your salvation. Prayer and the Word should never be separated because you are praying His Will to be done, and not your own. Why do we think His Word is there in the Bible? It's important! It is life to us and our lifeline! And for those who say I can't quote the Word verbatim, I say keep studying, you need to know some and where it's found. Yes, the Spirit will hear your groanings, but not your eloquent words which may be selfish or out of God's Will. They sound good. But, it will take your sincere heart that He listens to perform. But, His Word does not fall short or come back void as you make your request known while giving thanks.

2. He must pray in the Spirit, that is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit; all prayer and supplication is in the Spirit! It is

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the Holy Spirit who prays in us, through us, and for us. It is the Lord who has won the battle! But you are a participant for what you need from Him. I believe when you are praying His Word, you are praying in the Spirit. And also when you are praying in tongues, you are praying in the Spirit! Prayer itself is the language of heaven. It is the Spirit who leads and guides. *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the Will of God" Rom.8:26-27.* We can pray and we can sing in the Spirit.

3. He must pray watching, that is, keep alert, concentrating.
4. He must pray persevering, that is to stick to it and not quit. When you really want something to happen, you will keep at it. And that is to say, how bad do you want it? The enemy's job is not to turn loose so easily, and that should be yours also. Prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven; it's getting God's Will done on earth.
5. He must pray unselfishly. The soldier is not in battle alone. Many are engaged in the same warfare. The Christian soldier must pray for those who fight with him; pray intensely for his fellow soldiers as for himself.

6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,— Paul requires prayer for himself. Why? Not that the chains would be removed, but, "That utterance may be given him"; *"a bold speech when he opens his mouth when he makes known the mystery (truths hidden and later revealed) of the gospel"* to others. Even as we pray for a change in our circumstances, we should also pray that God will accomplish His plan through us right where we are.

6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Paul and the other apostles were sent out by Christ the way kings and governments send out ambassadors to represent them and convey messages.

SUMMARY:

¹The last major section of this epistle is a call to "walk in victory", with a charge to stand strong in the power of the Lord's might. To be able to withstand the wiles of the devil and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places, Christians needs to adorn themselves with the whole armor of God. This armor includes such elements as truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. Standing strong also requires fervent and watchful prayer, not just for one's self, but for all Christians. Even Paul solicits their prayers that he might be bold as an ambassador in chains as he makes known the mystery of the gospel (**vv.10-20**).

²We are to be strong in the Lord because spiritual battles require spiritual strength (**v.10**). Put on all the armor that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil's tricks (**v.11**). The word "wrestle" indicates hand to hand battle, not just being a spectator (**v.12**).

We need God's complete armor on so that we may stand our ground firmly and completely (**v.13**). To "stand" implies urgency and in place (**v.14**). The "girdle" holds the other parts of the armor together in the same way that truth is an integrating force of the victorious Christian's life. The soldier's "breastplate" protected his chest from the enemy just like a believer's heart needs protection from the devil's attacks (**v.14**). Our beautiful "feet" carries us to share the Gospel (**v.15**). Satan's "fiery darts" are full of the flaming arrows of adversity and his quiver is full of them (**v.16**). Frequently he fires a round of problems at us (sickness, financial loss, broken relationships), and when our guard is down, he will hit us with fear, doubt or depression. The "shield of faith" is trust in the promises and power of God that protects us from the enemy. Since Satan wants to capture us at our weakest area we must use the shield of faith and walk by faith and not try to handle the enemy ourselves. Notice we are to take the "sword" and the "helmet" (**v.17**). The helmet protects our minds when our minds are controlled by God. A physical sword wounds to hurt and kill, while the sword of the Spirit wounds to heal and give life.

Prayer is the energy that enables Christians to engage in the battle of life. We can never fight this battle in our own power, no matter how strong we may think we are. Remember that many men greater than we have fallen before us. Paul tells us how to pray in order to defeat Satan (**vv.18-20**).

¹ http://executableoutlines.com/ep/ep_06.htm

² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/ephesians-614/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

[THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD]

ARTICLE 1

5/31/2006

EPHESIANS 6: 14-18 STAND THEREFORE HAVING YOUR **LOINS** GIRT ABOUT WITH **TRUTH**, AND HAVING ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND YOUR **FEET** SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF **PEACE**; ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE **SHIELD OF FAITH**, WHEREWITH YE SHALL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED. AND TAKE THE **HELMET OF SALVATION**, AND THE **WORD** OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS **THE WORD** OF GOD. **PRAYING** ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT, AND WATCHING THEREUNTO WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION FOR ALL SAINTS

B **LOINS** GIRT ABOUT
WITH **TRUTH** -
BELT OF **TRUTH** -
TRUTH **KEEPS US FROM**
BEING DECEIVED.
MAKES US FREE.

B **BREASTPLATE** OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS
RIGHTEOUSNESS
KEEPS OUR HEARTS
COVERED AND
PROTECTED FROM
WRONG MOTIVES.

F **FEET** SHOD WITH THE
PREPARATION OF THE
GOSPEL OF **PEACE** -
THE GOSPEL OF **PEACE**

PEACE **KEEPS US FROM**
CONFUSION THAT OUR
WITNESS MAY NOT BE
CONTAMINATED.

S **SHIELD** OF **FAITH**
FAITH **KEEPS UNBELIEF**
OUT AND YOU ACT ON
WHAT YOU BELIEVE EVEN WHEN
YOU HAVE DOUBTS.

H **HELMET** OF **SALVATION**
SALVATION **KEEPS**
YOU FROM BEING IN
BONDAGE.

S **WORD** OF THE SPIRIT
WHICH IS THE WORD OF
GOD

THE WORD **KEEPS US IN**
THE SPIRIT AND NOT IN
THE FLESH WHEN WE
CONSISTENTLY USE IT.

P **PRAYING** WITH ALL
PRAYER AND
SUPPLICATION
PRAYER **KEEPS US**
IN CONSTANT
COMMUNICATION WITH
GOD