

How to Resist the Devil, Part 2

Scripture: Ephesians 6:14-17

Code: 49-40

As we come now to the Word of God, I want you to turn in your Bible to Ephesians chapter 6. We're going to look to the next portion of Scripture in our study in Ephesians. We are really coming to the very end, after many months in this wonderful epistle. And this morning we are going to go back to chapter 6, verses 10 through 17. We looked at the first part of it last week, and we'll wrap it up this morning. We will be considering the believer's armor, which is a familiar portion of Scripture. And I think it was back in 2008 or so I did a series on this; it may have been eight or nine messages which are available at the Grace to You website. But for us in this season I'm just going to consider the armor of the believer in one message, and we'll gather it all together this morning.

To begin with let me read, starting in verse 10 of Ephesians 6: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

This is really Paul's wrap-up on this amazing letter to the Ephesians. After giving us so much information in the opening three chapters about salvation and so much already in chapters 4, 5, and 6 about sanctification, he comes to his final emphasis—as he notes in verse 10, saying, "Finally"—to draw our attention to the fact that there is a war, and we are in that war by virtue of being a part of the kingdom of light. Because we belong to the Lord, we are at war with the devil and his schemes.

Now verse 11 kind of sums up the text: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." The devil has schemes; you want to stand firm. You can do that if you put on the full armor of God.

We need to understand that we have a supernatural enemy, that our enemy is not only the flesh—our fallenness, our unredeemed fallenness—but the enemy is the devil. And the Bible says so much about him. He originally was the anointed cherub Lucifer. Lucifer may have been the worship leader of heaven and the holy angels before his rebellion. He rebelled against God and took with him, in the rebellion, a third of the holy angels; and they became his demon force.

Scripture identifies him as the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the god of this age, and the prince of demons. This is a real, supernatural force of wickedness in the heavenlies—that means in the spiritual realm. He has personal names. Fifty-two times in Scripture he is referred to as *Satan*, which means "adversary." Thirty-five times he is referred to as *the devil*,

which means “slanderer.” He is called the serpent, the great dragon, the roaring lion, the evil one, Abaddon or Apollyon (which means destroyer). He is called tempter, accuser, murderer, liar, sinner, perverter, and angel of light.

This powerful spirit and his demon hosts are set against God—Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Father—the triune God. They hate everything about God, about truth. They hate Scripture; they hate Israel; they hate the church. They hate righteousness. They hate the Law of God and the Word of God.

So he and his demons are making war against God every way they can. They are the spiritual force behind the human, visible force of evil that we see in the world. They control the world system. And in so doing, one of their enterprises is to stalk Christians. “The devil is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” stalking Christians in order to trip them up, in order to devour them, render them useless, joyless, fruitless.

Now obviously he cannot snatch them away. He is a snatcher—as we know, in Matthew 13 he snatches the Word. But in John 10, no one is able to snatch us out of the hand of the Father and the Son. He cannot ultimately win the victory because “greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.” He cannot win the victory, even though he runs the world system of evil, because we have, in Christ, overcome the world.

So we don’t want to give him more power than he has. He cannot remove us from the hand of the Father or the Son; he cannot remove the Spirit from us; he cannot take away our eternal salvation. “Nothing [will ever] separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus,” nothing, including Satan and all the demon forces. But he comes after us in order to, as I said, make us useless in the kingdom—fruitless, joyless, unproductive Christians.

And Scripture tells us in this passage that our responsibility is to resist. You see that that is the verb in verse 13, “resist,” or “stand firm” as in verse 11 and the end of verse 13. We are never told to chase the devil, run after the devil, talk to the devil, denounce the devil. In fact, it’s clear that that’s foolishness. You don’t bring in a railing accusation against a supernatural being over which you have no power and no authority.

Christ had authority over all of them; so did the apostles. We don’t. That’s why the demons in the book of Acts, when they were being exorcized, supposedly, by the sons of Sceva, said, “Jesus we know and Paul we know. But who are you?” They know who has the power, and it was Christ and the apostles. We don’t chase Satan; we don’t denounce Satan. We resist him and stand firm.

And the question is, with this kind of massive heavenly hierarchy described in verse 12 as rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies, we have a formidable enemy. This is an enemy that is ancient. The demons were created originally as holy angels. They fell sometime near the creation; they’ve been around ever since. There have not been any creation of angels since the original one. So these demons have plied their trade for millennia in the world. They are crafty, they are cunning, and they are relentless. And even though they know the end from the beginning because Scripture lays out their inevitable end, they resist and fight against that and fight against God because they are permanently so evil they can’t do anything else.

You'll notice they are defined or described as "rulers," "powers," "world forces," and "spiritual forces." These are the different ranks or strata of demons. Back in chapter 1, verses 20 and 21, the holy angels are described in similar ranks. So these demons have certain roles to play. Some are "rulers," some are known by their evil power, some are behind the world governments. They are "world forces." They are the ultimate globalists, who are pushing the world toward one final, evil world kingdom ruled by Antichrist under the full power of Satan.

People say to me, "Do you think there's a scheme for a one-world government?" Absolutely. And it's not a scheme of men, it's a scheme of Satan, and he's moving rapidly in that direction. Everything points to that.

The real enemy is behind the human forces of evil, and it is the power of Satan and his demons. They are "the world forces of this darkness." They are "the spiritual forces of wickedness."

And the truth is, according to verse 12, we struggle against them. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood." People are not our enemy, they're the mission field. They are Satan's dupes; they are Satan's agents; they are the children of the devil, the Bible says. They have his desires, and they do his bidding. But behind them, the real struggle is with the forces of supernatural, spiritual beings who are doing everything they can to destroy the work of God and destroy the usefulness of God's people.

So this is a severe, serious struggle. The word "struggle" in the Greek is *palē*, and it basically is simply—if you just took it in a literal sense, it means to swing around back and forth. So it became a word used for wrestling, which is what happens in a wrestling match as two opponents grapple with each other. We are in a wrestling match with a very, very powerful enemy not to be taken lightly without sad, sad results.

Now in the end the Lord will triumph. Romans 16:20 says that God will crush Satan shortly under our feet. Revelation 19 and 20 describe the end of Satan, how the Lord Jesus in His return takes Satan and his demons and throws them forever into the lake of fire prepared for them. Christ has already won the victory over Satan. And you remember the apostle Paul said in Colossians that when He died on the cross, He showed up in the presence of demons and declared His triumph over them at the cross.

But in the meantime we are living in what Paul in verse 13 calls "the evil day." What day is that? That's any day there's evil. And what day is that? That's every day. So living in this evil day, understanding this formidable, massive, supernatural, global force of spiritual beings set on fighting everything about God and His kingdom and His plan, we have a real challenge, a real struggle. And because we can't see it doesn't mean it's not there.

So how do we deal with it? Well verse 11, again back to the summation statement: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes"—or the "methods"—"of the devil." You have to put on the armor of God. "Put on," there, by the way, is a verb that means "put on, and leave on." It's a permanent statement: "Put it on, and keep it on, once for all time," not on and off like some kind of a uniform when you go to play a game for a team. This war never ends. There is no time to rest; there is no R&R; there is no leave. This is constant.

And we put on the armor of God to “be able to stand firm,” and he says it twice, once at the end of verse 11 and once at the end of verse 13: “having done everything, to stand firm.” Doesn’t matter what you’ve done if you don’t stand firm at the end. And that’s a really important word to emphasize.

There are a lot of people who do a lot of things in terms of the kingdom and kingdom ministry and kingdom work and preaching and teaching and serving; but when the dust settles, they’re not standing at the end. We all know about that. It’s a pretty common thing that Satan is able to do damage to some in the kingdom, and dire damage to leaders, pastors, Bible teachers, et cetera, et cetera, all the way down through the ranks of Christians.

The goal is that when the battle finally ends, at the very end, “having done everything” you’ve done, you’re “standing firm.” It’s what Paul called for in 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” “Steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Or doing everything, and at the end of everything, you’re still standing.

And you might say, “Is it possible with such a formidable enemy?” And his devices are so massively effective today with the media, the Internet, and the culture encroaching on us whether we want it or not. Is it possible at the end to be standing? It’s not only possible, it’s expected of us—and the reason is because we have the armor. We have the armor; it’s a question of putting it on and taking it up, as we will see.

So I’m going to give you just really an overview of this armor. I think this will be helpful to you, to do it in one setting. Paul is a prisoner at this time, and of course, he’s surrounded by Roman soldiers because he’s imprisoned by Rome. And he’s seen plenty of Roman soldiers in his life and ministry, traveling through the Roman world, and he finds in the Roman soldier a good illustration of what is necessary for the believer to be victorious in the battle against the schemes of the devil. And so he draws his picture out of the vivid reality of a Roman soldier. There very possibly was one nearby—if not in full armor, nonetheless a Roman soldier nearby even when he wrote this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Now the first piece of armor is in verse 14: “Stand firm. Stand firm.” For the third time he says, “Stand firm.” That’s the third time. “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth.” Let’s call it the belt of truth.

He starts with a belt as the first aspect of armor. Why would he do that? Well that’s a very common place to start, if you’re a soldier. People wore tunics in those days, and you would have a tunic that was probably below your knees, typically. That was what gentlemen did. And if you were going to engage in war, that was the kind of clothing you would wear. You had to do something because you can’t go into a war with your skirt blowing in the breeze.

This loose piece of material around your neck with armholes wasn’t going to be an aid to any kind of success in battle. So the first thing they would do is put on a leather belt, a wide leather belt, pull up the hem and the edges of their tunic, turn it into some kind of a male miniskirt, if you will, so that it didn’t encumber them, and somebody couldn’t pull it over their head and stab them, and that would be it. So they were covered with appropriate undergarments. But the first thing you did as a soldier, when you knew you were going to face battle, was get yourself in a position with your tunic that it was not going to be harmful to you, it was not going to be a danger.

Girding your loins in an old expression. It appears in the Old Testament, girding your loins. It was a picture of preparation. For example, in Exodus 12, girding your loins to leave Egypt at the Passover time. It was a way to pull in the loose ends, is what it's talking about—gather everything up, trim everything down, get ready.

And “having girded your loins with truth” is borrowed, interestingly enough, from the book of Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 11, verse 5 speaks of Messiah—Messiah the branch who will be empowered by the Holy Spirit, who will fear the Lord, who will judge righteously, who will slay the wicked. And it says of Messiah, “Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.” So in that case it's a belt of righteousness and a belt of faithfulness. It's that that pulls everything together as the Messiah goes to war. It speaks of Messiah's final readiness for the final conflict; He is prepared for battle.

And what is the belt that pulls everything together? Well, in the text it says the belt of “truth,” or the girdle of truth. It could be content; it could be truth as such, sound doctrine—that's certainly important. But I think it's better understood—the term *alētheia* is better understood as truthfulness, truthfulness. It is the idea that you're committed. There's no hypocrisy. You know there's a battle; you're ready for the battle. It's that notion that is conveyed in girding up your loins.

For example, in Luke 12:35 we read, “Gird up your loins and keep your lamps lit,” ready for the moment your master shows up. It's a picture of readiness—readiness to move, to be engaged in something that you need all the alacrity that you can have. Or in 1 Peter 1:13, “Having therefore girded your minds for action,” “girded your minds for action.” That's what it is; it's getting ready for the action.

So that is what I see in the belt of truth. It's preparation; it's readiness. It's not so much the content of truth as it is truthfulness. It's used in the sense of the absence of hypocrisy, the presence of real commitment, Jude 3, earnestly contending for the faith.

Hebrews 12, “[Laying] aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us.” All encumbrances are set aside. Or Romans 12:1, “[Presenting yourself as] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Or 1 Corinthians 9 where the apostle Paul says that “I don't beat the air; I fight as one who wants to hit my opponent. I don't want to be disqualified by a failure to be serious and committed to the battle.”

Just a page over in Philippians chapter 1 you can see it in verse 9, a similar illustration: “I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment”—then verse 10—“so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.” It's about sincerity. It's about saying, “Look, this is the most important thing in my life.”

Paul talks about this in the language of 2 Timothy 2 where he talks about being a soldier, being a hard-working farmer, being someone who is entering in a race and is ready for the race and has no encumbrances and is highly trained. He also talks about it in 2 Timothy 2 when he talks about how you have to be a vessel, pure and cleansed for the Master's use.

So that's where we're starting. You need to make a commitment to this battle; that is obvious. That's presenting yourself as a living sacrifice, that's making your commitment to fight the battle with your whole heart. So that's the point of the belt. You pull in all the loose ends of your life, you understand the seriousness of the war, and you're all in.

The second piece of armor is "the breastplate of righteousness." You've already put on the belt of truth; that's the past tense. You "[have already] put on the breastplate of righteousness." You did that when you were saved, in a sense. But the breastplate of righteousness has to be understood in a practical sense, not in a forensic sense, and I think I can show you that.

The breastplate of righteousness is vital. Let's start with breastplate. If you're soldier, this covers the vital organs. This is critical; this is going to save you at the most critical point of your anatomy. Breastplates were made sometimes out of heavy linen, and they would have pieces of hoof linked together on them or pieces of metal, protecting the vital organs, sometimes chain metal, sometimes linked metal, sometimes even solid kind of molded metal, and it went from the neck to the waist to obviously protect your vital organs.

Now you're going to be able to win if you have already put on this breastplate of righteousness. And again, if you're a Christian, you already have the righteousness of Christ. So this is not asking you to find on your own the righteousness that saves you—this is not that. This is the righteousness of practical godliness. You have to put on practical righteousness. All that Satan needs, really, in attacking you is unrighteousness. Wherever there is sin in your life, then Satan has an opening, and he can make a thrust, and he can do some serious damage.

We have the righteousness of Christ imputed to us at salvation, the very righteousness of God that is ours by faith in Christ. That's the gift of justification. What we're talking about here is something that you don't need to put on because you've already put on that righteousness of God through Christ. But this we're talking about is practical righteousness. The point would be better, perhaps, stated to say you need to get rid of sin in your life. You need to turn from sin, and you need to pursue righteousness and holiness. Second Corinthians 2, the apostle Paul warns that if you have sin in your life, you're going to give the devil an opportunity. You're going to be ignorant of his devices.

Back in Ephesians 4 the same thing, if you look at verse 24, "Put on the new self." In other words, live consistently with your new life, "which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." You have been created that way in a positional sense. Now you need to live that way. So "lay aside falsehood, speak truth [with each one of your neighbors], for we're members of one another. Be angry, and do not sin; don't let the sun go down on your anger," meaning, "don't give the devil an opportunity." So any kind of sin in your life allows the devil access to do damage.

In 1 Corinthians 15:34 the apostle Paul said, "Awake to righteousness, and do not sin." In 2 Corinthians 7:1 he says, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh . . . perfecting holiness in the fear of God." So again, when you came to faith in Christ you were granted righteousness; the very righteousness of God was imputed to your account. That doesn't mean you became totally righteous; that's a process of sanctification, and you're in the middle of that process. Responding to biblical commands to be godly and holy will produce the kind of righteousness by the Holy Spirit that will allow you to be secure against the assaults of Satan. You have to understand that. You can't cultivate sin. You can't have areas of your life that are given over to sin, given over to

transgression. I don't care what it is; anything—pornography to anger and everything in between—because you have vulnerability to the powers of darkness, if that is the case.

So to start with, you have to go into this Christian life with a complete commitment, tie up all the loose ends, and realize you're going to have to fight this battle with some sober-mindedness. And secondly, you need to make sure that you're protected by righteousness, by godliness, by holiness. Pursue holiness in the fear of God.

The third piece of armor which is to be put on, verse 15, "Having shod with your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." And again, you're going to be able to fight the battle if you take up the armor; and if you take up the armor, then you have put on the belt, you have put on the shield, and you have put on the shoes.

Now shoes in our culture are pretty much a fashion statement and not much else because we live in a hard surface world and not like the ancient world. Whenever I think about this passage I always go back to a memorable moment when I was playing football in my college university days, and we had a game in the Rose Bowl. And it was late in the season; it was a day like today, and it was rainy, and I was back to receive the kickoff and to return the kickoff. And I had made a decision to wear some new football shoes that had just come into town. I was the only player on the team that had them. They were made by a German company called Adidas. That's right. This was the first year they were here. And Adidas is Adi Dassler, one of the Dassler brothers; the other one started Puma.

So they came from Germany, and they developed a soccer shoe into a football shoe. But it had very short studs on it, and it was a tremendous improvement because it had a plastic sole that couldn't absorb water. And up until that time football shoes were leather; and over a period of seasons they sucked up so much water it was like having lead feet. But they did have longer spikes. But I thought, "You know, this is the time. I'm going to switch over to these exotic new shoes." The kick came down; I caught the kick, took three steps, hit a mud spot, and ended up flat on my back on the sixth yard line. Not exactly where I wanted to be. But it stood in my mind that I had made a foolish decision about having ill-prepared my feet. So in the interim few minutes I went to the sideline, and I got the right kind of shoes.

I haven't been in combat, but you have to have the right kind of shoes. And we have that illustrated to us all the time in athletics. You have to have whatever allows you to function in the combat of athletics. Footwear is very, very important. And in battle, it was far more important because it was life and death. And the Roman soldiers did marches—long, long marches—so they had to have tough leather boots. And they would literally take nails and push them through from the inside so they had like spikes, so they could move over the terrain and so they could hold their ground when they were in hand-to-hand combat. Believe me, they weren't slipping and sliding in sandals. It was a matter of life and death, necessary for long marches, durable, and with the ability to grip the ground in such a way that they couldn't be pushed off balance.

Well that is precisely what the apostle Paul sees here. He sees the believer needing some shoes that anchor him or her, that allow him to take the full attack and not move—no slipping, no sliding. And what are the shoes? "The gospel of peace." This is marvelous: "the gospel of peace."

What do you mean by "the gospel of peace"? Well let's go back to Ephesians chapter 2. Back to

Ephesians 2, verse 12: “Remember that you were at that time”—before your conversion—“separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” That is the condition of a nonbeliever: separate from Christ, without God in the world.

That’s true of all unconverted people. But what happens in salvation? Verse 13: “Now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace.” That’s so important. “He Himself is our peace.”

So what happened at salvation? What do you mean, “He is our peace”? Listen to the language of Romans 5: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Verse 10 says, “We were enemies . . . we [are now] reconciled to God through the death of His Son.”

So what does it mean to say, “The gospel of peace”? The gospel brings you peace with God. We’re not talking about psychological peace, emotional peace, experiential peace. We also are blessed with that as a fruit of the Spirit. But the main issue is that we have been made literally children of God. That’s the peace that has taken place through Christ. We were enemies; we hated God. God was angry at us, and the gospel produced peace.

So how does that relate to the Christian life? It relates to it in a very simple way: God’s on your side. Rather than being against you, rather than having the devil against you and God against you, you now have God for you to the degree that no ultimate harm can come your way. There’ll never be condemnation. Nothing will ever separate you from the love of Christ. You have overcome the evil one. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. You have overcome the world. You have entered into triumphant promise, a triumphant covenant with Christ. You have made peace with God.

Colossians 1, verses 20 and 21, “Through Him”—through Christ—“to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross. . . . You were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you.” That’s the peace we’re talking about.

The good news is you have a formidable enemy, but God is on your side. The Old Testament Psalms talk about, “God is my shield. God is our rock. God is our defender. God is our deliverer. God will never leave us or forsake us.” Christ will never allow us to be tempted above what we are able, but will always with that temptation make a way of escape. We will triumph in Christ.

So as you go into this battle, you go without fear in that sense. I love this. Even if you sin, listen to 1 John 2:1. As much as we would like to have the perfect righteousness, we sin. What does that do to our vulnerability? First John 2:1, “My little children, I’m writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” And when you do sin, you have an advocate, an intercessor, a great high priest who intercedes on your behalf, so that nothing can ever separate you from God. And so that is to say that all divine resources are yours. All the resources in the heavenlies are yours. God as your Father, Son, and Holy Spirit come to your aid in the battle.

So the first three parts of the armor: a belt that pulls everything tighter—that speaks of commitment; a breastplate of righteousness—it speaks of living a righteous and holy life as protection; and thirdly,

being able to stand against anything and everything the devil throws at you because you have backing from the eternal God, Creator, Redeemer, and your loving Father. So a commitment to live the truth, pursue righteousness, stand firm, trusting in God to give you strength. That's the first part of your armor. And by the way, you put this on and leave it on your whole life.

Now we come to some additional parts of the armor: number four, verse 16, "In addition, in addition." Here are some that you take up. The others you have on all the time, here are some that you take up at the time of battle.

The first one is the shield of faith—*thureon* is the term. There are a number of Greek words for different shields. There was a small, round shield that a soldier had on his forearm—on his left forearm, typically, if he's right-handed, and he would fight with a dagger with his right hand and parry blows with his left. That's not this. This is *thureon*, which is like a small door, maybe four feet by two-and-a-half feet—full protection, double protection. On top of the breastplate you had this—thick wood, usually covered with leather, and then the leather would be saturated with a non-flammable oil because darts, arrows would be shot at it, and they should be extinguished when they hit that saturated leather. The way these shields were used was in a phalanx—that's an old word. But basically the front of the army would put them side by side. You'd have just wooden shields for many miles, sometimes, just in front of the enemy. It was the double, double protection.

Beyond confidence in God's faithfulness, beyond righteousness, beyond commitment, you had this added protection. You picked it up when the battle started. And what are you defending yourself against? Well, he says this is how you extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. The evil one is Satan; his flaming arrows are temptation. They hit that shield with that saturated leather, and it extinguishes the arrows. What they used to do was take arrows, tip them with pitch, and just before they would shoot them, they would light them on fire, and it would just rain down on the opposing army, all these fiery arrows. And the idea was that if it could hit a man, it would splatter the pitch, and then the fire would move across him and could be deadly.

So what are we talking about with these arrows? Well we're obviously talking about temptation. Satan is shooting temptation at us. We have double protection if we have the shield of faith. He shoots sins of temptations of impurity, anger, selfishness, doubt, fear, disappointment, discouragement, lust, greed, covetousness, pride, you name it. Whatever is coming at us are his flaming arrows. And what is the defense? It's "the shield of faith." What does that mean? That means that you extinguish Satan's temptations if you believe in God, if you truly believe—not only believe in Him but believe His Word.

Faith overcomes temptation. In what sense? Well what Satan wants you to do in a temptation is to believe that this is what you deserve, this is what you need, this is most satisfying, this is something to be desired, and the reason that God is withholding it from you is because He's mean, He's narrow-minded, He's legalistic. That's exactly what Satan said to Eve in the garden. "You can't trust God," he said. "You can't trust God. God doesn't want you to be like Him. You eat that fruit, you'll be like Him. He doesn't want that. God is not good like you think; He's withholding a real, true satisfaction from you in that fruit, and that's because He doesn't want you like Him, and He's mean." And Eve believed the lies of Satan, and the whole human race fell.

"You can't trust God; trust me," the devil always says. "You can't trust God; trust me. I'll give you the real joys; I'll give you the real fulfillment; I'll give you the real satisfaction. You find it through sin."

It was that way with Jesus in His temptation. Satan was saying to Jesus, “You don’t deserve to be deprived; You don’t deserve to be hungry; You don’t deserve to be mistreated; You don’t deserve to be rejected. You can have all the kingdoms of the world. You can have bread; You just create it out of nothing. Take what You deserve; take what will satisfy You.” Those were the flaming arrows. But Jesus would not, would not distrust His Father. He would not.

So every temptation is designed to make you believe God is holding back something fulfilling. That’s the devil’s constant lie. So 2 Corinthians 1:24 says, “By faith you stand.” “By faith you stand.” If you just trust God, you stand. You overcome the devil; you overcome the world, 1 John 5:4, by your faith, by your faith. That’s why four times in Scripture it says, “The just shall live by faith.”

So the shield of faith is the consistent trust that the Lord has the best for us. And His will is the best, the most satisfying, the most delightful, the most fulfilling, the most joyous. Every time you sin, you have allowed your flesh to believe the devil’s lie that there is satisfaction in sin that is greater than the satisfaction in obedience to God. So you protect yourself by believing God.

So the belt, the breastplate, the shoes, and the shield. The fifth piece of armor is “the helmet of salvation,” the helmet of salvation, and that’s in the beginning of verse 17, “Take the helmet of salvation.” Helmets were sometimes leather, sometimes made out of metal, and they were designed, obviously, to protect the head. There could be great blows delivered to the head with a *rhomphaia*, which was a three- to four-foot double-edged sword that was flailed around and wielded for just the purpose of chopping somebody’s head off.

What is “the helmet of salvation”? What does “salvation” mean? Don’t we already have salvation? We do. We have the salvation that we received at the beginning. When we got our armor, we received salvation.

But this is talking about one aspect of salvation. And there are three, right? At the time of your salvation you were saved from the penalty of sin—no condemnation. That’s in your justification. Now in your sanctification you are being delivered from the power of sin; it no longer has dominion over you. But the final form of salvation is to be saved from the presence of sin, when you literally are delivered from sin altogether, into the presence of God where there will never be sin, forever.

That’s the helmet of salvation: the realization that you can go fully into this battle confident that the devil, who may hit your head, come after your mind with doubts and discouragement, confusion, bad doctrine, bad theology, disappointment, fear, anxiety, questioning your true salvation, questioning whether salvation is forever—all those kinds of blows to your thinking are protected when you have the hope of final salvation.

In 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul speaks in the same kind of language. Listen to verse 8, 1 Thessalonians 5:8, “Since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.” We’re talking about the hope aspect of it. I don’t hope that my sins are forgiven; that’s past. I don’t hope that I’m being sanctified; that’s present. I hope for the future fulfillment of salvation—that I’ll be delivered into the presence of the Lord. So that’s what he’s talking about.

Put on the “helmet, which is the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If you have been saved and are being sanctified, you will be glorified. Nobody gets dropped in the process. Nobody can take us out of God’s hand. Nobody can break the love that God has toward us and for us. No accusation, Romans 8, can stand against us. You’re going to glory; that’s the promise. You’re on the way to the final salvation.

If you have been justified, are being sanctified, you will be glorified. That’s why Paul in Romans 13 says, “Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed.” What salvation nearer than when I believed? The final salvation. So in every battle, in every fight where you might tend to be challenged by the difficulty of it, maybe even it includes persecution, you can be confident that nothing can remove you from the promise of God, made before the foundation of the world for your eternal glory.

Listen to the epistle of Jude, the last two verses. This is really a benediction: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy”—Why will you arrive in eternal glory? Because He is able to keep you from stumbling, He is able “to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy”—“to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

People have asked me through the years occasionally, “Don’t you worry about what the devil can do to you?” Never had such a thought in my entire life because ultimately I know what he can do to me if my life isn’t what it should be. I know he can render me useless, and he can take away my joy and all of that. But I know what he’ll never do to me, and that is separate me from final salvation. That allows me to go to battle without fear. Nothing can separate me from the love of Christ fulfilled in final glory.

Well, the last part of the armor is “the sword of the Spirit,” and that’s explanatory by the very words of Scripture: “which is the word of God.” It’s the term *machaira*; it’s that small dagger. It’s not the long broadsword, it’s the small dagger.

What is that saying to us? It’s “the word of God.” It’s not *logos*, it’s *rhēma*, which—*logos* means a general means, *rhēma* means a specific statement. And listen, this is important. You defend yourself, first of all, with the Word of God when you know the specific statement that counters the temptation. Did you get that? When Jesus was tempted by the devil—three times the devil tempted Him, every time He answered with what? Scripture. And every answer was specific.

It’s not enough to have a Bible; it’s not enough to own a Bible; it’s not enough to have some general notions about what’s in the Bible. When Satan comes at you, you need to know the specific truth of Scripture that counters that temptation, or you will be a victim because he’ll strike you in your ignorance.

This is talking about a small dagger that was used in very intimate fighting. It’s the very term that was used of the sword that Peter used to cut off the ear of Malchus in the garden in Matthew 26. It’s the same word that was used of the blade that murdered James, the brother of John. It’s the same sword, or dagger, used to slay the martyrs of Hebrews 11. It’s very precise; and we have to wield it that way.

It is “of the Spirit,” meaning it is originated from the Spirit—both that, and it is spiritual. It’s a spiritual

weapon. Nothing is more powerful, “sharper than any [other] sword.” So it is the weapon that is powerful in the kingdom of darkness in the spiritual realm. But it originates from the Holy Spirit, who’s the author of Scripture; that’s what that phrase means.

So we have in our hands the perfect, the perfect weapon, both to use defensively like Jesus did when He quoted Scripture and Satan left Him, and to use offensively. We use it because people are born again by the Word, the use of the sword. They are sanctified by the use of the sword, John 17:17. They are comforted by the use of the sword. They are instructed by the use of the sword. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

So mark it down that the Bible is only as useful to you as you know the contents in it, so that you know what the biblical answer is to the temptation. You can parry Satan’s daggers and arrows, and you can also use the Word offensively because of its immense power to save and sanctify.

So to wrap it up let’s go back to verse 10: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power,” or “the strength of His might.” I want to end where we began, but I want to end by something I hope you’ll think of as really the main point.

The whole armor of God is actually a picture of Jesus Christ. Christ is the truth; He is righteousness. He is our righteousness; He is our peace. His faithfulness to the Father makes possible our faith. He is the one who guarantees our final salvation, and He is the living Word of God. What this means is that when you were saved, you received Christ. We use that language, don’t we? You received Christ. When you received Christ, you received the truth, righteousness, peace, faith, final salvation, and divine truth. You received the armor.

That’s why Paul told the Romans what to do with the armor in Romans 13. In verse 11 he said, “Wake up.” In verse 12 of Romans 13 he said, “Cast off sin,” and then he said, “Put on the armor of light.” Romans 13:12, “Put on the armor of light.” What does that mean? He then said, “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Putting on the armor and putting on Christ is the same thing, the same thing. You have Christ. You have Christ. He is everything you need. Put on Christ, and you will vanquish the enemy and stand firm.

Father, we thank You for the time to be together and consider Your divine truth. We thank You for the gift of Christ, not only in His death and resurrection, but in His presence; for the very armor that we need is Christ. What an amazing reality. And now we think about His death for us, His resurrection, which has provided for us reconciliation, redemption, and salvation. And we have received not only the salvation of Christ, but Christ Himself. May we put Him on, wear Him, His person. May we be inextinguishable in terms of all of Satan’s flaming arrows. May we be inexhaustibly faithful to fight the battle, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

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