



“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.”

**EPHESIANS 6:13**

**Sermon Series by Brent Keener  
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It is very likely that Paul was in prison as he penned his letter to the Ephesians. He may have even been looking at the armor of a Roman soldier standing guard over him as he wrote his words. Paul gives us instruction concerning the spiritual armor we need to put on because our warfare is spiritual. “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.” **Eph 6:12-13**. Unlike the Roman soldier, we don’t fight against a physical, earthly enemy. We fight against Satan and his forces of evil. Alone we are defenseless, but we can stand and fight putting on the armor of God.

**II Cor. 10:3** – “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh”.

## THE BELT OF TRUTH EPHESIANS 6:14



Literally "having girded your loins with truth" what is it Paul is talking about? Gird is the Greek word "*peridzone*" and means "to fasten on one's belt (literally or figuratively)". The practice of "girding loins" was common for most people in that time, not just Roman soldiers. Girding your loins meant you would draw up your tunic (robe like garment) above your legs and tie it off around your waste; this is where the "belt" comes in. For the soldier, the belt also helps keep the breastplate in place and holds the sword.

Soldiers and everyday people tied up their garments so they wouldn't get them caught on something or trip over the garment itself. Girding yourself then, helped prevent you from falling down and gave you more efficient mobility.

With this understanding it is interesting to think that Paul's point is that we need to "tie up" anything that may cause us to fall down. Knowing truth keeps us from falling. We should always be able to efficiently move with truth, in our walk with God. Keep in mind though, that while we are talking about physical "things", like a belt, the warfare is spiritual. We're talking about a movement of our mind – where the warfare is.

**I Ptr. 1:13** – "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Peter reiterates the point concerning the battle being in our minds as he stresses that we need to prepare our minds for action and keep sober in spirit.

The word for "prepare" in the Greek is "*anazonnumi*" and means "to gird up". Some translations even read "gird your minds". For example the KJV says "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ".

The point is our minds are to be spiritually mobile and girded up so that we can stand firm against the forces of evil. And what do we gird our minds with? Truth.

**John 18:37-38** – "Therefore Pilate said to Him, 'So You are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, 'I find no guilt in Him.'".

The truth for Pilate was that Jesus was innocent. But for us, what is truth? Postmodernism is the idea that there is no truth only interpretations. Truth is important. Not just metaphysical truth; such as water freezing at thirty two degrees Fahrenheit, but spiritual truth such as the understanding that God *is*. “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”, **Heb. 11:6**.

**Jn. 8:31-32** – “Jesus said that those who continued in His word are truly disciples of His and that we would know the truth, and the truth will make us free”. Truth is the commands of Jesus.

**Jn. 17:17** – “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” Jesus even more clearly defines truth for us - the word of God is truth! The Bible, inspired by Him, revealed to us, is truth.

**II Tim. 2:3-4** – “Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.”

Imploring Timothy to be a “good soldier of Christ Jesus” Paul touches on the “warfare” concept. Mentioning an athlete and a farmer in **verses 5 & 6** he illustrates that being a Christian takes work and effort.

**II Tim. 2:15** – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”

What we need to be a “workman” at is “handling accurately the word of truth”. Notice that Paul writes here that diligence is involved. We need to be diligent in knowing what truth is which is only defined as that which is from God.

**Gen. 3:3-4** – Satan’s lie here did contain some truth. Not dying was the lie but being like God in knowing good and evil was true – little did they know the consequence of that.

The point is that Satan’s strategies of warfare include selling us lies that look like truth. When we don’t continue to move our mind so that it is focused on God and the spiritual things He has given us we run the risk of being entangled in the influences of evil.

**Rom. 1:18-25** – (**vr. 18**) “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...” (**vr. 25**) “For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

Paul tells us that there are those who “suppress the truth” and exchange it for “a lie”. Our minds need to be girded with truth.

**I Jn. 1:6-8** – “If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

How are you walking? We do not want to exchange the truth of God for a lie and end up stumbling or tripping. We must practice the spiritual things God has given us...this is a continual walk with Jesus. Gird your minds with the belt of truth in that walk.

## THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS EPHESIANS 6:14



The Romans designed the breastplate to provide ease of movement with strong protection. The breastplate was attached to the belt with leather thongs and rings to help keep it in place. The belt had to be put on first, then the breastplate. The breastplate protected the soldier's chest area which, of course, is where the vital organs are located.

### 1) Know God's Righteousness

When we arm ourselves with the righteousness of God our vitality is protected. To be righteous means to be right with God. The root of the word righteousness is "*dikaios*" and means "equitable (in character or act); by implication innocent, holy: just, right". To be righteous means we are right, holy and innocent. How do we know what is right? We have the belt of truth. To come to know God's truth is how we come to know righteousness. Through God's truth, the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed.

**Rom 1:16-17** – "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "but the righteous man shall live by faith".

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel because in it the righteousness of God is revealed. As we come to know the gospel, we know more how to present ourselves in righteousness to God.

**Rom 6:13-19** – "(**vr. 13**) and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...(vr. 16) Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?...(**vr. 18**) and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness...(vr. 19) I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification".

Righteousness is so simple and so complex. It is simple in that it means being right and it is so complex in what it is that God does for us in making us right. The simplicity and complexity of salvation is simply that we need to know Christ and obey Him. The complexity is in who Christ is and what He did in dying for the forgiveness of our sin. The simplicity of baptism is all we have to do is get immersed into water. The complexity is that baptism is equated with His death and is where we touch His redeeming blood which cleanses our sin and makes us righteous.

## 2) We Must Be Trained In Righteousness

**II Tim. 3:16** – “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness”.

Look at what Paul said. Scripture is “for training in righteousness”. Remember this is a warfare and we need to be trained...even in righteousness. We need to be trained on how to put on and use the breastplate of righteousness.

**Heb 12:7-11** – (vr. 11) “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness”.

Training takes discipline, discipline from God mind you. Disregard the faults of our earthly fathers and understand that God’s discipline is for our good. No discipline is fun, in fact it’s “sorrowful”. Discipline is uncomfortable, not just because it is not fun but God’s discipline trains us in righteousness and we, by nature are not righteous. So to get disciplined in something that we are not - makes us uncomfortable. Remember Paul’s illustration in **Rom. 6** for us to be “slaves to righteousness”? As a child of God, we have a new boss. We don’t work for ourselves, we don’t work for the world, we work for God. Oh but that’s hard. Is it an accident that the Hebrew writer uses a father’s discipline to illustrate his point? As children whine “I don’t want to clean my room...it’s too hard” do we whine? Then when a child does clean their room is it ever to the same standard as mom’s? Is our “cleanliness” ever to God’s standard? No. Is it always easy? No. But that is no excuse for us not to be disciplined by God as we work for Him.

## 3) Righteousness Sustains Our Vitality.

As the soldier’s breastplate protected his vital organs so too the breastplate of righteousness protects our vitality in the warfare. As the breastplate protects organs like the lungs and the heart which give us life, righteousness protects us and gives us life.

**I Jn. 2:29** – “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him”.

**I Jn. 3:7** – “Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous”.

To practice righteousness reiterates the points that we need to know God’s righteousness and be trained by it. But righteousness isn’t of ourselves it comes from Him and as we continue in it we see how it sustains us in our life. When the heart changes for God it results in righteousness.

Consider Paul's words in:

**Rom 10:10** – “for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation”.

And Jesus' words in:

**Mt. 6:20-24** – (vr.21) "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also".

**Mt. 15:17-20** – (vr.18) "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man”.

When we are wearing the breastplate of righteousness our “vital organs” are protected by it. The breastplate of righteousness protects our vitality because it changes our focus in life. Our heart is different because it is not focused on the treasures of the world but on the treasures that are in God's righteousness. What comes out of us, in the things that we say and the things that we do, reflects the righteousness of God. When we go into battle with Satan we are confident that with whatever blows he may strike us, the vitality of our spiritual breath and eternal life come from our almighty Creator. In this we are sustained because we do not live for the physical but we live for the spiritual, in the righteousness of God!

#### **4) He Makes Us Righteous**

A great banquet that you would never have the money to pay for. Righteousness is that banquet, you are invited and you don't have to pay.

**II Cor. 5:21** – “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”.

Jesus pays. No one is righteous...no one, **Rom. 3:10**. For you, Jesus says to the Father “let them come to the banquet, I'll pay the price”. As we suit up with our breastplate, as we clothe ourselves with Christ, as we put Him on, we put on the righteousness of God.

### **THE SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE EPHESIANS 6:15**



The verse literally reads “and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace”. Shod is the Greek word “*hupodeo*” and means “to bind under one's feet, that is, put on shoes or sandals: - bind on”. Ladies will be happy to know that here is a verse that talks about the importance of having good shoes. To the Roman soldier it was a good pair of sandals to protect his feet from the stony road. To us it is a pair of dress shoes, or sneakers or boots; whatever the shoe to help us carry out the activity we're doing. As shoes do for our feet physically, the right “shoes” spiritually help us move in our walk with God.

**Gal 5:16-25** – “(vr. 16) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (vr.25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”

The warfare is spiritual...our walk is spiritual. The right shoes help us do whatever physical activity we're doing. Shoes protect us, make us comfortable and assist us in whatever we are doing. Having the right spiritual mindset does the same for us in our warfare.

Paul says there are three things that make up what we are shodding our feet with; preparation, the gospel and peace.

**1) Preparation** – is to be prepared to make ready.

**II Tim. 4:1-2** – “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

**I Pt. 3:15** – “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence”.

Be ready to share the word of God when it seems popular and when it doesn't. Be ready to use it to “reprove, rebuke, exhort and instruct”.

**Col. 3:2** – “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth”.

Think of it this way, the bride doesn't get all dressed up to look her best because she *hopes* to get married. She gets dressed up *because* she is getting married. She doesn't put all kinds of preparation into a day she thinks will happen. She puts preparation in because she knows it will happen. Because of the relationship that has already been established. The same is true for us. We want to look our best for Christ. We want our hearts to be pure and our thoughts to be clean. We want to be prepared for Him because of the relationship we have with Him.

**2) The Gospel** – the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Rom 1:16** – “ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek”.

**I Cor. 9:20-23** – (vr.23)”And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it”.

Paul lived a sacrificial life for the sake of the gospel. As Christ gave Himself up for us, so we too should give ourselves up for others. Why? What is our motivation? So that we may become a “fellow partaker of it”. When we prepare our feet with the gospel we can't help but move in a direction closer to Jesus!

### 3) Peace

**Philippians 4:4-7** – How to have peace.

a) Rejoice – **Jn. 16:33** – “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” Rejoice, knowing that Christ has overcome the world, and share that with others. Joy is different than being happy. Happiness is an emotion that goes “up and down”. Joy is a “mindset” that gives us peace. Peace doesn’t come from the world. It comes from Jesus, who has overcome the world. He has allowed us to get close to Him. Peace is not quietness in the world, it is us in Him, without sin.

b) Be anxious for nothing...remove the stress. **Mt. 6:34** – Jesus told us not to worry about tomorrow, if we disobey what Jesus said isn’t that sin? To stress over life is sinful, at least to stress for tomorrow and beyond is sinful. I know that sounds harsh but maybe it needs too. Israel sinned before God and it separated them from Him. Our sin separates us from God, **Is. 59:1-2**. If worry is sin and sin separates, then worry separates us from God. Whatever the sin, it needs to be removed. We often want the hurt of sin to stop but don’t look to get rid of the sin. We need to have peace *with* God before we can have the peace *of* God. The point is that anxiety affects our relationship with God.

**Rom 5:1-6** – “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand....For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

**Col. 1:20** – “and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven”.

If nothing else, allow what Christ did for us is to be a “stress reliever”. Allow the assurance of your salvation to be a source of joy in your life.

c) Pray and let your request be known! **Mt. 6:6; 7:7; 21:22, Lk. 18:1, I Thess. 5:17, I Peter 3:12**. Supplication is the Greek word “Deesis” and means “need, indigence, want, privation, penury; a seeking, asking, entreating”. Prayer focuses our mindset on God. It brings our attention back into the relationship. It is like looking at someone when talking to them.

d) Be thankful in word and deed, **Col. 3:15-17**. We become more obedient in our service when we become more thankful for what we have been given.

Part of the armor we move through life with is in the preparation we have in our relationship with God. We move with the ready knowledge to share His gospel and we move with the peace that Christ gives, which it is beyond “all comprehension” and guards our hearts and minds. Preparation, the Gospel, and Peace...all on your feet. This is how you move!

## THE SHIELD OF FAITH EPHESIANS 6:16



The verse reads “in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one”.

The history of the Roman shield is that soldiers needed protection from spears swung at them in combat but also flaming arrows that would be fired on them. The Roman shield was larger and heavier than the smaller circular shields of the Greeks. As warfare at the time consisted of flaming arrows being shot at the enemy, they developed these shields to be large enough for the soldier to easily hide behind. They coated the shields in leather and soaked them in water. They would gather in a group putting their shields above their heads to protect themselves and extinguish the flaming arrows shot at them, thus the use of Paul’s imagery.

**Rom. 10:17** – “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

Faith is the foundation of our existence. What we believe in is what sustains preserves and carries us through life. What we believe in is what defines who we are and what we do, in all aspects of life. Specifically, our faith in Christ is the core of our being. It gives us hope and meaning. If we are wrong then we are a pitiful bunch of people, **I Cor. 15:19**. But if we are right, then we understand the great blessings we have and the blessings to come.

To understand the importance of our faith, what it is we believe in, consider our faith and the faith of an atheist. You say “but the atheist has no faith”. Oh, but he does. His faith though, is not like ours. His faith is that, “there is no God”. That is what he believes in. Now to discuss the scripture with him is pointless, because he does not believe in the scripture. His faith is “on a different field”. Common ground needs to be found to even begin to discuss each faith. Evidence is given from both sides; scientific, historical, archeological, and other arguments are made according to how each one believes. Ultimately though, it is our personal conviction on the evidence and arguments of such a debate that determine what our faith is.

Do you, or do you not, believe there is a God? Do you believe the Bible is how He has revealed Himself to us? We go on with such questions building on the foundation of our faith. Yes, I believe there is a God. Yes, I believe the Bible is His inspired word, and so on. We convict our self on the answers to these questions and it shapes who we are. Hopefully then, we see the importance of what it is we believe.

**John 6:64-69** – The context for this is in the preceding **verses, 48-63**. Jesus teaches that those following Him must be willing to eat His flesh and drink His blood. This was a difficult thing for them to grasp and understand, **vr. 60**. This challenged their belief in Him and caused some to withdraw from Him. Jesus challenges the 12 on their belief in the things He was saying, asking them if they were going to leave Him too. Peter answers that it is Jesus who has the words of eternal life and they have “believed and come to know” that He was the Holy One of God, **vr. 69**. Notice the affirmation of faith! They not only believed, but know.

**Hebrews 11:1**, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”. Sometimes our definition of belief carries a hint of doubt. We say “I believe”...meaning I’m pretty sure, but not totally. In **John 6:69**, the apostle’s belief meant they knew. The Hebrew writer does not define faith with words that leave room for doubt. They are translated for us accordingly: “assurance, conviction” (NAS, RSV), “substance, evidence” (KJV, NKJ), “sure, certain” (NIV).

**Mark 9:17-24**, Jesus is asked by a man to heal his possessed son. Jesus says all things are possible to those who believe. The man replies, “I do believe; help my unbelief”. What a humbling statement. Too often we don’t want to acknowledge that we may lack faith. We pray for our faith to increase but the real issue is we need our unbelief to go away. While the man answers in **verse 17-18**, that the disciples couldn’t cast the demon out. Jesus speaks to the crowd in **verse 19** – “O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you?”. Could it be that Jesus saw the faith of each individual and that their faith was weak. Could it have made a difference to have one or more of them believe that Jesus could heal the boy?

In **Mark 2**, Mark tells us about the paralytic man carried by four others. **Mark 2:5** “And Jesus seeing *their* faith said to the paralytic, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’” (Emp. Mine). If Roman soldiers can put up their shields to protect, not only themselves but each other than cannot our faith be used the same way?! If the faith of the paralytic man made a difference, as did the faith of the men who carried him, then can our faith work the same way? Can we not strengthen the faith of each other? Can we not help each other in our unbelief? I’m not saying your faith covers others, but our faith prompts us to get into the trenches of battle with each other. So that where my shield does not cover, you may help me. And where your shield may not cover, I may help you. I believe, help my unbelief.

**Lk. 17:5-6** – The apostles said to Jesus, "Increase our faith!". Jesus goes on to explain that if they have the faith of a mustard seed they can tell the mulberry tree to be uprooted and planted in the sea and it would obey them.

Often times it’s not the size of our faith that is the issue, it’s the size of our unbelief. Our faith can be small and we can still do great things.

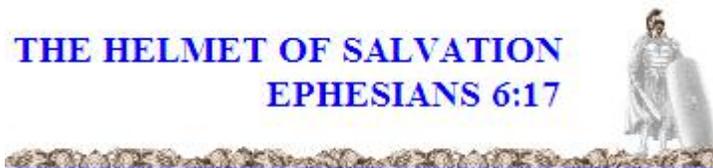
**Mt. 21:21** – “And Jesus answered and said to them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt, you shall not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall happen.”

**James 1:5-7** – “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...But let him ask in faith without any doubting...For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord”

It is not the size of your faith that limits what God does in your life, it is your doubt. Notice I didn’t say God is limited...what he does is limited. Jesus told if we don’t doubt, not only will we get what we ask for, we’ll get more. James said if you doubt, don’t expect to get what you ask for. On one side we have faith, even if it’s small faith. On the other side we have doubt.

Too often our focus is spent on increasing our faith. When instead it should be on removing the doubt! Remove the doubt then work on increasing your faith. I'll think you'll find that removing doubt, by default, increases our faith. Concentrate on getting rid of "the unbelief" instead of the size of your faith. God has always done great things with those who have little faith. It's not the size of the faith that hinders, it is the doubt.

Doubt keeps us from raising our shield and even puts holes in our shield. Satan wants us to doubt, that is how his "flaming arrows" cause us damage. When we doubt God and His involvement in our lives we become more susceptible to an attack from the enemy. When a soldier is attacked the shield is the first thing he puts up. All the other pieces of armor go behind the shield. It is what we stand behind to be protected. Our shield isn't large because our faith is large. Our shield is large because we do not doubt. Our defense is that we know it is God who ultimately protects us. That is our faith. That is our shield.



Eph 6:17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The Romans had developed great helmets compared to other nations. While other nations had helmets of stuff like cloth and animal hides, the Roman's helmets had chinstraps, visors and were designed to cover not only the head but the neck. The soldier's helmet was lined with softened leather for comfort and fit and was made of bronze cast. Officer's helmets were made of iron, silver or gold alloy, depending on the rank and had a plume or soft brush on top. The Roman helmet was well designed to protect the soldier's head from various angles of attack.

As the soldier's helmet protects his head so our spiritual helmet protects our mind. After all it is there that our warfare takes place.

**II Cor. 10:3-5** – "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ".

The warfare is not according to flesh...it is in our mind. The weapons of our warfare are "divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" so that we can destroy "speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God". As the forces of evil battle to influence our mind, equipped with the armor of God, we combat these influences by having our mind dwell on what God has given us.

**Ph. 4:8** – “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”

One of the things God has given us is salvation. Having the helmet of salvation means that, while Satan may win some battles, we stay strong in our fight because we know God has won the war. Satan doesn't want the world to know that he has lost and will do whatever he can to keep people away from the knowledge of salvation. For those that come to know salvation, he will do whatever he can to keep them from the assurance of that salvation.

Without God – man is in sin. God gave the law of Moses so man could see sin. God gave the law of Christ so that man could be saved from sin. As this progression is seen through the dispensation of time so it is seen in the dispensation of our lives. Without God we are in sin. We come to knowledge of sin and a need for God. We come to Christ to receive salvation from sin.

**Rom. 7:21-25** – “I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”

**Rom. 8:1-7** – (**vr. 6**) “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace”.

**I Thess. 5:8** – “But 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”

The word "hope" as it is used in scripture often carries with it an understanding of certainty. The idea here is that we have salvation in Jesus and yet there are even more blessings coming! We look forward to His return and our transformation into glory. As certain as we are with our shield of faith there is no doubt under the helmet of Salvation.

The helmet of salvation enables us to look at the big picture in view of the warfare. If we do not have it on, Satan can cause us to get frustrated, loose focus, get discouraged, give up, and even quit. The helmet of salvation keeps us focused on our eternal reward. We live in a sinful world bombarded with sinful influence. Satan does not let up in the battle over our mind when we become a Christian. In fact, having lost us makes him want to hurt us all the more. When the warfare rages – no matter how severe the trial, no matter how bitter the sorrow, no matter how powerful the enemy may seem – we take comfort in our salvation. Our soul is worth something...Jesus set our worth by paying the price on the cross, giving us our salvation. Without Him we are drenched in sin, with Him we are drenched in His blood, saved from sin.

**Jn. 6:47-69** – In a realization of the great sacrifices needed to follow Jesus, some of His followers departed from Him. Jesus asked the twelve if they too were going to go away. Peter answers in **vr. 68**, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life". Salvation!

Peter's mindset was in the right place. I am going to do what is asked of me, I am not going to leave, I will persist because Jesus is my salvation. Because in His words are eternal life. No matter the sadness that may come our way during the battles of the warfare during the days of our life we stand resilient with a spiritual mindset, donning the helmet of salvation.

## THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT EPHESIANS 6:17



The verse reads “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”. The sword was the soldier's offensive weapon. Meant to severely cut up the enemy so that death would be their demise. Paul parallels this physical personal weapon for us spiritually as the sword of the spirit, the word of God.

**Mt. 4:1-11** – The Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. The sword of the Spirit; the word of God is so powerful it is what Jesus uses to combat Satan. Interestingly enough, it is so powerful, even Satan uses it as he quotes from it to Jesus in an effort to tempt Him. But Satan is no match for God in the flesh or the sword of the Spirit.

Notice Paul says the sword is the Spirit's. The Holy Spirit; part of the Godhead; present at creation exercising the power of His word by speaking life into existence. A soldier is proud of a weapon He makes himself but how much more of a weapon made by a far superior craftsman? Who can fashion, temper or sharpen like God? When we obtain a physical item made of superb quality it is a treasure to hold on too. To think that we can hold a physical item, the Bible we hold in our hand, made by the Spirit of God! The Spirit not only moved in man to produce and preserve these writings but is the Spirit that moved to produce the events written about. It is the Spirit that has given these words to read; to speak aloud; to write on our heart and our mind.

Jesus, God in the flesh, utilized this mighty weapon in warfare – He quoted scripture! We would do well to do the same. In the peaceful moments of life and in the heat of battle we keep the sword of the Spirit by our side; we hold it in our hand. Handling it, using it, becoming ever familiar with it. We lie down with it we rise up with it. Knowing it's divine and glorious power we hold it with reverence and humility combating the forces of our opponent.

**Mt. 10:34** – “Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

Make no mistake, a sword is a weapon of war, the effects of which can set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother. It can cause a man's enemies to be the members of his own household (**Mt. 10:35-36**). It is for battling the spirits of man and the spirits that influence man. There is no weapon so efficient, so piercing, so penetrating, so able to divide. It can divide nations, families and cause us to feel God's divine power in our inner most being.

Yes make no mistake, a sword is a weapon of war. But the sword of the Spirit does not glorify war. It glorifies Christ and His victory in the war. It illuminates hope as the battles rage until Jesus again shall appear victorious over Satan. It illuminates love over hate, truth of error and righteousness over sin.

The Spirit's sword does not leave paper cuts. It will cut to our destruction or to our glory. The effects of the Spirit's sword prompt us to either deny men or deny God. Drenching from its blade comes the revelation of who Jesus Christ is. The Spirit's sword brings to us the meaning of our existence and the call to deny ourselves. As we decide to take up the sword we decide to take up our cross and follow Jesus. To accept the call of our heavenly Father. To rise and be found worthy of that calling. The sword of the Spirit is a conquering weapon wondrous in all its ways.

**Heb 4:12** – “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The sword is a two-edged sword and it is the Spirit that gives it those edges. The Spirit is the sharpening stone, the grinding wheel that makes the edges so sharp. It is the Spirit that moves on our minds as we hear the word of God. He is the cut, He is the piercing, He is the one who moves in the heavenly realm calling us to listen to the word of our supreme creator and to allow ourselves to be so moved by its power.

It is the Spirit's edge that brings to a child's remembrance a story they heard in Sunday school class. It is the Spirit's edge that brings new meaning to a verse you have read a hundred times before. It is the Spirit's edge that puts you on your knees in humility before God saying “I sinned again Father, please forgive me”. It is the Spirit's edge that brings you confidence to enter into battle once again.

This same sword which pierced us, we now use. Do you remember when you were pierced by it? Do you remember when it showed you how lost you were? How much you needed God? Do you remember being so moved by it that you couldn't help but be obedient? Do you remember being so cut by it that you had to change something in your behavior or go out do something for the sake of the gospel?

This same sword which pierced us, we now use. The sword of the Spirit is a great killer and a great giver of life. The word of God is the true and sound doctrine of our lives. We use it with one another, Sunday after Sunday, day after day, to preach, teach, reprove, rebuke, exhort, instruct and encourage one another. It is the weapon we have in common. A sword that slays sin and cuts loose what sin entangles. It defends righteousness, justice and that which is holy. A weapon that God holds in His hand and speaks from His lips; He has give to you to hold in your hand and speak from your lips.

**II Sam. 12:7-9** – “Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus *says* the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. 'I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! 'Why have you *despised the word of the LORD* by doing evil in His sight?" (emph. Mine)

Understand there is no compromise in following the word of God, the sword of the Spirit. You cannot follow yourself and follow God. David understood he had sinned. This great and mighty military leader missed using the one weapon that would enable him to overcome sin and the entanglements of it. By not taking this weapon he “despised the word of the Lord”. We don’t win battles by accident; we win by knowing how to accurately and responsibly handle the word of God. It is not a sword that you put in your arsenal for later. It is not a sword that is to be kept in a sheath. It is a sword that is to be taken and used.

What soldier enlists and gets the chance...gets the command to handle the greatest weapon in his commander’s army? And yet here you are commanded to take hold of the greatest weapon ever known! Here you are armed with the sword of the Holy Spirit of God. Here you are as He says “take this”. He commands us to take His weapon...His word. His mighty powerful word. Creation was accomplished with it, miracles were done with it, salvation is brought by it and He tells us to “take it”! It can overcome our frustration. It can overcome our hesitation. It can overcome anxiety, hopelessness, depression, guilt, shame, anger, frustration, selfishness, it is the word of God and it can overcome! It is the power that created life, it is the power that raised Jesus from the dead it is the power that conquers death and He says “take it”!

We are not to be selfish in our life’s desires or careless in our understanding. Take the sword. It is the word of God; His righteous power and He beckons you to put it in your hand. It is so big that you have to use two hands to pick it up. Your arms may get tired from swinging it, your mind may grow weary from concentrating on it – no matter – take the sword!

Through life’s battles we fight with it, all the way to heaven we carry it, heeding our instruction “take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God”. It is the voice of God Almighty that gives the command “TAKE THE SWORD!”