



*Every Spiritual
Blessing*

EPHESIANS - WEEK 17
Spiritual Warfare (Part 2)

7. TITHING FOR FESTIVALS (DEUT.
14:22)

By God's design, the Israelites were a celebratory people. Part of their tithe went to preparing for festivals and celebrations!

8. TITHING FOR ORPHANS, WIDOWS, AND SOJOURNERS (DEUT. 14:28–29)

The first tithe taken annually was used to support the Levites. Every third year a special tithe was taken for the distinct purpose of supporting orphans, widows, and strangers. Baked into God's law was a special provision to take care of

the most vulnerable citizens. Interestingly enough, this included caring for people from outside of their community.

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Here

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Erick Cobb and Covenant Grace Church.

Closing prayer

INTRODUCTION

This is one of the primary tactics of the enemy. Since he cannot harm your salvation, **since the enemy cannot take away your salvation, he counters by attacking your assurance.** “How can you be a Christian if...? No Christian would ever think such a thing, do such a thing, act in such a way, etc.” All these little darts of doubt that he sends your way to attack your assurance, your security, your peace.

James Boice lists three circumstances in which

the enemy is likely to attack:

1. When the Christian is newly converted.
2. When the Christian is afflicted.
3. When the Christian has achieved some notable success.

Regardless of the circumstances, Paul tells us how to wage spiritual war on all fronts.

Ephesians 6:13-14

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

So, take up the whole armor, not part of it, not some here and some there, not this piece on Mondays, this piece on Fridays, put it all on.

**1. The Enemy Wants to Make Us
Waiver**

THAT IS THE GOAL OF HIS ATTACK

To waiver in your convictions, to waiver in your assurance, to waiver in your faith.

We see here that some days will be more evil than others. Some days the spiritual war will be waged with more intensity by the enemy. And his goal is to get you to waiver, rather than stand firm.

We've all had those days where we feel less than spiritual giants. And you find yourself in a situation where an opportunity opens up for you

to say something about the gospel, or help someone or do something, but you don't because the enemy has you wavering. You don't feel that you're a strong enough Christian at the time. "You'd be a hypocrite if you spoke up. You're be a hypocrite if you did that," he tells us.

¹⁴ Stand therefore,

So, we stand firm, we stand therefore, but the question is, "What do we stand in?"

having fastened on the belt of truth,

1. Belt of Truth

The truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ boils down to this central message — humanity is lost without Jesus Christ. Humanity is in darkness without Jesus Christ. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all, but human sinfulness has blinded us to the light of God's truth. And that truth is... There is no other belief system or philosophy or idea or person who can save your soul from the just punishment that you deserve

for your sins against Almighty God. The only person who can save you from the wrath to come is Jesus Christ. That is the belt of truth.

John 14:6

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

If you don't put that truth on, the other truths we find in Scripture won't do you a lot of good. The

rest of the armor fits over this truth.

- The belt was more like a leather girdle.

The point is, until you get that truth you may not even be a Christian. Because the first place we stand in this spiritual battle is in the truth of the gospel — the belt of truth.

I love what Francis Schaeffer said once. He said, “There’s only one reason to become a Christian

and that's because Christianity is true." So, the belt of truth is mean truth in the broader sense, but specifically we must stand in the truth of the gospel. Because until you're standing in the truth of the gospel you're standing in a lie.

And it's so important to realize we stand there in spiritual battle, because...

2. There Is One Who Won the Spiritual Battle for Us

JESUS WON THE BATTLE IN THE GOSPEL

Paul describes what God did for those who trust in Christ and His death on the cross for them, who stand in this truth.

Colossians 2:14-15

¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

When Christ died for us, He disarmed Satan by stripping away one of his most potent devices — accusation, that we are as guilty of rebellion as he is and should be sent to hell with him. That we have no right to even call ourselves Christians, because of... then he'll list the accusations.

But according to this verse, he can no longer accuse us because our sins have been paid for, the debt of our sins has been canceled. All those who put their trust in Christ will never perish.

Satan cannot separate us from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:37–39).

Again, this is one of the primary tactics of Satan — accusation.

Thomas Brooks lists different ways the enemy attacks the Christian.

By causing saints to remember their sins more than their Savior, yes, even to forget and neglect their Savior: For remedies, consider that

1) though Jesus Christ has not freed believers from sin's presence, He has freed them from its damnatory power. (Brooks, Thomas. *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*)

In other words, we'll never be perfectly free from sin in this life, but we're completely free from the damnation of sin, the penalty of sin and the condemnation of the enemy's accusations. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."

The reason Paul begins this list with the belt of truth is because that foundation is so important. It's vital to understand where you stand with God because of Christ. And because of Christ you stand accepted in the Beloved.

Now, after knowing we're secure in Christ, we can address our behavior.

2. Breastplate of Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14

and having put on the breastplate of

righteousness,

I think Paul's giving practical application here, so I think the best way to understand "the breastplate of righteousness" is in the sense of how you live your life. Are you living the right way? Are you walking in obedience to the Scriptures as far as you understand them? Are you walking in the same manner that Jesus walked?

1 John 3:16-18

¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Because Thomas Brooks points out the opposite extreme in the enemy's attack is...

By causing saints to draw false inferences from the blessed and glorious things that Christ has done: For remedies, consider that

1) it is as needful to dwell as much upon scriptures that state Christian duty as upon those that speak of the glorious things that Christ has done for us

2) the glorious things that Christ has done and is now doing for us should be our strongest motives and encouragements for the performance of our duties

3) other precious souls who have rested on

Christ's work have been very active and lively in religious duties. (Brooks, Thomas. *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*)

- Jim Elliot quote

3. Gospel Shoes

Ephesians 6:15-17

¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Because you have peace with God through the gospel you are ready to share with others how God brings this peace through the gospel. The gospel makes us ready. Again, knowing that we operate from this place of total acceptance and great security makes us ready to share the gospel.

- The gospel is the power of God.

4. Shield of Faith

¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

The primary way we overcome the attacks of the enemy is by faith, by trusting what God has said as opposed to what the enemy is saying. We use the Word of God the same way Jesus used the Word of God to do spiritual battle with the enemy when He was in the desert. Jesus countered every single attack of the enemy with Scripture.

Our faith in what God says extinguishes the darts of the enemy.

1 Peter 1:5 King James Version (KJV)

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

“The power of God is that shoulder on which Christ carries his sheep home, rejoicing all the way he goes.” (Luke xv 5)

Luke 15:5

⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

5. Helmet of Salvation

6. The Word of God

¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation,

Because you have put on the belt of truth, you have the helmet of salvation.

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

3. | Now We Can Fight Through His Victory

THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS YOU CAN STAND FIRM

Take the tools that Christ has won for you — your salvation, the Word of God you believed when you heard the gospel, the Holy Spirit who brought light and life to your soul when you believed in Christ. Now, because you have these things that Christ has won for you — salvation, the Bible, the Holy Spirit — pray.

Then he lists three prayer requests. Are you praying for any of these things in your prayer time?

- pray for the saints who are daily in this spiritual battle where the enemy is trying to gain a foothold through one of our flaws, such as anger or bitterness, etc., something that he can use to accuse us and attack our assurance.
- pray for preachers to have the right words to explain things clearly
- pray for preachers to speak boldly

2 Corinthians 2:11

**¹¹ so that we would not be outwitted by Satan;
for we are not ignorant of his designs.**

He has designs on us to discourage us.

He has designs on us to accuse us.

He has designs on us to tempt us.

He has designs on us to deceive us.

He has designs on us to confuse us.

But... we **can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one** by putting on the full armor of God.