

THE TOOLS OF WAR

The Battle Is Real, Even If It Can't Be Seen With Your Eyes

THE PASSAGE

Ephesians 6:10-20; The Whole Armour of God

1) Belt of Truth —

- The enemy is the “father of lies” (John 8:44). Jesus gives us the truth. By believing his truth and battling lies, we are waging spiritual warfare.

2) Breastplate of Righteousness —

- Jesus was tempted in every way, and we will be too. Satan’s goal is for us to take the bait of sin to draw us away from God, but we are called to deny sin and be righteous as Jesus was, to draw closer to God (Hebrews. 4:14–16).

3) The Gospel of Peace —

- The good news of the person and work of Jesus is the most powerful weapon we have. Use it for yourself and share it with others.

4) Shield of Faith —

- Faith is the shield that protects from Satan’s “flaming darts” (Ephesians. 6:16). (a soldier dipping his shield in water to extinguish the flaming arrow)

5) The Helmet of Salvation —

- The helmet of salvation represents our hope. We must filter all of our current realities through that hope or confident expectation of rescue and reconciliation for eternity.

6) The sword of the Spirit (Scripture)

- The Bible is like a sword protecting us from attacks of the liar and false preachers.

7) Prayer —

- In every field of combat, communication is key. Pray offensively about everything and anything (v. 18). Our battle with temptation is a joint venture with God.

QUESTIONS / THOUGHTS AND SCRIPTURE FOR FURTHER STUDY

When it comes to the demonic, people fall into two errors—not wanting to talk about it at all, or not wanting to talk about anything else. As C. S. Lewis said, “Humanity falls into two equal and opposite errors concerning the Devil. Either they take him altogether too seriously or they do not take him seriously enough.” So we can’t just pretend that demons aren’t real. But we also shouldn’t attribute every inconvenient circumstance—a dead car battery, a traffic jam, a price increase at KFC—to spiritual warfare.

The question is: how should we combat the demonic? If Satan is real—prowling around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour—what can Christians do about it? Listen to what Jesus says in Luke 10:19-20: ***“Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”***

In one breath, Jesus avoids both modern errors: he acknowledges the reality of spiritual enemies, but reminds us not to be obsessed with them. Jesus consistently directs people away from preoccupation with the demonic. He took on his fair share of demons, but he never tells us to go out demon hunting. Instead, he says to “rejoice that our names are written in heaven.”

Your Primary Weapon

The way to engage the demonic is by focusing on the gospel, the good news that our names are written in heaven. Paul says this in another way in Ephesians 6, talking about the “armour of God” that protects us from demonic forces. The gospel should shield our thinking (helmet of salvation), the gospel enables us to believe God’s promises (shield of faith and belt of truth), and the gospel should cause us to preach the good news to others (feet covered). Summed up? Have faith in the gospel; be covered by the gospel; saturate yourself in the gospel. Because when you are covered by the gospel, Satan can’t touch you.

We can’t engage the demonic by finding the “regional demon” in our area and going toe-to-toe with him. Jesus doesn’t want us playing those sorts of games. Instead, he wants us to focus on something that is stronger than any demon, stronger than Satan himself. Remember the parable Jesus tells in Matthew 12 about a demon being thrown out of a man’s house, but then coming back sevenfold? He said, “The last state of that man was worse than the first” (Matt. 12:45). If he wanted to keep the demonic out, he needed a stronger resident, someone the demon couldn’t take over. If you want to fight the demonic, don’t focus on the demons at all; just let Jesus be large in your life.

Charles Spurgeon said, “The preaching of Christ is the whip that flogs the Devil.” How do you get the Devil out of your home? Out of your church? Out of your life? Preach Christ. Focus on the only one with the power to actually do Satan harm.

Your Primary Ally

Is Satan filling your mind with discouraging thoughts? “You’re a failure; you’ll never be used by God.” “You think with your past God still cares about you?” Don’t listen. Instead, hear the gospel that says, “I have ransomed you, I have made you my own, I have given you a future and a hope.”

Is Satan afflicting you? Because of the gospel he cannot hurt you. Because of Christ, you’ll walk right over scorpions and serpents, and God will overturn all of his evil plans for good. Does the daily battle with Satan seem hopeless? The gospel says, “The Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

I often hear Christians say they are fighting for victory. But the reality is that Christians fight from victory, not for victory. Jesus has already won the victory on our behalf, disarming and defeating every power of darkness that threatens us. So when “this world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us.”

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