

OUR FIGHT - EPHESIANS 6

INTRODUCTION: You can learn a lot about a persons worldview by the metaphors they employ.

Life is a dance, Life is a gift, Life is a journey, Life is a box of chocolates

Well all of those have some truth in them, but when we look at the Apostle Paul we see the most common metaphor he employed was one of WAR. Life is a battle.

When Paul came to the end of his life, he said in

- **2 Timothy 4:7**, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
- And in **1 Timothy 6:12**, he tells Timothy, "**Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life to which you were called.**"
- **Concerning his own life of warfare, Paul said (1 Corinthians 9:26-7)**, "I do not run aimlessly, I do-not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified"
- **Concerning his ministry, he said**, "Though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**).

Make no mistake about it – to make peace with Christ is to make war with Satan.

THE WAR –

- There is a war going on today greater than any conflict of WWII.
- You have an enemy that is more crafty, devious and threatening that Communism or militant Islam.
- In this conflict the casualties do not merely lose an arm or an eye or an earthly life, but they lose everything – this battle is for the souls of man.

Until you believe this you will not pray as you ought, give as you ought, serve as you ought... you will be a self centered consumerist American Christian that goes to your grave like a baby whining for a bottle, while battles are being won and lost all around you.

Nowhere in the Bible does God call us to prepare for the warfare anymore than in our passage this morning.

CONTEXT – REGULAR LIFE: The Context of the passage gives you some indication of where the warfare takes place. He has just finished talking about the home and roles for the family and the workplace. It's in the everydayness of life that these battles occur

You say, Well Pastor I thought the battle was won on the cross? In a very real sense it was – but Satan has not yet *conceited defeat*. It is as if you and I live between D-Day and V.E. Day. That is when the battle of the bulge was fought. The enemy gets the most fierce when he is cornered.

- He starts breaking out the roadside bombs
- Engages in Guerilla Warfare
- He uses human shields
- And the rules of war go out the window.

John says it well in Revelation 12:12 (NASB95)

¹²“For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, ***knowing that he has only a short time.***”

So what are we to do?

Ephesians 6:10–13 (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ **Put on the whole armor of God,**

Notice, it's God's armor, but YOU are to put it on... it's HIS armor, YOUR responsibility.

11b. that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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.

This is HIS armor, this YOUR responsibility.

The IDEA OF ARMOR - So many times I've heard this preached, picturing Paul sitting chained to a Roman Guard, glancing down at his armor and making certain correlations. But that's unlikely for a couple of reasons –

1. It is very unlikely that a Roman Soldier would be dressed in full battle gear while guarding a prisoner.
2. Paul's attention was more likely given to the depictions of the Messiah in the book of Isaiah. Each piece of Armor is described in Isaiah as belonging to Messiah.

The 'full armour of God is Yahweh's own armour, which he and his Messiah have worn and which is now provided for his people as they engage in battle.

You are to wear the Armor of God.

Let's look at each piece of armor that God has provided for us -

1. The Belt of Truth

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth...

Isaiah tells us in 11:5 that Yahweh's Messiah wears a belt...

⁵Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

So the God with which we deal is not flippant, ruthless, or maniacal as the many pagan deities, NO – he wears the belt of righteousness, faithfulness... or as Paul puts it – truth.

The Greek word for Truth (Alethia) that Paul uses primarily refers to inward truth – truth of heart or sincerity as opposed to objective truth which we will find later in the sword of the Spirit.

The Soldier's Belt - *The Roman soldier always wore a tunic, an outer garment that served as his primary clothing. It was usually made of a large, square piece of material with holes cut out for the head and arms. Ordinarily it draped loosely over most of the soldier's body. Since the greatest part of ancient combat was hand-to-hand, a loose tunic was a potential hindrance and even a danger. Before a battle it was therefore carefully cinched up and tucked into the heavy leather apron type belt that both gathered the material of the tunic as well as served in much the same way a cup does today.*



Guys, would you play football without a cup? You won't very long.

What does it mean to gird your loins with truth? I believe that Paul is calling the soldier of Christ to a pure and sincere devotion of conscience to the Lord Jesus Christ.



Nothing hinders us from taking new ground for Christ more than a guilty conscience.

- You have recently gossiped about a co-worker?
- You have been griping about the current state of affairs in the World?
- You just told a filthy joke?
- You looked over a lady at lunch and had lust in your heart?

Are you likely going to follow that by a heartfelt witness for Christ?

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness

Ephesians 6:14b (ESV)

...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Paul's language here is drawn from Isaiah 59:17 ¹⁷He
put on righteousness like a breastplate.

The Soldier's Breastplate - *No Roman soldier would go into battle without his **breastplate**, a tough, sleeveless piece of armor that covered his full torso. It was often made of leather or heavy linen, onto which were sewn overlapping slices of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body. The purpose of that piece of armor is obvious—to protect the heart, lungs, intestines, and other vital organs.*



In ancient Jewish thinking, the heart represented the mind and the will and the bowels were considered the seat of emotions and feelings. It is at the vulnerable areas that Satan launches his deadliest weapons. He wants to affect your mind, your will, and your emotions.

You are to defend you mind, will and emotions with the breastplate of Righteousness...

The Bible refers to three “types” of righteousness -

- **Self Righteousness** – This is the worst form of sin. It is however the very thing that many clothe themselves in, thinking that there on religious accomplishments will gain God's reward.
- **Imputed Righteousness** – This is God's perfect righteousness that is imputed at conversation.
- **Practical Righteousness**

The **breastplate of righteousness** that we **put on** as spiritual armor against our adversary is the *practical* righteousness of a life lived in obedience to God's Word.

What does it mean to put on the Breastplate of Righteousness? Friend you employ the breastplate of righteousness by making a conscious commitment to bring your life into submission to that which Christ deems to be right or righteous.

ILLUSTRATION: *When tuning an instrument it is imperative that when a band leader or conductor calls for the band to strike an “A” chord that they all have the same “A” chord otherwise the sound would be Chaos. Around the year 1945 technology was a place where we could measure and determine exactly what defined an “A” Chord. The tool used for measuring sound determined that a “A” Chord represents 440 vibrations per minute. Not 430, not 450 – 440 = A. If everything is tuned properly it doesn’t matter what the instrument is – when it attempts to produce an “A” note it should vibrate 440 times per minute.*

As you live your life in concert with Christ. You will find that on a daily basis your life will fall out of tune. Putting on the breastplate of practical righteousness is tuning your life to CHRIST – the STANDARD.

3. The Shoes of Peace

Ephesians 6:15 (ESV)

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

The language has obviously been borrowed from Isaiah 52:7 (NASB95)

⁷How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”

Shoes of Peace seem odd upon a Warrior – but such is the nature of our battle. While we wage war on that which God wages war – Satan and Demons. We come as ambassadors of God to our fellow man. Calling them to make peace with Christ.



- **What an amazing statement - Isaiah 1:18-20 (NASB95)**

¹⁸“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

- **2 Corinthians 5:20 (NASB95)**

²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

The Roman Soldier’s Shoes - A good pair of boots allows the soldier to be ready to march, climb, fight, or do whatever else is necessary. Christ demands the same readiness of His people.

- **1 Peter 3:15 (NASB95)**

¹⁵... 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;

What does it mean to wear the shoes of peace? Friend this means that when you enter into your day – you are doing so on the alert for opportunities to bring people closer to Christ.

- When you sit down for lunch, you are thinking – where will my waitress spend eternity?
- When you enter an elevator you ask yourself, “why would the sovereign God of the universe allow me to be on an elevator with these people at this time?”

Those first three are pieces of armor that the soldiers carries at all times, the final three – the shield, the helmet and the sword...he takes up as he enters the intense battle.

4. The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV)

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

Roman Soldier's Shield - *The kind of shield Paul refers to here was the thureos,. This shield was about two and half feet wide and four and a half feet high, designed to protect the entire body of the soldier—who was considerably smaller than the average man today. The shield was made of a solid piece of wood and was covered with metal or heavy oiled leather. Often it was dipped in water to extinguish flaming arrows. They would normally stood side by side with their shields together, forming a huge phalanx extending as long as a mile or more. The archers stood behind this protective wall of shields and shot their arrows as they advanced against the enemy. Anyone who stood or crouched behind such shields was protected from the barrage of enemy arrows and spears.*



The spiritual **flaming missiles** against which believers need protection would seem primarily to be temptations. Satan continually bombards God's children with temptations to immorality, hatred, envy, anger, covetousness, pride, doubt, fear, despair, distrust, and every other sin.

What does it mean to take up the shield of faith?

MOC - In the moment of every temptation there is what I call a, “MOMENT OF CRISIS”

When you have to decide whether you are going to fold or fight. Which way you go will have everything to do with whether or not you believe God.

EXAMPLE: *You make a mistake, you are tempted to lie about it, shift the blame on someone else. God said speak the truth... in the moment of crisis you must lift the shield of faith and believe God is big enough to rescue you if you obey Him. YOU MUST TRUST HIM.*

5. The Helmet of Salvation

¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION.

Here Paul's language is once again drawn from Isaiah 59, where Yahweh the victorious warrior wears 'the helmet of salvation'

Roman Soldier's Helmet - *The purpose of the helmet, of course, was to protect the head from injury, particularly from the dangerous broadsword commonly used in the warfare of that day. That was not the much smaller sword mentioned later in this verse, but was a large two-handed, double-edged sword that measured three to four feet in length. It was often carried by cavalymen, who would swing at the heads of enemy soldiers to split their skulls or decapitate them.*



The fact that the **helmet** is related to **salvation** indicates that Satan's blows are directed at the believer's **security** and **assurance** in Christ. The two dangerous edges of Satan's spiritual broadsword are discouragement and doubt.

- To **discourage** us he points to our failures, our sins, our unresolved problems, our poor health, or to whatever else seems negative in our lives in order to make us lose confidence in the love and care of our heavenly Father.
- To cause us to **doubt** he raises questions about what we have done – did you pray the prayer correctly? Did you mean what you said? Did you do it for selfish motives... the helmet of salvation puts the emphasis on Christ –
 - Listen Christianity is not spelled D O, but rather DONE. It's not about what you do, but what Jesus has done.
 - It's not in a prayer you pray, but in a person you trust.

What does it mean to put on the helmet of Salvation? You must preach the truth of the Gospel to yourself on a regular basis to defend yourself. Keep Christ and His finished work at the forefront of your thinking.

6. The Sword of the Spirit

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Isaiah 11:4 (NASB95)

---And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

Revelation 19:15 (NASB95)

¹⁵From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations.

The Roman Soldier's Sword - The **sword** to which Paul refers here is the *machaira*, which varied in length from six to eighteen inches. It was the common sword carried by Roman foot soldiers and was the principal weapon in hand-to-hand combat. Carried in a sheath or scabbard attached to their belts, it was always at hand and ready for use.



Paul explicitly states that **the sword of the Spirit** is Scripture, **the word of God**.

ILLUSTRATION: EVE and JESUS – Eve misquoted and misused the sword, Jesus masterfully used Deuteronomy and thus defeated Satan.

What does it mean to take up the sword of the Spirit? It means that you learn, meditate on and proclaim the truth of the Word of God in your life.

- You answer every lie with God's truth.
- You answer every temptation with God's requirement.

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CLOSING ILLUSTRATION – The Church at Ephesus was accustomed to the **Extraordinary work of Satan. Acts 19:11-20**

- Handkerchiefs and Aprons carried from his body would heal sickness and drive out Demons.
- Seven Sons of Sceva began to attempt exorcisms and they were beaten by demonized man and ran out naked and hurt.
- Those practicing magic brought their books and burned them.

But by the time John wrote REVELATION we see that it wasn't in the extraordinary that Satan won, but it was in the ordinary.

Revelation 2:1-5 (NASB95): ²'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; ³and you have

perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.⁴ But I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

CLOSING ILLUSTRATION:

You see it doesn't matter so much to Satan that you are in the flesh doing witchcraft or participating in séances or if you are in the flesh away from God teaching a Sunday school class. Either way – he wins. You are not being lead by the Spirit of God and you are not making an impact for Eternity.