

## The Armor of God

### Ephesians 6:10-17

**INTRODUCTION:** We have been looking at this section of scripture that deals with the family. It's basically a code of conduct for a Christian household. So far we have seen the role of:

- Husband and Wife
- Father and Mother
- Sons and Daughters
- Then we looked at the Employer and Employee
- Today Paul draws our attention to one other personality that we have to deal with as a family, our **UNSEEN ENEMY**.

**ILLUSTRATION:** As a child I was very **near sighted**, but it wasn't diagnosed until I was seeking to get my driver's license. I remember going to the Optometrist, being tested, then receiving a very strong prescription. I left that day with a new pair of glasses.

I remember looking out her office window and noticing the thousands of little leaves on the trees. I had never seen that before. It was always just a green blur.

Now neither of my parents wore glasses, so I was a bit unsure how it all worked. I asked the Optometrist if it was ok for me to drive while wearing glasses. She said, "Son, I don't know how you drove without them"

**Well the Bible teaches that there are a number of things going on around us, that are very real, yet we can't see them.**

- **Numbers 22:31 tells us that the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand.**
- **2 Kings 6:17 Elisha was surrounded by a massive army. Servant is freaking out but Elisha is cool... servant says, "can't you see what's about to happen?" Then the Bible tells us that Elisha prayed for his servant - and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.**

**SATAN** - The Bible teaches that, before the fall of man - there was a fall in Heaven. Lucifer, the great ArchAngel led a rebellion against the Creator. 1/3 of the Heavenly Angels joined the rebellion. Those fallen angels are called Demons in scripture.

There is no substantive difference between and Angel and a Demon. The heart motive is the only difference.

As we said in an earlier sermon - the war continue between the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Satan.

NOW - If you want to do a deep dive into this subject pick up a copy of my book, "Our Fight". There I delve into the full work of Satan.

But for our purposes today, recognize that Satan's primary plan is destruction and disintegration. Satan and demons want to bring disintegration into Relationships, Churches, Communities, Nations, and ultimately into your life.

- He hates you with a passion as an image bearer of God.
- He despises the fact that Christ atoned for your sin and adopted you.

**NOT A METAPHOR** - Every time scripture addresses our interaction with Satan and Demons, it always does so in **MILITARY TERMS**. And you see, it is not that God chose warfare as a helpful metaphor to understand these things... it's not metaphor, it actually is a war taking place.

- **The bad news** is his intelligence is astounding, his power is immense, his military force is massive. I'm sorry to tell you this - in and of yourself, you do not stand a chance against the Kingdom of Satan.
- **The good news** is - Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the World.

You see compared to Satan, you are a flea. Compared to God Satan is a flea.

Nevertheless, the battle rages until our Lord returns.

Like any military power, Satan has a battle plan and a strategy. While there are many facets to his strategy, chief among them is the use of "the stronghold"

**A stronghold** is a well defended, fortified position within enemy territory from which one may wage war.

### **2 Corinthians 10:4–5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power **to destroy strongholds**. <sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

So if we have weapons to tear down strongholds, it must be possible for strongholds to exist. And notice where they exist - in the mind. So it is thoughts we take captive.

Now, here in Ephesians we see one of the most familiar passages in all of scripture dealing with spiritual warfare.

Interestingly, it is right after this extended section on the family. Do you think that perhaps FAMILY is one of the main areas Satan attacks?

You, your spouse, your sons, your daughters, are not collateral damage. They are military targets.

Our Ultimate Commander and Chief has not left us defenseless, but has given us defensive and offensives means not in order to merely survive... but to conquer.

### **Romans 8:37 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Let me ask you an honest question - does Satan have a stronghold in your life? An area of your heart or mind that he seems to dominate again and again? Well through Paul, God teaches us how to take back that land.

### **TEXT: Ephesians 6:10–13 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

So notice, we are not bailing from our strength. Our strength can be and impediment to victory. If you are here today and you feel weak and defeated - great! It takes a knowledge of personal weakness to be successful in this battle.

<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Literally what the verse says is this: "Put on the whole armor of God and keep it on." There are no furloughs; there are no truces; there are no leaves of absence; there are no cease-fires in this war.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

Did you catch that - your husband isn't the problem, your boss isn't the problem, your kids aren't the problem. The problem is your unseen enemy.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

**OK, So what is it and how do we take it up?**

**PERHAPS YOU'VE KNOWN THIS PASSAGE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, BUT I WANT YOU TO HEAR IT TODAY IN A NEW WAY. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, THERE IS MORE THAN MEATS THE EYE IN THIS TEXT.**

# 1. The Belt of Truth

## Ephesians 6:14 (ESV)

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

**The Greek word for Truth** (Alethia) that Paul uses primarily refers to inward truth – truth of heart or sincerity and authenticity as opposed to objective truth which we will find later in the sword of the Spirit. This is the word Jesus would use when He said, “truly, truly”

## 1. The Belt of Truth = Personal Authenticity

We live in a world where we are trained to present our ideal self. To fake it till we make it. Like Adam and Eve before us, we place carefully crafted fig leaves over our soul less someone see us for who we really are.

Well, Satan capitalizes on this tendency. He tells us if people really knew us, they wouldn't accept us, they wouldn't like us, they certainly wouldn't love us.

**ILLUSTRATION:** The **Pharisees** in Jesus day were masters of the mask. They carefully crafted their personal brand to impress the world, but never really dealt with heart issues. Jesus loved them enough to call them out. He called them hypocrites, a greek for for an actor. He said they had a NAME (or reputation) for being alive, but they were dead inside.

How do you put on the Belt of **Alethia**, Authenticity? Well part of it comes from having a place where you can you bear your soul.

That is why groups like AA are so popular. Ironically, it's a space where you aren't anonymous. You state your name and say, “I have a problem”. And you find that the roof doesn't cave in. In fact, people love and support you. They encourage the best parts of who your are.

I've been doing ministry for 28 years. The people I have known who have the most authentic walk with Jesus, get over themselves and find a place to open up. For them, it almost becomes addictive.

In fact, I would warn you, if you do bear your soul to your small group, or a few friends, it will be so life giving that you will be tempted to bear your soul to the world.

Be careful there - The bible teaches that we are to guard our heart with all diligence for from it comes the well spring of life. There are people who you can't trust with heart issues... but you can trust someone.

## James 5:16 (ESV)

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed...

Think of it, before you were ever born, knowing full well everything you would ever do wrong, Jesus Christ gave Himself for you that He might restore a relationship with you.

Jesus didn't die for your projected ideal - he died for you. He loves you.

**Dane Ortland** said it this way - *"Those things about you that make you cringe the most, there Jesus hugs the tightest"*

*Put on Authenticity...*

## 2. The Breastplate of Righteousness

**Ephesians 6:14 (ESV)**

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

Righteousness simply means RIGHT LIVING.

### 2. The Breastplate of Righteousness = Life Integration

Our culture tends to believe that **information** leads to **transformation**, so we produce an endless stream of content in hopes of changing the world - books, podcasts, etc. And for some that works. But it is not the content that changes people, it is the content applied.

#### INFORMATION + INTEGRATION LEADS TO TRANSFORMATION.

Jesus didn't say, "teach them all I commanded you", but rather, "Teach them to **OBSERVE** (obey) all I have commanded you"

The great secret of the Christian life is learning how to integrate God's truth into your personal reality. The great danger you face is that you will receive an immeasurable amount of information and very little integration.

**Character is not formed primarily through gaining information. It's formed in the midst of a loving Christian community.** That is one of the reasons we champion groups and service - those are the two areas where connections are formed.

You see serving is not only about what it does for others - it does a great deal for you.

**ILLUSTRATION:** In his book, "**The Other Half of Church**" Psychologist Jim Wilder explains that the part of the *The right hemisphere of our brain*, the part that forms our identity and character is essentially nonverbal and operates by updating my reality six times per second. Far too fast to shape by words alone.

How does the right hemisphere form our character? By images. Watching things, specifically in a group context. <sup>1</sup>

That is why Jesus didn't just say, "Listen to me" but rather, "follow me". Then Paul likewise said, "follow me as I follow Christ"

**ILLUSTRATION:** That is one of the reasons that I absolutely love the multigenerational church. I can watch older men and see how they handle things. **Mallory Smith** is my fishing buddy. I probably know a lot more about scripture than he does, but I've learned more about being a Christian man from him that just about anyone. Why? I've followed him. I've seen how he deals with someone who sins. I've seen how he cares for his wife. I've seen how he takes care of those who need him.

*Put on Authenticity, Integrate Truth into your Life,*

### **3. The Shoes of Peace**

**Ephesians 6:15 (ESV)**

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

We are called to be Peacemakers. We personally make peace with God through Jesus Christ. The Gospel is called the Gospel of Peace.

But once we are at peace with God, we expand that out to all other human relationships.

### **3. The Shoes of Peace = Healthy Relationships**

**Romans 12:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

How are your relationships with:

- Your Parents?
- Your Siblings?
- Your Friends?

**ILLUSTRATION:** I've had couple unmistakable experiences of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in my life. One of the most memorable was at a student camp for Millbrook Baptist Church in Montgomery, AL. I spoke that night on Peace, where David said, "Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it". Toward the end of the sermon a young lady grabs her phone and runs out of the room. The Holy Spirit had spoken to her about her relationship with her Step Father. This man was not her biological dad, but he had

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<sup>1</sup> Wilder, Jim; Hendricks, Michel. *The Other Half of Church* (p. 99). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

loved her, provided for her, and cared for her as his own. Yet, as kids do sometimes, she had treated him very poorly. She came under deep conviction, called her stepdad and apologized, then asked him to forgive her. Of course, he did. A great burden was lifted from her soul. She testified to the peace she had found and that night we were up until 3am, kids and adults, spontaneously falling under conviction and crying out for salvation.

What happened? She put on the shoes of peace. God guides us through the presence or absence of peace many times.

*Put on Authenticity, Integrate Truth into your Life, Walk in Peace...*

## 4. The Shield of Faith

**Ephesians 6:16 (ESV)**

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

Now faith is simply, Taking God at His word and trusting Him for the results.

BUT NOTICE, this is specifically taken up when we are under fire. The shield of faith is lifted in the MOC the **MOMENT OF CRISIS**.

### 4. The Shield of Faith = Good Decisions in MOC

If the enemy has built a stronghold in your life, he has done so by decisions you made while under attack. You see, you have remarkable power over your life. And Satan can go no further than you allow.

Here is how this plays out. You can be hear today in worship singing the praises of the Lord, you can be saturated with truth, you can have so much good stuff around you that you feel like you are totally free, never to sin again.

But mark my word, a time is coming, maybe this evening when an old familiar temptation is going hit you. You will know it because it will feel like an attack.

Something will cause your anxiety to rise, and that doesn't feel good. So you look for a comfortable place to go, and Satan shine the light on that old habit. THAT IS YOUR MOC.

When that happens, what you do next will determine whether you take up the shield of faith or not. Now faith is simply, Taking God at His word and trusting Him for the results.

In that MOC - rather than turn to sin, turn to that group of people that you have developed authenticity with. Call on them to pray for you. Change course.

Satan is not omnipotent, he has limited resources. He will not attack forever. Survive the attack and he will leave.

### **James 4:7 (ESV)**

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

*Put on Authenticity, Integrate Truth into your Life, Walk in Peace, Lift the Shield of Faith in MOC.*

## **5. The Helmet of Salvation**

17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION,

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.

### **5. The Helmet of Salvation = Gospel Confidence**

**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.

JOY is born in the cradle of thankfulness. Try this practice - every day of your life, preferably in the morning practice the habit of preaching the Gospel to yourself.

Remind yourself of a time when you were far from God. Reflect on how the Gospel came to you. Imagine Jesus suffering in your place. Hear the words, "it is finished".

Consider the implications of the Gospel - that Jesus loved you, knowing you fully. Remember the promises of God - he separates you from your sin as far as the east is from the west.

As you contemplate these realities daily, your mind learns to rest in the Work of Jesus.

Tim Keller says it this way, "You recognize that you were so great a sinner that it required the very prince of Heaven to die in order for you to be saved, but you also recognize how loved you are because you realize the very Prince of Heaven was willing to die for you".

*Put on Authenticity, Integrate Truth into your Life, Walk in Peace, Lift the Shield of Faith in MOC. Preach the Gospel to yourself...*

## **6. The Sword of the Spirit**

17b. and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

### **6. The Sword of the Spirit = The Holy Spirit Directed Word**

There are two words in the Greek translated into the English word, “word”

- Logos - refers to the object Word (or Scripture)
- Rhema - refers to the subjective Word (Holy Spirit directed Scripture)

The word here is Rhema. It’s the particular word for the moment.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Let me illustrate the difference. If a husband and wife are in an argument and perhaps the husband insists that the wife obey scripture and submit to his leadership. But then the Holy Spirit brings to his mind the words of Christ who said, “The Gentiles Lord their authority over one another, it is not to be so among you, but rather he who wishes to be head must be servant of all”

So the verse he quoted to his wife was true. But the Rheam word, the word for the moment, the word God was speaking to him was... don’t Lord your authority, but rather serve”.

The Sword of the Spirit is the Rhema Word.

How do you receive the Rhema Word? You walk filled with the Spirit, you live in tune with the Lord.

There is it the Rhema of God - the very word God has spoken.

BTW, Rhema is the word that was used in **Matthew 4:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> But he answered, “It is written, “ ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

We receive life but hearing the Spirit directed word.

**CONCLUSION/INVITATION:** Now, what is the alternative to putting on the Armor of God?

- Well rather than live in Authenticity we project an image that is insincere and dishonest, people may love us, but do they really love us or an ideal?
- Rather than integrate truth in our lives, we learn a lot of concepts, but practically speaking we cease spiritual process our character stalls.
- Rather that walk in peace, we carry the burden of bad relationships.
- Instead of Winning in the MOC we fold, one more time.
- Instead of cultivating JOY in a thankful response to the Gospel, we grow weak.
- Instead hearing and wielding the Rhema word, we exist in a perpetual defensive posture.