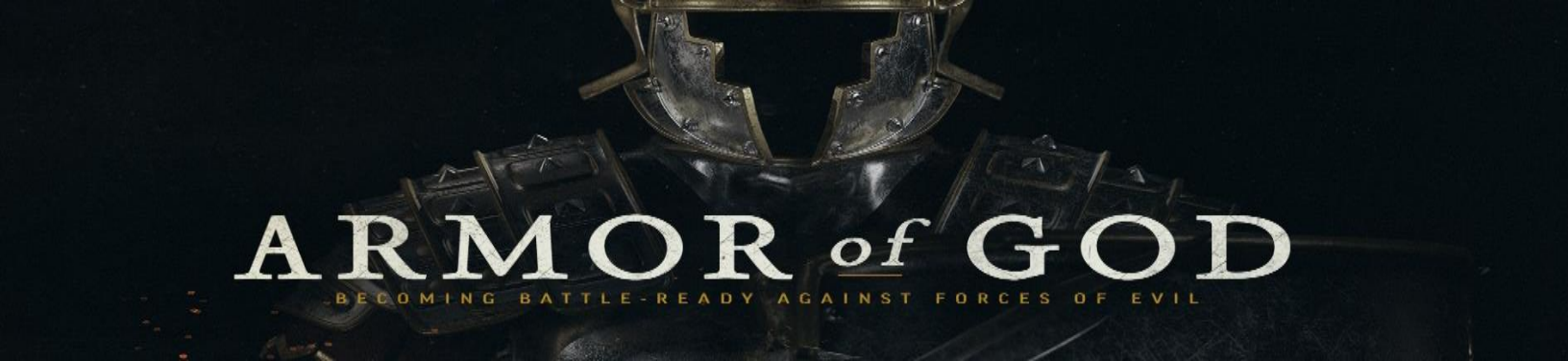




# ARMOR *of* GOD

BECOMING BATTLE-READY AGAINST FORCES OF EVIL

## The Shield of Faith (Allegiance)

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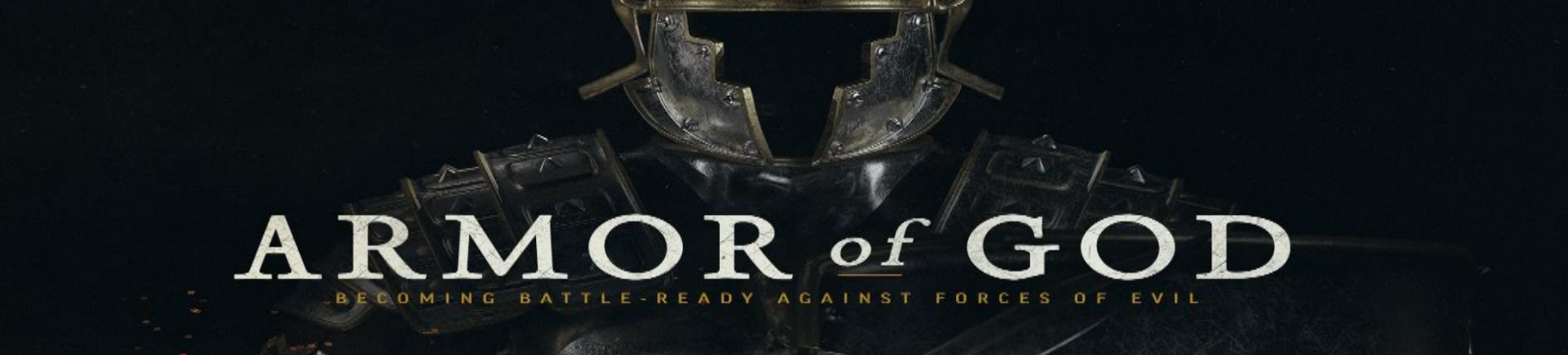
### Opening Question

Think of a time when someone showed up for you in a moment of real difficulty without being asked. What did that feel like, and what did it communicate to you about that person?

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### Digging into the Text

1. The sermon made a distinction between saying "I believe that Jesus is Lord" and saying "I believe in Jesus as Lord." In your own words, what is the difference? How does that distinction change the way you think about your own faith?
2. The Greek word *pistis* is often translated as faith, belief, or trust, but the sermon suggested that allegiance might sometimes be a more accurate translation. Does reframing faith as allegiance change anything for you? Does it feel more demanding, more freeing, or something else entirely?
3. Read Daniel 3:16-18 together as a group. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego say, "But even if he does not..." What does that phrase reveal about the nature of their allegiance? Is that kind of faith easy or difficult to relate to? Why?
4. The sermon pointed out that when Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace, a fourth figure was present. The ropes that bound the three men burned away, and the fire only consumed what had been holding them captive. What do you think that detail is meant to communicate to believers who are walking through their own furnace moments?



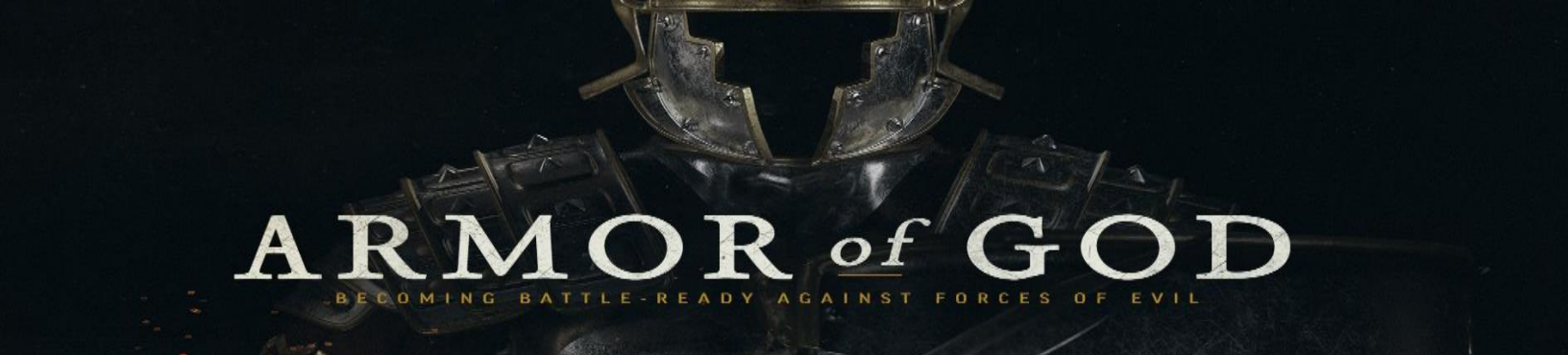
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5. The sermon described the symbol painted on the Roman soldier's shield as representing the lord they fought for, and that this symbol itself carried authority and weight in battle. How does the identity of who we belong to function as protection in our daily lives?
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## Personal Reflection

6. The preacher shared a deeply personal story about losing his ministry, his home, and his community in a single email. He described his shield beginning to droop in the aftermath. Have you ever experienced a season where your allegiance to Jesus or your engagement with his body felt like it was slipping? What contributed to that, and what, if anything, helped restore it?
  7. The sermon acknowledged that sometimes the enemy fires arrows from within the church itself, from the very place that should have been the safest. If you carry church hurt, how has that affected your posture toward the body of Christ? Is there anything you need from this group as you navigate that?
  8. The preacher said, "The enemy would have been more than content for me to keep reading my books on the Bible and listening to Bible podcasts if that meant I withdrew from the body." Do you see any ways in which personal spiritual activity, however good, might be functioning as a substitute for genuine community in your own life?
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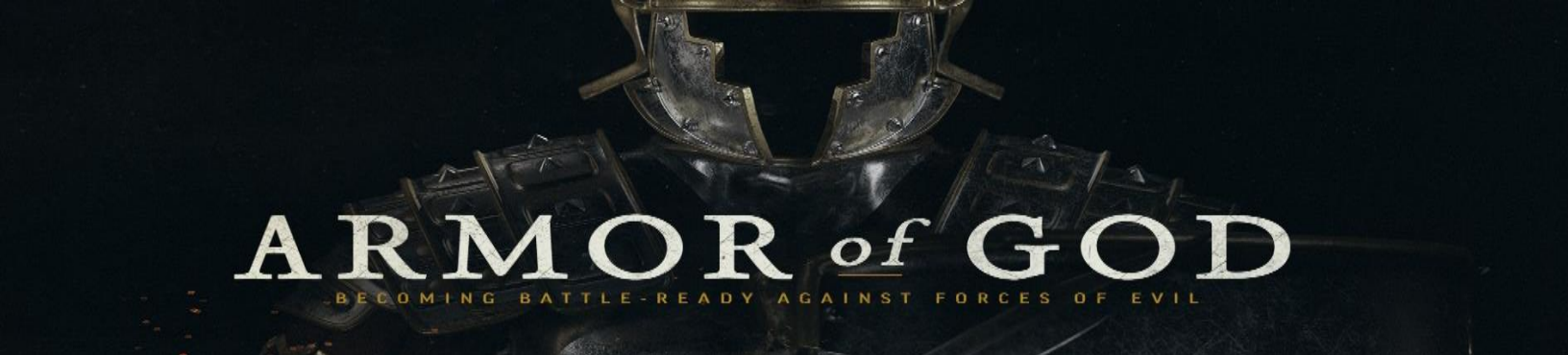


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## Community and Application

9. The sermon described a Roman battle formation where soldiers used their shields not just for themselves but to cover the flanks and protect those beside them. Who in your life right now might need you to hold your shield out for them? What would that practically look like this week?
  10. The preacher described how Heath, the worship pastor, showed up consistently for his wife Hannah, and how watching that loyalty slowly softened his own hardened heart. He said, "I could stand here and list all of the people that used their faith, used their allegiance to the king to protect me and my family." Who has caught arrows for you that you have never properly acknowledged or thanked? Is there an opportunity to do that?
  11. The sermon closed with this challenge: "One thing that everybody in this room can do is we can use our shield of faith, our shield of allegiance, to make sure what happened to us doesn't happen to a brother or sister." As a group, what is one concrete way you can commit to creating a safer, more protective community for the people around you?
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## Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice individually or as a group before your next meeting.

- **Practice Allegiance Publicly** Identify one area of your life where cultural pressure pulls you toward a competing allegiance, whether financial, relational, vocational, or otherwise. Write down one specific decision this week that reflects loyalty to King Jesus in that area rather than conformity to that pressure.
  - **Hold Your Shield for Someone Else** Identify one person in your life who is walking through a furnace moment. Commit to one tangible act of presence or support this week. Do not wait for them to ask.
  - **Acknowledge the Formation** Write down the names of two or three people whose faith and allegiance have protected you, caught arrows for you, or helped carry you through a difficult season. Reach out to at least one of them this week and tell them what their faithfulness meant to you.
  - **Examine Your Shield** Spend a few minutes in honest prayer this week asking God to show you where your allegiance has drifted. Not to condemn, but to reorient. Invite him to renew your loyalty to him and his kingdom.
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