

GOD WITH US

His People. His Dwelling Place.

The Whole Armor of God - Craig Galloway

The armor of God can easily become a 'kid's church' story. In reality, it holds **powerful truth** and teaching to help us walk out our Christian faith. Understanding the role of the armor of God **grounds us in our faith**. It is not *only* an emotional experience to follow God but also one of understanding and knowing the truth we base our lives upon. The truth about the armor of God establishes us on a strong rock and **strengthens our resolve** as Christians. There is a strong emphasis in Ephesians that it is the armor of God that helps us to **stand and stand firm** amidst all the storms and trials around us.

*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. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.** Ephesians 6:13-18 (ESV)*

What does the picture of the armor of God teach us?

Belt of truth: There is a big attack today against the truth of Christianity. Just like a belt holds the armor together, the fact that Christianity is absolute truth holds our faith together. It is based on true events and a true Savior who is God. It is important to believe this is not a 'relative truth' but the **true state of our world**, regardless of whether or not people enjoy hearing it. (Eph 1:20-23)

Breastplate of righteousness: This speaks of us being in right-standing with God. What defends us from attacks is **confidently knowing our relationship with God is secure**, even when we make mistakes. It is because of Jesus and not our efforts that we are in right-standing with Him, and so **our efforts cannot change our righteousness**. We are protected from attacks because our righteousness is not based on us. (Rom 5:1-3)

Shoes of the gospel of peace: Peace comes from what Jesus did for us (Eph 2:13-22). There is now peace between us and God, and between previously hostile groups. It is easy to become distracted comparing different expressions of Christianity. Wherever the core message is the true gospel message of Christ, we should **pursue peace and unity**, regardless of differences in denomination or expression.

Shield of faith: Our faith that God is all who He says He is, is what defends us from fiery darts. It is by encountering God that we develop faith to be able to say we have an assurance that He is real. The enemy will try to cause you to doubt God's character and faithfulness. Our assurance, which is **built up through intimacy with Him**, is a shield that defends us. (Heb 11:1-3)

Helmet of salvation: Jesus saved us out of the clutches of the enemy, and by grace we receive it. He did it all on the cross and by this, we are saved and protected. **Knowing we have eternal life gives us hope** that protects us from all kinds of attacks. When the enemy tries to tell us we are not good enough for God, we stand on the truth that it was never about us being good enough, Jesus already did it.

Sword of the Spirit: This is the word of God which He uses to accomplish His powerful, cleansing work in the hearts of people. We are called to use this 'weapon' by **declaring the good news**, which takes ground from the enemy when people are saved and redeemed. (Isa 52:7)

We are not useless - the armor is not so that we can sit back and be safe, but so that we can stand firm and advance the kingdom.

Reflection

1. Which area of the armor do you want to grow in? Do you want to grow in faith by encountering Him? Or in using the sword of the Spirit to declare His good news? What are some steps you can take to grow in each area?
2. Pray plays a vital role in taking up the armor of God. Where can you make space in your week to encounter God and allow the truth to settle deep into your heart?