

THE AMOUR OF GOD

Ephesians 6:11-17

By Raymond White

***Ephesians 6:11** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **:12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

Satan's army is powerful, and God has called us to stand against it. Since God wants us to win, he has given us armor, much like the armor worn by Roman soldiers. Without armor, a Roman soldier could not survive long in combat. And neither can a Christian soldier.

Paul wrote his Ephesian epistle in prison and he may have been chained to a Roman soldier. As he observed that soldier from day to day, he became acquainted with the Roman armor. There were six pieces in all, and Paul compared each piece to a piece of spiritual armor that we must likewise wear in our battles with Satan if we are to survive. They are:

[1] THE BELT OF TRUTH

***Ephesians 6:14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth.*

Every Roman soldier wore a belt around his waist which held things together. In battle he would bin the lower edges of his robe to his belt so that he would not trip. His sword hung from his belt. If he was an archer, his bow and arrows hung on a shoulder strap which was fastened to his belt. If he had medals, they too hung on his belt. The belt was the middle of everything. Without it, everything else fell apart.

The Christian's belt is truth. Satan deceives the world with lies and we must respond with truth. When the world teaches immorality and murder, we must teach morality and justice. A watered down truth is not the truth. Silence is not the truth. Only the truth is the truth.

In addition to teach truth, we must also teach it truthfully. It's not just a true message that's required, but also a true messenger. The integrity and sincerity of the messenger are nearly as important as the message itself.

Fundamentally, if we compromise truth in any way, we start stumbling around, tripping on our own robes, and everything else falls apart;

[2] THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

***Ephesians 6:14** Stand therefore...having on the breastplate of righteousness.*

Only a foolish soldier would go into battle without his breastplate. It was made of woven metal and it protected the soldier's hart and vital organs. But if the breastplate had a hole in it, a sword could easily penetrate and find the soldier's heart.

A Christian's breastplate is righteousness. When the heart is surrounded by righteousness, Satan has no opportunity for attack, unless the righteousness has a hole in it. Some

people don't commit big sins, just little ones. Satan scans their righteousness to find a hole, and if he finds one, that's where he sticks his dagger, cutting deep to the heart.

Today's breastplate is a bulletproof vest. That vest will stop a 22, a 38, a 45, and even a 44 magnum. The officer may have a broken rib, but that vest will hold back serious firepower and save the officer's life. But that vest will not stop a shotgun. Why is that? Because shot does not come in one lump, it comes bit by bit, each shot cutting a tiny path for the next, and the next, and the next, until finally they're through. Little temptations can cut a big hole. Righteousness is a great protector, but sometimes, when evil comes your way, it's best to just step aside.

[3] THE SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Roman soldiers wore a kind of hob-nailed boot which worked well on long marches, for running and for standing firm in hand-to-hand combat. Whatever his task, a soldier needed his feet to be firmly on the ground, and that required good shoes.

Often, the difference between winning and losing a battle was simply an army's ability to redeploy its lines, as the field changed, quickly and under fire. And occasionally, the difference between winning and losing a war was simply an army's ability to redeploy from one end of the empire to the other end. That's why the Romans built such good roads, and why they equipped every soldier with good shoes.

A Christian's shoes are the gospel of peace — the good news that through Christ we have peace with God. *Ephesians 2:14* He is our peace. Knowing where we stand before God is the sure-footing that moves us to battle and enables us to stand firm in combat.

[4] THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. [Greek: the wicked one]

The Romans used several kinds of shields. The *Aspis* was small and round for hand-to-hand combat, but the *Thureus* was big, like a door, made of wood and covered with leather. When the soldiers held those shields together, they formed a nearly impenetrable wall.

That big shield is in view here. To stop a Roman phalanx, the enemy often used darts dipped in pitch and ignited. When a dart hit a soldier, even if it failed to penetrate the armor, the flaming pitch would stick. But there was a defense against such flaming darts: this large door-like shield. When the dart hit, it penetrated into the wood and the leather smothered the flame.

Faith is like that shield, quenching Satan's fiery temptations. It stands "above all," out in front, taking incoming, protecting everything else. Faith is the first and most effective defense against sin because doubting God is what sin is all about. Satan told Jesus to turn stone into bread. "Don't trust God," Satan argued, "trust yourself."

God says live right and we'll be happy. Satan says, "Are you sure?" He said to Eve: *Hath God said? (Genesis 3:1)*. Doubt fuels sin. The shield of faith snuffs out sin. *1 John 5:4* This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. *Hebrews 11:33* Who through faith...:34 quenched the violence of fire.

[5] THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation.

Some attacks come from the top or behind. The big broadsword just swung around looking for heads to break. But if it struck a helmet, it glanced off.

The *helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8)*, protects heads when Satan comes from an unexpected angle. *We are saved by hope (Romans 8:24)*.

When Satan blindsides us, sometimes only our salvation and our hope in it will stop his sneaky attack. *Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing...:7 God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*. In other words, God has your back. You are secure.

[6] THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 6:17 And take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

All other armor is defensive. Now we come to the sword, the only piece of armor that is offensive. Imagine a battle where both sides had shields, but only one side had swords. Clearly the side without swords will lose, of course. Defense without offense is a formula for defeat. That's a military reality.

God has given Christians a sword, the word of God. Our words do not scare Satan, but God's words do. When Satan attacked Jesus — (*Matthew 4:3-11 command these stone, cast thyself down, worship me*) — Jesus attacked back: — (*It is written, it is written, it is written*). It is God's words that make Satan retreat. We're not trying to hold ground, we want to advance, take ground away from Satan, save souls that are lost. Don't be content to just defend — attack! That's what swords are for, to engage Satan and move into his territory.

There are two Greek words for *word*: *logos* and *rhema*. *Logos* can mean the word of God collectively, but *Rhema* means individual sayings. *Rhema* is the word used here in :17. This means to address specific evils, use specific verses. If someone is sinning, don't just say, "read the Bible." What that person needs from you is specific verses that speak to their specific sins. Wielding the sword of the spirit is not having the *Word* of God, but speaking the *words* of God.

One last thought about swords: They're hard. They don't bend. If you give your child a sword to play with, you make sure it's rubber so no one gets hurt. Rubber swords are for children. Iron swords are for soldiers and they are meant to hurt. If we skip verses or change their meaning because we're uncomfortable that they might hurt, then we're carrying a rubber sword into battle and why bother.

Psalms 138:2 Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

God holds his word higher than even his own name. So don't bend it.