

# The Traveling Pulpit

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## The Christian's Armor

**“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Eph. 6:11-18)**

### Introduction

Proper clothing is a very important part of our daily attire. We choose our clothing based upon such things as the season of the year and the various kinds of activities in which we engage. Even a soldier when he enters the ranks of the military is outfitted with different pieces of gear and trained to use his equipment in combat. So, it is with a Christian, as he learns to properly dress in a manner pleasing to God and prepared to do battle with his enemy. Such clothing will not necessarily consist of a fancy wardrobe, but a spiritual suit of armor. Unfortunately, many Christians act as though they're spiritually dressed for frolic on the playground instead of for war on the battleground. The sooner we

learn that the Christian life is war, then the sooner we'll get serious about living for Jesus Christ and drawing strength from the "power" (Acts 1:8) of the Holy Spirit.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ephesians, we have a description of a believer's battle clothing. Someone has said, that to be clothed in the "whole armor of God," is to be clothed in the Holy Spirit. Christians are involved in a spiritual war and apart from the enabling "armor of God," we can never be victorious over our opposing enemy, "the devil." From our text, we discover that Satan's kingdom of "wickedness" is molded into a very complex military-like structure. Therefore, our spiritual conflict is "not against flesh and blood," but "against" supernatural powers that are greater than ourselves. Our enemy cannot be attacked nor destroyed with any weapon from any human arsenal. Although, Satan does use "flesh and blood," he himself can only be confronted in the supernatural armor that God provides the believer. For many years, Paul was guarded by Roman soldiers which gave him plenty of time to observe all the various pieces of armor that the soldier wore. Under divine inspiration, Paul described the furnishing of a believer's warfare and how God provides us with the spiritual equipment to do combat with the devil. In this list of armor, we discover five pieces that are used for defensive purposes and two pieces used for offensive purposes.

### **The Belt of Truth**

In ancient times, we're told that the soldier's belt about his "loins" was the most basic part of the uniform because it held in place every other piece of armor. From a spiritual standpoint, this belt symbolizes salvation in Christ Who came into this world as the very embodiment of "truth" (Jh. 14:6). Before one can ever begin to do battle with the devil, he must be found "in Christ" (II Cor. 5:17), and "Christ" must be found "in" us (Col. 1:27). We're living in a world filled with lies and deception. Scripture declares that the devil is the "father" of a lie (Jh. 8:44). Followers of Satan and those influenced by him, are the ones who have "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25). The story of Ananias and Sapphira serves as a good reminder as to what God thinks of lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). God Almighty is incapable of lying (Heb. 6:18) and unless the "truth" of Jesus Christ regenerates our hearts, then we'll not be indwelt with the Holy Spirit nor have a base upon which to wear God's armor.

### **The Breastplate of Righteousness**

A Roman's soldier's breastplate was not for decorative purposes, but to protect the vital bodily organs of the chest, such as the heart and lungs. God desires for our hearts to be protected from Satanic influence. If Satan can find a lodging place in our hearts, then he can expose us to so much sin that it's possible for us to get used to it and become tolerant of it. Therefore, Christians must give Christ His rightful place in their "hearts" (I Thess. 2:4) so that we'll be empowered to live holy and defeat any attempt of Satanic invasion into our lives. When I talk about our hearts, I'm not talking about the human heart that beats within our chest, but using the word metaphorically in referring to the inner person. The real you, "soul and spirit" (Heb. 4:12), that is housed in the body of flesh. When a sinner repents and acknowledges Jesus as Lord and Savior, then the perfect "righteousness" of Christ is credited to his heavenly account (Rom. 4). In spiritual combat, we find that our filthy rages of self-righteousness are a useless breastplate. The need of every believer is to be a good soldier of the cross and live a life marked by "righteousness" (godliness). Unless we're following the "righteousness" of Christ, then all the other pieces of armor will prove meaningless.

## **The Shoes of Peace**

A Roman soldier had his “feet shod” with heavy shoes which gave him a firm footing. If we are to “stand” like God has commanded us in the midst of battle, then we also need a good foundation. When the storms of life blow hard against us (and they most certainly will), then our “feet” need to be firmly anchored in the Solid Rock of Jesus Christ. Not only were the soldier’s shoes associated with standing, but with walking, because it was their primary means of travel in biblical days. God wants His people to “stand” upon the “gospel,” or in other words, put it into daily practice in everyday living (Jam. 1:22). If we’re standing upon the “gospel” as we ought, then not only will we be attempting to live it, but sharing it with others (Matt. 28:19-20) as the opportunity presents itself. The Church of Jesus Christ must never forget that this “gospel” changes troubled lives because it is a “gospel of peace” (I Cor. 14:33). Satan specializes in discord, confusion, and turmoil; whereas, “the fruit of the Spirit is .... peace” (Gal. 5:22). A trait of born again people is that they are “peace” loving, whereas evil possessed people don’t respond to love, kindness, tenderness, and peace-able-ness. The “peace of God ... passeth all understanding” (Phil. 4:7) and being at “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1) will give us stability and protection to stand as we do battle with the devil.

## **The Shield of Faith**

A soldier’s “shield” was a large protective plate that he could use to ward off “darts” of danger. When God says in this passage, “above all,” He’s letting us know the importance of this particular piece of armor. In fact, all the other pieces of armor are not sufficient without the “shield of faith.” Sometimes, the arrows of the enemy were lit with fire or tipped with poison and considered “fiery.” Without a “shield,” the “fiery darts” could prove deadly even with a full suit of armor. For the Christian, genuine unquestioning “faith” in Christ is our “shield against Satan’s “fiery darts.” Even when the days are dark and everything seems to be going against us, we must keep using the “shield of faith.” Apart from the “shield of faith,” then worry and doubt can kill our Christian testimony and render us ineffective for the Lord (I Jh. 5:4) when the flaming arrows are shot at us by the enemy.

## **The Helmet of Salvation**

In the same way that a “helmet” would protect a soldier’s head, “the helmet of salvation” is the protective headgear for a believer’s mind and thoughts. God not only appeals to our hearts, but to our minds and intellect (Isa. 1:18). In writing to the Philippians, Paul reminds them to have the “mind” of Christ (Phil. 2:5). God’s people need to have the assurance of their salvation and be growing in grace (II Pet. 3:18) by gaining knowledge of God’s Word. It is at this point that we must be aware that Satan is battling for the minds of men. He who controls the mind controls the man; therefore, our very thoughts ought to be brought under subjection to the Spirit’s control (II Cor. 10:5).

## **The Sword of the Spirit**

Up to this point, we’ve seen the defensive pieces of armor, but with the “sword of the Spirit” we are introduced to the only tangible offensive piece of armor given to the Christian. A Roman sword was a short deadly two-edged weapon. Our major weapon that we use against the devil, is the “word of God” (Heb. 4:12, Rev. 1:16). Jesus taught us how to use “the sword of the Spirit” when Satan launches his attack against us. When He was tempted in the wilderness following His baptism, He skillfully quoted from “the word” and told the devil that “it is written” (Matt. 4:4-10). Just as a soldier needed training in how to use his “sword,” believers need instruction in God’s “word” to properly use it

in spiritual combat as we sing, “Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war, With the Cross of Jesus, Going on before! Christ, the royal Master, Leads against the foe; Forward into battle, See His banners go!”

### **The Privilege of Prayer**

The last piece of armor is intangible, but nevertheless, it’s still a very vital part of our military outfit. Some do not include prayer as a piece of the armor, but I do. In actual combat, communication between the battlefield and headquarters is essential. Likewise, the Christian must maintain contact with God through “prayer” if he’s to be an effective and efficient soldier of Jesus Christ following His orders. “Praying ... in the Spirit” is not the same thing as turning in a grocery list of wants to God. It means to yield our selfish wills to the sovereign will of God. While we’re busy “praying,” we also need to keep our eyes wide open and be “watching,” like a guard on sentry duty, for enemy attack (Mk. 13:33). “Prayer” gives the spiritual ability to use all the other pieces of armor effectively.

### **Closing**

The Christian life is not a playground, but a battleground. Nobody ever said that the Christian life was going to be easy and that it would be a bed of roses. In fact, one doesn’t know what Satanic opposition is all about, until he’s truly converted to Christ and begins living for the Lord. Since the Christian’s enemy is spiritual and not merely “flesh and blood,” we need God’s supernatural armor to withstand satanic opposition. There is a very real demonic world all around us and it seems to be manifesting itself more all the time. Unless we stand clothed in God’s armor, then we’ll be overcome by the forces of Hell and lose our testimony. In Closing, one last thing that must be mentioned. Please notice that God provides no armor for the back. God never intends for a Christian to sound the trumpet of retreat when he confronts the devil. It’s always spiritually disastrous for any believer to turn his back on the devil and run from him like a scared rabbit. In our spiritual skirmishes with the forces of Hell, don’t ever forget that “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 Jh. 4:4).

### **A Ministry Update**

I’ll never forget being in class trying to finish my degree work through Luther Rice when a professor made the statement, “When the devil rings your doorbell, send Jesus to answer it.” As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have an enemy and his name is Satan (Matt. 4:10, 1 Pet. 5:8), our “adversary,” who opposes all that we do for Christ. It’s impossible to live the Christian life without being clothed in the whole armor of God. God wants us to live a victorious Christian life and equips us to do so. The armor of God spoken of in Scripture gives us a picture of how God accomplishes this in our lives.

This little ministry exists to help Christians grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. That means we sometimes will experience spiritual growing pains as the Holy Spirit teaches us how to live outside of our own human strength. It also reminds us that although the devil has been ultimately defeated by Christ’s death on the cross, there are yet spiritual battles to be fought by the militant church. Enabling us to live glorifying to God and being instruments through which God can work, we are given the whole armor of God. Let’s learn how to use it so that we’ll not lean unto our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6), but live as soldiers of the cross in our lost world. As Christians, one of these days when we enter Glory, we’ll be a part of the church triumphant. Until then, thanks to all our partners who prayerfully and financially support COGM.

Because of His Sovereign Grace ... BWM