



The Southeast Sower

Southeast Church of Christ

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The Whole Armor of God”

by

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Every year in the dangerous jungles of India, many natives are killed by wild Bengal tigers. One of the ways the natives use to protect themselves is to wear a mask resembling a human face on the back of their head. If the tiger believes he is being watched while stalking the native he often will not attempt an attack, thinking the victim will be able to escape. So the mask deceives the tiger, making him think he is being watched, and preventing an attack.

The apostle Paul reminds us that Satan is a clever and powerful foe, able to attack from any direction by many means. We must be prepared for his deceptive attacks. He is not as easily fooled as a tiger may be by a mask. Rather, we are to wear the armor that God provides that is truly able to protect us.

In Ephesians 6:11-12 Paul wrote, *“¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 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.”

Since we are fighting against an enemy in a spiritual world, we need spiritual weaponry to defend ourselves. Paul tells us that God has provided complete armor for us, and we need to be sure not to forget any part of it.

The first piece of armor is the girdle of truth in verse 14. This was not just an ornament. It bound the other pieces together and gave the soldier the ability to move freely. A man who lives a righteous life by following the truth, can live with a clean conscience and fearlessly face the enemy. John 8:32 tells us, *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* We can move about this world more freely when we know the truth! The girdle also held the sword. Unless we practice the truth, we cannot use the Word of truth. Without the truth in our lives, everything begins to crumble. King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba, and the life he knew fell apart. The girdle of truth is what holds our spiritual lives together.

The second piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness in verse 14. This piece of armor covered the body from the neck to the waist, in the front and back, in order to protect the heart and other vital organs. Like God,

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Worship: 10:50 am

6:00 pm

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we are to wear a breastplate of righteousness, (Isaiah 59:17). It represents the believer’s righteousness in Christ. Satan is known as the accuser, but he cannot accuse the believer who is living a godly life in the power of the Holy Spirit. So the life we live either strengthens us against Satan’s attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us. Therefore, by not practicing righteousness in our daily lives the way we should we

give Satan an opportunity to attack and overcome us. Our words alone are no defense against accusations, but a righteous life is! We must put on the breastplate of righteousness.

The third piece of armor is the shoes of the gospel in verse 15. Soldiers wore sandals with hobnails in the soles to give them better footing, and if we are going to have firm footing then we need to wear the shoes of the gospel. A soldier's shoes were designed to make it difficult to walk backwards, just like the gospel grounds us, keeping us from sliding back into sin.. But the shoes have another meaning as well. We must be prepared each day to steadfastly share the gospel with others. If we truly wear the shoes of the gospel in our daily lives then we are told we have "beautiful feet." *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'"*, (Isaiah 52:7). Satan has declared war but we are ambassadors of peace, taking the gospel of peace wherever we go. Perhaps, the shoes of the gospel would carry us much farther if we simply put them on each day.

The fourth piece of armor is the shield of faith in verse 16. Shields were made of wood covered with leather and were about 4 feet high by 2 feet wide in order to protect the body from spears, swords and fiery darts. The edges of these shields were made to interlock with other soldiers marching in line, together forming a solid wall. This reminds us

that each Christian is not alone in battle. As Christians we must stand together, putting our faith and complete trust in Christ so we can extinguish the fiery darts of trials and temptations hurled against us by Satan. If we do not quench these fiery darts, they can ignite a fire within us causing us to disobey God. We never know when Satan may shoot a dart at us, so we must always walk with the shield of faith.

The fifth piece of armor is the helmet of salvation in verse 17. This was usually made of bronze with a leather liner inside to protect against fatal head wounds. Satan wants to deliver a fatal head wound to us by attacking our minds and leading us astray, the same way he defeated Eve in the Garden of Eden. This was a concern of the apostle Paul. He wrote in 2 Cor. 11:3, *"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent beguiled Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* The helmet of salvation refers to the mind that follows after Christ. When we allow our minds to be led by Christ, Satan cannot lead us astray, and we can ultimately receive salvation. The Christian who studies God's word is not going to be led astray too easily. Salvation lies in the word of God, and knowing it is the helmet that protects us from Satan's lies.

And the sixth and final piece of armor is the sword of the Spirit in verse 17. The soldier wore his sword on his girdle where it could be quickly and easily drawn. This sword, the word of God, is the offensive weapon God provides us.

Hebrews 4:12, *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* It doesn't grow duller the more it is used like a physical sword, but rather becomes sharper in our lives the more we use it. A material sword pierces the body, but the word of God pierces the heart. Peter tried to use a sword to defend Jesus in the garden, but he learned at Pentecost that the sword of the Spirit does a much better job of cutting people to the heart. Yet, while a physical sword wounds to hurt and kill, the sword of the Spirit wounds in order to heal and give life to all it touches. But, when we use it against Satan, we are out to strike a blow that will send him fleeing from our presence, even as Christ did when he was tempted. Three times Christ answered Satan saying, *"It is written..."*, providing a pattern for us to follow when we are tempted. So we are never wasting our time when we are sharpening our swords. In fact, we must never let them get rusty.

In closing, may we all by faith put on the "whole armor of God" on a daily basis, remembering that we are never out of reach of Satan's devices, so we must never be without the whole armor of God, or any part of it for that matter. The fate of our very souls depends on it.

(Edited by Jeff Haught)