

## **Standing Firm in Evil Days Ephesians 6:13-16**

### **Introduction**

NJFK—Roman Soldier Figurine

**13** 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.

**14** 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;

Paul is writing the Ephesians from house arrest in Rome. According to Acts 28, he was chained every day to a soldier from the Praetorian Guard, that is, one of Caesar's bodyguards. Some of them came to faith in Christ because of the regular contact they had with him as he shared the gospel with those who visited him.

As he writes about the armor of God, you have to wonder if he patterns his discussion after the armor he sees the soldier of the day wearing. A fitting way to take what many would consider a royal pain and turn it into an

object lesson better than any NJFK ever hoped to be.

1. The Whole Armor Necessary to Standing Firm (13)
2. The Belt of Truth (14a)
3. The Breastplate of Righteousness (14b)
4. The Shoes of Gospel Readiness (15)
5. The Shield of Faith (16)

### **1. The Whole Armor Necessary to Standing Firm (13)**

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.

Therefore—because of what we wrestle against—rulers and authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places

Take up—just a soldier takes up his armor and weapons in final preparation for a battle about to begin

Able to stand against—the ability to stand against

In the evil day—the mystery of lawlessness is already at work (2 Thessalonians 2)  
cf. Ephesians 5:16 Making the best use of the time (buying back the opportunity), because the days are evil.

Having done all—having made all the preparation necessary to fighting the battle

To stand—in our era we are big on progress, but just because you're moving does not mean you are progressing. You may be drifting off course; you may be retreating.

### **Application**

- Since every day you face a spiritual war against powerful Satanic forces, what needs to be part of your daily routine to be prepared to stand firm against whatever evil comes against you?

## **2. The Belt of Truth (14a)**

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth,

Wide belt that protected the lower abdomen; another onto which the sword was fastened

Illus: weight-lifting belt, to reinforce the core muscles

The first piece—a revealed religion; protection against the lies and deception of Satan; Scripture the rule of faith and practice

Give this piece up and everything else is up for grabs.

Why so-called progressive Christianity is so damaging; it deconstructs the foundation of everything else, replacing truth with the changing opinions and dogma of fickle human beings. If you adopt this way of thinking, you will defect. Period. You cannot stand.

Paul teaches us in Ephesians 4:15 to be truthing in love. Not just the truth of Scripture, but the honest integrity of a truth-based life. Sincerity rather than duplicity. Transparency. Be who you are. Do what you are. Christ has transformed you so that you don't have to be a fake. Christianity is not a make-believe game. It is authentic, genuine life rooted in solid, reliable truth from God who sees us as we really are and loves us more than anyone else even can.

Sometimes professing believers use dishonest tactics in order to advance the truth. If it's truth we defend and promote, we don't need to use lies. We know that the end (goal) does not justify the means (methods). If our goal is truly honorable, we refuse to use underhanded methods to advance it.

2 Corinthians 4:2

But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would

commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

### **Application**

- In what ways do you keep yourself in the truth revealed by God?
- In what ways do you hold yourself to honest transparency of life before God and others?

### **3. The Breastplate of Righteousness (14b)**

and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

Protects the vital organs—what you need to stay alive

Righteousness—we have received the imputed righteousness of Christ—justification—declared righteous by God on the basis of the perfect righteousness of the God-man Savior Jesus.

More likely Paul is referring to the righteousness that flows from that foundational righteousness that reconciles us to God. “The righteousnesses of the saints” (Revelation). The Spirit empowers living that lines up with the righteous standards of God. Doing right is a protection for us. Doing wrong harms us.

Whenever you choose to sin, you give yourself a self-inflicted wound, as well as doing injury to those around you.

Romans 6:13

Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

### **Application**

- What righteous practices that reflect the righteousness of Jesus make up your everyday normal life patterns?

### **4. The Shoes of Gospel Readiness (15)**

and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Roman soldiers strapped on a reinforced sandal with heavy studs that helped them grip the ground and gave them strong traction; great mobility and stability

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

Gospel of peace—peace with God; peace of conscience; peace with others; Jesus is the Prince of Peace; the good news opens the way for our warfare with God to end and in its place makes us His allies, citizens, friends, children.

Readiness—preparedness; you can't share what you're not experiencing; and once you've received the good news, you know that by its very nature, it's meant to be passed on to others. Jesus Himself has set us on the mission of making disciples of all ethnicities, so that they follow Him too.

If you have not found peace through the gospel, you will find it difficult to pass it on. If you are not passing it on, you tend to lose your sense of purpose in life. And without purpose, you get distracted and become idle, easy prey for the enemy.

### **Applications**

- How are you keeping gospel truth in the forefront of your mind each day? (*The Gospel Primer* a possible tool)
- What preparations to you keep up so that you could share the gospel at a moment's notice?
- With whom could you share the gospel this week? This month?

## **5. The Shield of Faith (16)**

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

The shield referred to is large, enough to cover the entire body if you crouch. Roman soldiers were masters of using their shields alongside of their fellow soldiers in a way that they formed a human tank, with protection on every side from the hail of arrows, or great stones hurled down from city walls.

We encounter all kinds of threats in this lifetime of battle. Some we expect, others blindsides us. Trust in God, His reliable character, and His faithful promises keeps us steady through thick and thin. Our feelings can rage wild, driven by the storms; we must bind ourselves to the faithfulness of God. And we encourage one another in the fight to hold fast to Christ. Jude. Romans. Hebrews. John's Epistles. Thessalonian epistles. Peter's epistles.

Quench all the fiery darts of the evil one—the accuser of the brothers—false guilt, slander (the slanderer); the father of lies—false doctrine. The kind of attacks that not only wound, but fester and burn, doing residual damage over time.

Illus: campfire left smoldering under the ashes; can flame up again with new fuel



Don't let the doubts smolder. Let the water of the Word douse its embers.

### **Applications**

- What threats to your faith are you facing right now?
- What strategies can you employ to strengthen your faith in God and His promises?
- What friends could walk alongside you to strengthen your faith, and how can they help?

### **Conclusion**

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