

## INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to invite you to take God's Word and turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6.
2. This morning we are looking at verses 13-15 in our first look of *the armor of God*.
3. Read Ephesians 6:13-18.
4. John MacArthur so aptly says, "It is easy for believers—especially in the Western world, where the church is generally prosperous and respected—to be complacent and become oblivious to the seriousness of the battle around them. They rejoice in "victories" that involve no battles and in a kind of peace that is merely the absence of conflict. Theirs is the victory and peace of the draft dodger or defector who refuses to fight. They are not interested in **armor** because they are not engaged in the war.

God gives no deferments or exemptions. His people are at war and will continue to be at war until He returns and takes charge of earth.<sup>1</sup>

5. We are in a spiritual battle.
6. The battle is not with people but with Satan and his demons.
7. And to engage in this battle you have to be prepared.

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<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 343

8. Preparation is not done by making a check list of your resources but God's.
9. And using God's resources depends on a few things.
10. First, it demands that you depend on His strength and provision.
11. Paul says, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (v.10).
12. Since you're engaged in a spiritual battle, you need spiritual weapons.
13. And those weapons come from the Lord Himself.
14. The verb "be strong" occurs in the passive voice and means the strength that you need from the Lord comes from the Lord and not from within yourself.
15. Your part is to surrender to God.
16. Once you have surrendered your dependence, Paul says to "put on the full armor of God."
17. The armor is the protection the Lord provides for the spiritual battle against Satan and his demons.
18. By putting on God's provision of armor you are preparing yourself to "stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
19. In other words, your able to hold your position while under attack.

20. After you put your armor on, you need to recognize where the battle is.
21. According to verse 12, it's "not against flesh and blood."
22. In other words, it's not against the relationship in chapters five and six.
23. It's against the world we cannot see.
24. Paul identifies them as being against "the devil" (v.11) and "against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*" (v.12).
25. The word **against** presents the idea of a personal foe, face-to-face and hand-to-hand conflict to the finish, a life and death struggle. Paul is not describing a Sunday school picnic.<sup>2</sup>
26. Now as we look at verses 13-18, Paul instructs the Ephesians to *use the armor God has given you*.
27. And in this exhortation, we find *the purpose of the armor* in verses 13-14 and *the pieces of the armor* in verses 15-18.
28. Notice *the purpose of the armor* in verse 13.

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<sup>2</sup>KJV Bible Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994). 2427.

- I. Be Prepared for the Battle (vv.10-12)**
- II. Use the Armor God Has Given You (vv.13-18)**

Paul says in **Ephesians 6:13-14 (NASB77)** <sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore.

In these two verses Paul gives...

A. The Purpose of the Armor (vv.13-14a)

- 1. To oppose the enemy (v.13a)

How do you oppose Satan and his demons?

- a) You oppose the enemy by first being prepared

Paul begins verse 13 with the word “therefore.” This refers us back to verses 10-12.

You could translate “therefore” as “on this account.”<sup>3</sup>

“Therefore,” because Paul’s readers must fight a foe that is scheming, inhuman, powerful, and evil, they need to be armed and protected with the equipment God supplies.

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<sup>3</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:13.

They do not need to invent or manufacture their armaments; they just need to “put on” (lit., “take up”) the resources God has already made available.<sup>4</sup>

- b) You oppose the enemy by having the armor of God on

The words “take up” is *analambano*, which refers to “picking up” (Robertson) or “taking to one’s self.” It means “to take up, as one takes up armor to put it on” (Wuest).

The verb is aorist imperative, which construction issues a command given with military snap and curtness, a command to be obeyed at once and once for all. Thus, the Christian is to take up and put on all the armor of God as a once-for-all act and keep that armor on during the entire course of his life, not relaxing the discipline necessary for the constant use of such protection.<sup>5</sup>

- c) You oppose the enemy by resisting in the evil day

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<sup>4</sup>Kenneth L. Boles, *Galatians & Ephesians*, The College Press NIV commentary (Joplin, Mo.: College Press, 1993). Eph 6:13.

<sup>5</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:13.

This is the second reason why you are to “take up the full armor of God.” The first is so that you can hold your position against the “schemes, craftiness, deception, or trickery” of the devil in verse 11.

Now Paul says you need God’s armor for the purpose of resisting the enemy in the evil day.

He is giving us the purpose of the armor by the use of the hina purpose clause in verses 11 and 13. It is translated in both verses by the words “so that.”

He is saying that the only way to hold your position and resist in the evil day is to first “take up the full armor of God.”

To “resist” (anthistemi). It comes from *anti*, against, *histēmi*, to cause to stand and together means, “to stand against, to oppose” (Rienecker), or to set up in opposition.<sup>6</sup>

James uses this word when he says in **James 4:7 (NASB77)** <sup>7</sup> Submit therefore to God. **Resist the devil** and he will flee from you.

Peter also uses it in **1 Peter 5:9 (NASB77)** <sup>9</sup> But **resist him**, firm in *your* faith, knowing

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<sup>6</sup>H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon : Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996). 70.

that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

The “evil day” (puneros) is a “pernicious, evil in active opposition to good.”

**2 Timothy 3:1 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> But realize this, that in the *last days* difficult times will come.

We must have our armor always on, to be ready against the evil day which may come at any moment, the war being perpetual. <sup>7</sup>

2. To hold your position (vv.13b-14a)

“And having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore.”

This is the third time he has told the Ephesians to *stand firm*. He’s said it in verses 11, 13-14.

Our responsibility is to **resist** and **stand firm**. When Martin Luther stood before the Diet of Worms he was accused of heresy. After being condemned for declaring that men are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, he declared, “My conscience is captive to the Word of God. ... Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.” Every believer

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<sup>7</sup>Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, A. R. Fausset, David Brown and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). Eph 6:13.

who is faithful to God's Word cannot do otherwise than **stand firm**.

John warned, "Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward" (2 John 8).

Paul's one great fear was that, "possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).

He was not afraid of losing his salvation but his reward and, even more importantly, his usefulness to the Lord.

Countless men and women have faithfully taught Sunday school for years, led many people to Jesus Christ, pastored a church, led Bible studies, ministered to the sick, and done every sort of service in the Lord's name—only to one day give up, turn their backs on His work, and disappear into the world. The circumstances differ, but the underlying reason is always the same: they took God's **armor** off and thereby lost the courage, the power, and the desire to **stand firm**.<sup>8</sup>

The words, "and having done everything" (katergazomai) means "to perform, accomplish,

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<sup>8</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 344.



achieve, to do that from which something results, to carry something to its ultimate conclusion.<sup>9</sup>

Standing firm against the enemy without wavering or falling is the goal.<sup>10</sup>

Paul now moves from the purpose of the armor to...

B. The Pieces of the Armor (vv.14-18)

He says in **Ephesians 6:14-18 (NASB77)** <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH**, and **HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**, <sup>15</sup> and having shod **YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE**; <sup>16</sup> in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil *one*. <sup>17</sup> And take **THE HELMET OF SALVATION**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

Paul's mind is full of unseen war, and as he reaches for metaphors to describe further realities necessary for the

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<sup>9</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:13.

<sup>10</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Eph 6:13.

battle, a Roman soldier unwittingly sits for his portrait (very possibly the one to whom Paul was chained). That soldier's armor became the vehicle for teaching us what is necessary to win the invisible war.

Though a Roman soldier wore other essentials for war, such as protective greaves on his shins (like a baseball catcher), Paul focuses on six indispensable items: his *belt*, *breastplate*, *sandals*, *shield*, *helmet*, and *sword*, to which Paul adds a seventh non-clothing item, *prayer*, thus emphasizing the completeness of such an outfit for spiritual battle.<sup>11</sup>

1. The girdle of truth (v.14a)

“girded your loins” (perizonnuo) means, “to gird around, to fasten garments with a girdle or belt” (Wuest).

The Roman soldier always wore a tunic, an outer garment that served as his primary clothing. It was usually made of a large, square piece of material with holes cut out for the head and arms.

Ordinarily it draped loosely over most of the soldier's body. Since the greatest part of ancient combat was hand-to-hand, a loose tunic was a potential hindrance and even a danger. Before a battle it was therefore carefully cinched up and

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<sup>11</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 223.

tucked into the heavy leather belt that **girded** the soldier's **loins**.

The ordinary citizen of the Near East had a similar problem with his robe. When he was in a hurry or had heavy work to do, he either took the robe off or tucked it around his waist.<sup>12</sup>

- a) Girding your loins or waist was a mark of preparedness
  - 1) When the children of Israel were preparing to leave Egypt, they ate the Passover meal and was told in **Exodus 12:11 (NASB77)**<sup>11</sup> 'Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with your **loins girded**, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD 's Passover.*
  - 2) When referring to His second coming, Jesus said to His disciples in **Luke 12:35 (NASB77)**<sup>35</sup> Be dressed in ***readiness***, and *keep* your lamps alight.
  - 3) The Authorized has “Let your ***loins be girded*** about, and your lights burning.”
  - 4) Peter told his readers in **1 Peter 1:13 (NASB77)**<sup>13</sup> Therefore, ***gird your minds***

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<sup>12</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 349.

for action, keep sober *in spirit*, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

- b) Being girded with truth marks a sincere commitment

Girding up was a matter of pulling in the loose ends as preparation for battle. The belt that pulls all the spiritual loose ends in is “truth” or better, “truthfulness.” The idea is of sincere commitment to fight and win without hypocrisy—self-discipline in devotion to victory. Everything that hinders is tucked away.<sup>13</sup>

The word “truth” (aletheia) refers “to the content of that which is true and the attitude of truthfulness.” and “that candour of mind which is free from affection, pretence, simulation, falsehood, deceit.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Eph 6:14.

<sup>14</sup>James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.*, electronic ed. (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996). G225.

The Christian must gird his loins about with truth. That is his responsibility.<sup>15</sup>

Paul is saying that every Christian must tuck in their belt truth. They must be prepared by knowing the Word of God. Since Satan throws his arrows at the mind, it is imperative to know and understand the truth.

When Jesus responded to Satan in His temptation, He spoke the truth. Each time He said, “It is written.”

Paul told Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB77)** <sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

Jesus proclaimed to those in the bonds of false teaching, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32; cf. John 8:43–45). Later he said, “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). Paul refers in 4:21 to “the truth that is in Jesus” (cf. 5:9). There is objective, spiritual truth in Jesus and his Scriptures: truth about God, ourselves, history, and the future. Without it we do not have a chance in the spiritual battles which come our way.

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<sup>15</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:14.

Without cinching ourselves tightly with the truth of Scripture, the other weapons of our warfare will clatter in disarray.<sup>16</sup>

2. The breastplate of righteousness (v.14b)

“and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.”

The “breastplate” (thorax) was “a tough, sleeveless piece of armor that covered his full torso (it covered from the neck to the naval). It was often made of leather or heavy linen, onto which were sewn overlapping slices of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body. The purpose of that piece of armor is obvious—to protect the heart, lungs, intestines, and other vital organs.”<sup>17</sup>

The breastplate of righteousness is received and put on through faith as God gives us his righteousness. He clothes us through his Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 224.

<sup>17</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 351.

<sup>18</sup>R. Kent Hughes, *Ephesians : The Mystery of the Body of Christ*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990). 227.

But “the righteousness here is not justifying righteousness given the believing sinner when he first believes, but sanctifying righteousness, the product of the Holy Spirit in the life of the yielded saint.”<sup>19</sup>

The word “righteousness” (*dikaiosune*) refers to “the *practical* righteousness of a life lived in obedience to God’s Word.”<sup>20</sup>

- a) Paul refers to it in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 as “sanctification” which is “holiness” (v.7).
- b) Peter said in **1 Peter 1:14-15 (NASB77)** <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior.
- c) Paul told Titus in **Titus 2:11-12 (NASB77)** <sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, <sup>12</sup> instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.

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<sup>19</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:14.

<sup>20</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 352.

- d) The writer of Hebrews urged his readers in **Hebrews 12:14 (NASB77)** <sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

To **put on the breastplate of righteousness** is to live in daily, moment-by-moment obedience to our heavenly Father.<sup>21</sup>

3. The gospel of peace (v.15)

“and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.”

“shod your feet” (hupodeo), means, “to bind under one’s self” (Strong). The believer is to “shod” or “strap on” (Rienecker) to his feet the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

The “preparation” (hetoimasia) expresses “a firm foundation” (Rienecker) but carries the idea of readiness.

Curtis Vaughan says, “The idea is that of a disposition of mind that makes men quick to see their duty and every ready to plunge into the fight. This readiness comes from, or is produced by, “the gospel of peace.” The gospel is so designated because it is a peace-bringing power that destroys the enmity in men’s hearts and established

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<sup>21</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 353.



tranquility in its place. It is this heart-peace produced by the gospel that gives the Christian warrior his readiness for combat. To have a consciousness of peace with God and to live in tranquil communion with Him enables one to fling himself into the battle with strong determination and calm assurance.”<sup>22</sup>

The shoes of a Roman soldier were extremely important! They were made with bits of metal or nails to give him greater traction.

The Christian soldier should see to it that his feet are equipped with the sandals which will give him a firm footing, namely, the good news that speaks peace to a sinful heart, for the Lord Jesus made peace by the blood of His Cross, making a way for a holy God to reunite Himself with a believing sinner who in Adam had been separated from Him and His life.<sup>23</sup>

In this passage **the gospel of peace** refers to the good news that believers are at peace with God. The unsaved person is helpless, ungodly, sinful, and an enemy of God (Rom. 5:6–10). The saved

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<sup>22</sup> Curtis Vaughan, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977). 129.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament : For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, c1984). Eph 6:14.

person, on the other hand, is reconciled to God through faith in His Son (vv. 10–11).<sup>24</sup>

The message of our reconciliation to God, and nothing else gives peace to the conscience.<sup>25</sup>

Because Paul quoted Isaiah 52:7 in the context of preaching the gospel (“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Rom. 10:15), many commentators also interpret Ephesians 6:15 as a reference to preaching. But in the Ephesians text Paul is not talking about preaching or teaching but about fighting spiritual battles. And he is not talking about traveling about but standing firm (vv. 11, 13, 14). His subject is not evangelizing the lost but fighting the devil.<sup>26</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

1. What do you have strapped around your waist, chest, and feet?
2. Is it the truth?

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<sup>24</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 355.

<sup>25</sup>John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Ephesians*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998). Eph 6:15.

<sup>26</sup>John MacArthur, *Ephesians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996, c1986). 354.

3. Is it sanctification?
4. It is the assurance of the gospel of peace?
5. Putting on the whole armor of God is simply this: knowing the Word of God (belt of truth), obeying the Word of God (breastplate of righteousness), and being confident in the Word of God (the gospel of peace).
6. We'll look at the remaining 4 pieces of the armor that Paul mentions in verses 16-18 next time.
7. But for now let me ask you are you engaged in the battle?
8. Curtis Vaughan says, "It is a grave mistake to think that in the happy hour of our conversion all trouble and strife cease. In reality, that hour marks the beginning of a lifelong warfare—not a war for our salvation, to be sure, but a war in Christian service."<sup>27</sup>
9. We are all engaged in a spiritual battle and that battle began the moment you were saved.
10. If you here this morning and have not fully surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, then you are following the enemy.
11. That's the point Paul makes when he contrasts the new life with the old one in Ephesians 2.
12. He says in **Ephesians 2:1-3 (NASB77)** <sup>1</sup> And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you formerly

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<sup>27</sup> Curtis Vaughan, Ephesians (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977). 125.

walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. <sup>3</sup> Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

13. Does this describe your life now?
14. If not, you need a new master because at this point Satan is the god of your life.
15. Turn from him and your sin and turn to Jesus Christ.
16. Let's pray.