

## Ready for Battle, #3

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Ephesians 6:17  
**Preached on:** Sunday, May 15, 2016

**Truth Community Church**  
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45255

**Website:** [truthcommunitychurch.org](http://truthcommunitychurch.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm](http://www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm)

Well, our music this morning has certainly prepared us for the proper kind of heart to approach God's word with what we have in front of us here this morning. Welcome once again to Truth Community Church. We're glad that you're with us and I trust and hope that the songs that we have sung, the hymns that we have heard, the music that we have meditated on, have given you a sense, a taste, a renewal, for those of you that know Christ, of the desire of the surpassing value of being a Christian; that the ultimate point of salvation is not what we get out of it in this life but rather what lies beyond, the eternal dimension of salvation is what Christ saved us for, it's what the ultimate purpose of our existence as Christians is and it is that which you are currently not a participator in or an expectant heir of if you're not in Christ and we would have those blessings for every one of you in Christ here this morning. So we want to call your attention to those things as we come close to the end of the book of Ephesians as we have gone verse by verse through it over the past year and a half or so, and I invite you to turn to Ephesians 6, beginning in verse 14 and we'll read through verse 17 for our Scripture text this morning, even though we're only going to focus on the final verse for today's message, but we want to set the context. Ephesians 6, beginning in verse 14, the Apostle Paul said,

14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

What we've been looking at over the past few weeks is what is popularly and rightly known as Paul's discussion of the armor of God. Scripture describes us as we go through life as Christians as engaged in a struggle. Christian life was never meant, it was never promised to be easy, that could never be the case when we are living in an alien environment and we have our own inner corruption that we are overcoming. The Christian life by the very basic understanding and most basic principles could never be expected to be a life of ease and comfort, free from sorrow and free from discouragement. It couldn't be that way. Scripture says that the whole world lies in the hands of the evil one and if we hunger and thirst for righteousness, if we long and belong to Christ, then of course there's going to be some element of conflict involved in that and

that is just so helpful at the very basic level of the expectations that you set as you walk through life as a Christian. The encouragement of the passage that we just read and the encouragement that sustains us is that God has already given to you as a Christian everything that you need in order to live an obedient, a joyful and, yes, let's use the word, a courageous Christian life. Whether you are manifesting courage in the face of family that is hostile to you, whether you are manifesting valor as you walk through a world that is more and more opposed openly to the truth of Christ and the truth of Scripture, whether you're walking through the discouragement of physical pain and other life difficulties, maybe facing the latter days of old age with declining health and realizing that this flesh is also passing and begins to fail you, beloved, everything that you need to live with joy, everything that you need to live with courage, everything that you need to live an obedient life has already been given to you in Christ. You do not need a second blessing. There is no such thing. God isn't a miser. God isn't stingy when he saved you. God poured out abundant blessing upon you in a way that is everything that you need. He already gave it all to you and now your responsibility, your challenge, your opportunity, the call of God on your life is this: it is to take those things revealed in Scripture and understand them, to study them, to believe them and let that confidence in what God has already done shape your entire perspective to the rest of your life in a way that you live with courage and confidence and valor no matter what life brings to you. We live the Christian life from a position of absolute strength, a position of unassailable conquest is ours because of what God in Christ has already done for us.

Here's the thing, beloved, that you must understand: you live by, you live on, you live in response to truth in this wicked world and it all starts with you starting, having a settled fundamental conviction that says, "I believe these things to be true. I rely on them and I am confident that what God has said in his word is true, that what God has given me in Christ is something that is only a small down payment on the greater blessings that he will most certainly give to me throughout all of the blessings of eternity." And we've looked at these things over time, over the past few weeks. What is it that we are confident in? Beloved, you have a strong assurance, you have a settled conviction in your mind that God has revealed himself in the Scriptures and in the Lord Jesus Christ. You put on, as it were, the belt of truth. You realize that in your salvation, God has imputed to you, God has counted to your benefit and on your behalf, the perfect righteousness of Christ so that you realize that you have a perfect standing with God based on what Christ has done for you. You realize that as a result of your salvation, that you are perfectly reconciled to a holy God; that your sins will never be called against you again; that God will not on the day of judgment change his tone and suddenly accuse you once more of the sins that you're all guilty of. You realize, "No. No. Christ has taken all of my sin away as far as the east is from the west, buried in the depths of the sea. A holy God will never hold my sins against me again because I have been perfectly reconciled to him." In other words, your feet are firm on the Gospel of peace with God and you take up, as it were, the shield of faith, we saw last time. As it were, you stand behind these things as the assaults of Satan and the assaults of the world come and you are comforted in that. You are strong in it and you realize that you are protected in that, protected by the revelation of God, protected by the righteousness of Christ, protected by a perfect reconciliation to God in such utter completion, in such complete fulfillment that there is nothing that Satan can do to hinder

you, to harm you or to injure you in any kind of ultimate sense. God has provided for you in Christ in a way that gives you confidence.

Now, what we said last time is if you're in that position as a Christian, you have a responsibility. You have a duty in response to it. As you walk through this world according to physical sense, you are to take these things of spiritual sight and apply them so that you properly interpret the world around you, so that you properly live in response to this truth, so that you take what God has given – watch this – and you develop a sanctified mind and an obedient life in response to this great work of salvation that God has given you. You are not meant to be a casual Christian. In fact, the truth of the matter is, if you hear all of these things and you believe them, you realize that a casual Christian would be a contradiction in terms. The force of true salvation, the wonder of the greatness of what God has given us in Christ totally captivates the believing heart and shapes its affections in a way that redirects life completely in a different direction than what you were as an unsaved man, woman or child. It captivates you to realize the great eternal wealth that has been deposited to you in Christ and you want to live in response to that no matter what else has happened.

And yes, Scripture says, look at verse 12, chapter 6, verse 12 of Ephesians. Yeah, it's a struggle. You know, in one sense we realize that but yet in another sense we kind of shrug our shoulders at it and say, "Yeah, okay, somebody is after me but, do you know what? God has more strength and God has given me more than they can possibly overcome." Look at verse 12, Paul says, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." You say, "Wow, there's a supernatural enemy to my soul at work here. But do you know what? In all of these things that God has given, I am more than conqueror in Christ. Faith is the victory that has overcome the world. God is stronger than Satan. Greater is he who is in me than he who is in the world and that means that in Christ I have the capacity to live an obedient, God glorifying life even though supernatural forces that I can't see are arrayed against me trying to make me fail and fall." What you're supposed to say is, what you're supposed to realize is what I do then is I take these things and moment by moment in challenge, in temptation, in sorrow, I view all of my life through the prism of this great armor of God that he has given to me and I seek each moment to glorify Christ with what he has done that I would not sin against this great God who has given me such a great salvation. That's verses 10 through 16.

Now, the Apostle Paul in our text for this morning is going to finish the metaphor, the word picture of this armor, and he leads us to this final sense of invincibility that gives a great sense of confidence to go forward in hope, and a great sense of receptivity, of accepting the responsibility and saying, "I want my life to be obedient to Christ. I want my life, I want the whole tenor of my existence on earth to be one which is reflecting glory to Christ in whatever sphere of life he chooses to give to me." And beloved, you can do and you must do exactly that.

Look at verse 17 as we look at our text for this morning. Paul says, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Paul has shown us the footwear, the shield, the belt. He has given us the shield of faith to go forward and now he is completing the picture of the equipment and you might say, "You know, how could he possibly even add to the wonderful things that he has already described? I mean, if God has given us this great revelation, the righteousness of Christ, reconciliation with him, and that that's sufficient, what could you add to it? How could there possibly be more?" And then you start to realize that as wonderful as those things, to realize that there is still more that God has done on our behalf is to come into contact with the reality of salvation in such a way that your heart is just overjoyed, overwhelmed, totally humbled and grateful before the God who has done what he has done.

What do you do in addition to all of these things that we've talked about over the past few weeks? How could you add to the wonder of that? Point 1, we've been singing about it all through the morning already. Point 1: remember your future glory. Remember your future glory and I just get really worked up talking about this theme. This is the greatest theme that a Christian preacher could ever present to a Christian audience is to lift your mind out of the difficulties of your present life which are real and difficult and we sympathize with you in those, but to lift your mind out of that and place it into the realm of what still lies ahead and you'll see that what lies ahead swallows up the death-field nature of this life with victory. You remember your future glory. If you are going to win in combat with Satan, beloved, you must remember your position in Christ and what lies ahead.

Look at verse 17 with me again. We'll look at the first half here right now. Paul says, "take up the helmet of salvation," the helmet that salvation provides to you. Roman soldiers wore a hard helmet made of iron or bronze and it protected the most vital part of their being, their head. It had an inner lining. It was a heavy helmet but it had an inner lining for comfort. You can tell I'm eager to get into the content of this. And so Paul as he continues to talk about the armor that a soldier wore said, "Think about your salvation as a helmet guarding your head." And what does Paul mean by the helmet of salvation? What do we mean when we talk about salvation in general? Well, beloved, once again, I get the joy and the privilege and the pleasure of saying to you, "Let's just look at the broader context." What has Paul said about salvation earlier in this letter that would inform what he means by the term "salvation" here in chapter 6, verse 17? Stay with me here because this is really really wonderful stuff from God's word. You know, as you look at verse 17, if you were just reading it by itself, you just picked up a Bible and you opened it and you fell upon this verse kind of randomly and it said, "Take the helmet of salvation," you really wouldn't know what he meant by that, would you, because he doesn't explain it here. Well, do you know what? He doesn't need to explain it here in chapter 6, verse 17, because he has already made it plain what he has in mind by the term "salvation" in what he has said earlier in the letter. I know that the way the Bible is structured with chapter and verse divisions that we tend to, you know, once we've read chapter 5, we put it aside and we go on into chapter 6 as if the two were unrelated sections to one another. Not the case. Paul wrote this in a continual form without verse and chapter divisions so that we are supposed to understand the whole book in its hold

context. What did he mean when he said the helmet of salvation? What had he said about salvation earlier in the letter. Look over chapter 2 and be prepared for something wonderful to be brought to bear upon your understanding of what it means for you to be a Christian here this morning.

Chapter 2, beginning in verse 4. Paul had already said in verses 1 through 3 of chapter 2, you were dead in sin, dominated by the devil, doomed to suffer the wrath of God because you were guilty in sin and you were completely totally unable to do anything to get yourself out of that miserable lost condition. You needed to be delivered. You needed to be saved. And what did God do? Verse 4, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." Keep going because that's not the end of the sentence, not by a long shot. Verse 6, "he raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that," here's an ultimate purpose of salvation, the ultimate purpose. Why did God save you, Christian? It was "so that in the ages to come," in a time still future beyond this world, "He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." What he says here is that God saved you so that in an eternal age yet to come, he might bestow and pour out upon you untold blessing, untold joy, untold glory, that you would enjoy together with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in perfect bliss, in perfect harmony with God forever and ever and ever and ever and ever, amen.

That's why he saved you. When Paul talks about salvation in Ephesians 6, beloved, watch this, this is so important because some commentators narrow it too much and just talk about this life. Here in this life right now, we enjoy wonderful blessings of being saved, don't we? Our sins are forgiven. We have peace with God as Paul goes on to talk about later in chapter 2. We know something about joy. We have the indwelling Spirit. We have fellowship with the saints. God has transferred us already. He has lifted us out of the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. We live under the benevolent Lordship of Jesus Christ as Christians. That's wonderful. It is a great thing to be saved. The very nature of present Christian existence is far more than you and I deserve to be in that realm of blessing. And if we died and ceased to exist, having been able to spend a period of our time in life, in physical life under the Lordship of Christ, under the smile of his blessing, we would have enjoyed much more goodness than we could have dreamt possible and certainly far more than we ever deserved. That's if we died and ceased to exist. But do you know what? That's not even an appetizer of God's ultimate purpose in Christ. That's a down payment but the full wealth of salvation is yet to be given to us. It's in the ages to come.

Look at verse 7, chapter 2, verse 7. Notice this. Oh, where this goes is so awesome! It's "so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." And if you look over at chapter 3, verse 20, you say, "Well, what's that going to be like?" I couldn't begin to tell you what it's going to be like, I just know that it's going to be good. And how good is it going to be? Chapter 3, verse 20, "to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." However wonderful it is in eternity is completely

beyond our human capacity to guess at here in this life. It is more than we can think. It is far more than we can think. It is abundantly far more than we can think. It's beyond all that we could ask or think. That's what God has stored up for you in salvation. That's the ultimate purpose of your salvation is that God would bring you safely into eternity and you will be flabbergasted at the glory of Christ. You will be flabbergasted at the joy and the perfection of heaven. Whatever that is like, it's far more than you and I can conceive. Speculation couldn't bring us to the doorstep of the mansion of glory that we will enjoy and the magnitude of how wonderful it will be.

That, beloved, is the ultimate purpose of your salvation is to bring you into that realm one day soon and when you're there, it's going to be wonderful and that eternal dimension means this: in your union with Christ, in the fact that you belong to Christ and you are in him and he is in you, it means that Christ is risen from the dead so you shall be also. Christ is glorified, so shall you be also. Scripture says we will be like him. Somehow the resurrected glory of Christ is a measure of what your eternal existence is going to be like and the weakness of your flesh, the frailty of your human body, the sorrow that life has brought to you, the difficulty of human relationships, your own mediocrity, inconsistency and unfaithfulness, all of that is going to be washed away like a flood and you are going to be ushered into this pristine realm of glory that tongue can't describe. That is why God saved you, it is to deliver you into that eternal realm of blessing. That's why Christ died for you. That's what belongs to you as an heir of Christ.

Now, remember, go back to Ephesians 6:17. This is what Paul has said salvation is in the context of Ephesians. He has looked to eternal blessing and now he tells you, "Take up the helmet of salvation and put it on as you battle with demonic forces, as you live in the midst of a deceptive world. You take that on and let it protect you." And what do you do? Now we drop all the metaphors and get to the reality to which the metaphor was pointing. How is it that you overcome the discouragement? How is it that you find the motivation to live life for Christ? You remember this, beloved, you remember that your glory is still yet to come. Victory will be complete. And mark this, watch this, watch how this makes you invincible in the Christian life against the assaults of Satan when you appropriate it by faith and I'll back up. Think about what we've said over the past few weeks from this perspective. All of this starts to come together and you start to see the wonder and the magnitude and the certainty of salvation, of what God has done for you in Christ, and the fact that the things that are most precious to you, Satan can't lay a finger on despite his supernatural power. Watch this. Watch this: the revelation of God given in his word, given in Christ, Satan can't mar it. Satan cannot diminish the glory of that one bit. He cannot land a blow against its impeccable perfection. You look at the righteousness of Christ, Satan – mark it, we'll see this a little later in the message – Satan already had his chance to try to undermine the righteousness of Christ in a series of temptations and other confrontations and discouragements that he tried to lay in the path of Christ. Christ overcame them all. Satan cannot diminish the righteousness of Christ because it's perfect and it cannot change. Satan cannot take away your objective reconciliation with God.

These are things that are not in his realm to touch. God has not given him permission to touch his revelation, to touch the righteousness of Christ, to touch you in your reconciled

position to take away your salvation. And now watch this, beloved, bank all of your life, all of your hope, every expectation you have, bank it on this, you can't go wrong: Satan cannot take away your future glory in Christ. Satan cannot reach that. God has placed that beyond his realm and so in the armor of God that protects you against Satan, you rest in those things that Satan does not have the capacity to touch in any way, shape or form. Your salvation rests on the righteousness of Christ, not your own and Satan can't diminish it. We know these things from God's perfect revelation in his word and in the incarnate Christ. Satan can't take that away. The point of your salvation is an eternal glory so rich, so wonderful that you ought to be on your spiritual tiptoes looking and waiting as if you were a kid at Christmas, "I can't wait to get my hands on that gift!" It's never going to go away and so what you start to see, what Paul has woven here is a tapestry, to change the metaphor; Paul has given you a tapestry all woven together for you to look at and say, "This is the big picture of salvation. It's all glorious. It's all wonderful. It's all from God and nothing can take it away. And even supernatural wicked forces that are riled up against me can't touch that upon which my salvation rests and that which my salvation promises to me." So you can see why Paul uses this armor imagery. Yeah, you're in a struggle, yeah, you're in a battle, but do you know what? You're ready for that battle because that with which you wage war, so to speak, are invincible weapons from the hand of God himself. That's why it's the armor of God. It's the armor which comes from God and that's what he has given you in Christ if you're a Christian.

You know, I'll tell you, you can tell right now whether you're a Christian or not. If your heart is overjoyed in response to these truths, you belong to Christ. If you're cold and indifferent and you just can't wait for this to get over with, you're not a Christian. It's that simple, it's that plain, because to belong to Christ and have through his word, to have Christ show you through his word all that he has done for the true Christian, the true Christian says, "Oh, Lord, thank you! I'm so grateful!" And only someone who is dead in sin could listen to that and just say, "How soon is this going to be over? You know, when can I get on with my day?" You see, this draws the line right down the middle of your heart. And if you are rejoicing in these things today, whatever other doubts you may have felt in the past, I would want you on the authority of God's word to go out saying, "I belong to Christ and it's going to be well with my soul forever and ever." And if you're cold and indifferent, I would just want you to wake up to the fact that you're still dead in sin, dominated by the devil, and you belong to him. Satan is your father if these things are not important to you. It's that clear.

But Paul here is writing to us as Christians, giving us confidence in the sense that our victory will be complete. Do you know what? He used similar imagery in 1 Thessalonians. Turn over to 1 Thessalonians 5, and in this somewhat parallel passage, you are going to see it again, you are going to see that Paul gives this future emphasis to salvation when he talks about the helmet of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul says, "since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet," here it is, "the hope of salvation." Now, he has used that helmet of salvation idea again. Hope, not a wish, not my fingers crossed, a certain expectation that salvation will be accomplished in your life. That's the biblical meaning of hope. When he says hope of salvation here in 1 Thessalonians, what does he point to when he talks about

a helmet? We love God's word. He says in verse 9, "For." Put on as a helmet the hope of salvation for, because, for this reason, "because God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a future dimension that he is pointing to here. What is your destiny as a Christian? Your destiny is not wrath. It's not punishment. It's not eternal sorrow and torment in hell, Christian. You build your hope on the fact that you have been destined for obtaining, yet to come, future dimension of salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, "who died for us," verse 10, "so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him."

No matter what happens, Christian, you will never be separated from Christ. You will live together with him forever and ever. You take that reality, you take that certainty, you take that promise from a God who cannot lie and says, "I promise you," God in his word, as it were says, "I promise you that I'll do this. I promise you that I will deliver you to this ages to come blessing and I will not let you be taken out of my hand. I will not let anything separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And you take that and you say, "That's what I'm living for. That's what I'm hoping in." As that saturates and permeates your mind, you realize that whatever else Satan does, he can't take your most valuable possession away from you and you are safe. You are defended against his fiery darts in that realm of certain blessing and so how do you fight Satan? Not by rebuking him. Not by silly exorcisms or things like that that are done in other circles. No, you go back and you say, "I remember my future glory. I remember what God has saved me for and that fills me with joy, confidence and a desire to please him." And you're shaped for battle. You're ready. Your dark days here yield to bright days ahead without fail. So you're ready. Courage. Strong. Valor. Obedient. Loving toward this God who did that.

Final piece of equipment that Paul points you to leads us into our second point for this morning. We said you remember your future glory, secondly: you rely on the word of God. You rely on the word of God. And I hope that part of what starts to dawn on you here is that you realize that with the fullness of blessing that God has given, that you don't need to be looking for something more. You don't need God to speak to you privately in a vision or in a voice or anything like that. You don't need that. By the way, he doesn't do that. Anything that makes you think that God is speaking to you apart from the words of Scripture is a deception and you don't need it. Why would you need that in light of all of these wonderful things of the righteousness of Christ and God's revelation and your future glory, why would you need anything else? You don't. You're satisfied. You're solid. You're content. You're strong in these things. They instill in you a fiber of Christian character, virtue, conviction and commitment that takes you through the battle.

Now secondly, Paul says, you need to rely on the word of God. As you go through life, the future salvation isn't here yet and so you're still in the realm of conflict; that future culmination of salvation will be a time of peace but now there is still a time of conflict in the midst of this life and what God says here in his word is that you have the help that you need right now. Look at verse 17, chapter 6, verse 17 of Ephesians, he says, "take the helmet of salvation," we've looked at that, "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Now, the Roman soldier had a small dagger like weapon, maybe 6, 18 inches



long. When we use the word "sword" we tend to think of the long Japanese swords and you kind of swing those around and whack off whatever is in front of you. That kind of sword that is indicated by this word here, it's more of a dagger; it's more a weapon of precision; a weapon of close combat, and this is the only offensive piece in the armor. Brothers and sisters in Christ, God has given you a weapon that wields the power of the Holy Spirit.

Look at it there with me, verse 17, "the sword of the Spirit," the sword which the Spirit enables, which the Spirit gives power to and what is it that sword? Well, do you know what? It's not speaking in tongues. It's not fake words of prophecy. It's not being slain in the spirit. It's not getting physical healing in a staged controlled environment. It's none of that. It is the word of God.

Now, this particular term for "word," there are a couple of different words in the original language that you could talk about. There is the logos of God, Jesus is described as the Logos of God in John 1:1. That's the word that's often used to refer to the fullness, the completeness of God's revelation. This is a different word, rhema, and here in this context while those terms are often used as synonyms, here in this context this is emphasizing something a little bit different. Rather than referring to the word as the 66 books of the Bible and referring to it in a collective comprehensive sense when you let Scripture interpret Scripture, Paul here is talking about something just a little bit different, just a little bit different approach in talking about the written revelation of God. This is a word that emphasizes the individual parts of Scripture rather than revelation as a whole. You can talk about a piece of cake as opposed to the cake. The same substance, same lack of nutritional value to it, I guess you could say when you're talking about a cake, but the idea of a part of a greater whole is the idea Paul is using here and I'm going to show that to you here. What is he saying here? He says you take the word of God and you use discernment as you apply, let's put it this way, individual Scriptures to your life, to the teaching that you encounter, to the circumstances that you find. You take individual Scriptures and use them with precision to give you guidance, to give you discernment, to give you comfort in the midst of it all. Paul in this passage may well have been thinking of the time when Satan tempted our Lord in the wilderness.

Look back at Matthew 4 and you'll see from the life of our Lord what I believe Paul is alluding to here when he talks about the sword of the Spirit, a precision weapon, a word that often speaks to individual texts more than revelation as a whole, and what do you find when you look at the life of our Lord? It's cool. It really is cool. Matthew 4:1, "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." Okay, notice the context right here. We are talking in Ephesians 6 about battle, a struggle that is not against flesh and blood but with Satan himself, with demonic forces. Okay, well, Matthew 4, Jesus is being tempted by the devil. That puts us in the same general realm of conflict, doesn't it? That gives us direction. This gives us help to see and understand what Paul was talking about.

Verse 2, "after Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones

become bread." He's tempting Jesus. He is saying, "Rely on yourself. Rely on your own power. Take things into your own hands and command a stone to be, bread so that that hunger that you're feeling could be satisfied."

Look at what Jesus says in verse 4. He quotes one particular text and he says, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word,'" that's the word *rhema*, not *logos*, on every word, on specific individual text, man lives on those things, not on bread, "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." What did Jesus do? He answered a temptation with a specific text from Scripture, incidentally using the word which coincides with the word that Paul used in Ephesians 6. He quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 and says, "Satan, that would be wrong for me to do. I won't give in to your temptation because God has already said that his word is more important than literal physical bread. I'll wait on God for the provision of my need."

So Satan tried again. This time he tempts Jesus toward presumption on God. Look at verse 5, "the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, "He will come in His angels concerning You"; and "on their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"" Satan comes to him and twists the meaning of Scripture and calls on Christ to presume on God to do something foolish that had no meaning in itself other than to test God to see if his word is true and

Jesus says, "No. I'm not going to do that." And he resisted with a quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16. Look at Matthew 4:7, "Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written, "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'"" Satan says, "Test God to see if his word is true." Jesus says, "God says don't do that. I'll stand right here." Notice specific texts. He doesn't answer him with a complete general revelation to the book of Moses, in all of its chapters, he goes to a specific text that answered the specific need of the moment with precision.

Satan tried a third time, promised Jesus possessions in exchange for worship. Look at verse 8, "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.'" Wouldn't you like to have all that belongs to me? Just sell your soul out to me. Worship me and it belongs to you. And once more, Jesus took up the dagger of God's word with precision with a particular text and plunged it into the heart of the temptation to shatter it, to puncture it for what it was and to lay forth its evil intent behind the external attraction, if you will, of the temptation. Verse 10, "Jesus said to him, 'Go, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'""

Take a look at the big picture here. Look at what's going on here. When Paul calls you to take up the sword of the Spirit, he is calling you to develop the kind of discernment that comes from an accurate understanding, not just of Scripture in general but of particular texts of the Bible that respond to the particular nature of the temptation or trial that is in front of you. This is why, beloved, you must be a student of the word of God. It's not

enough, in fact it just adds to the deception to just say in general, "I believe that the Bible is the word of God," if you never open it and read it. It is beyond useless. It opens the door to deception to simply say, "Well, what do you think Jesus would do in this situation?" Well look, there's only one way that you know what Jesus would do and that's out of Scripture. Far too often to say, "Well, I think Jesus would do this. I think Jesus would be loving and kind and not judgmental toward anyone." Well, what you end up with, unless you're tying what Jesus does directly to the text of Scripture itself, you're just creating Jesus in your own image and saying, "I think Jesus is a lot like me." And that's not Jesus. He's not a lot like you.

So if you are going to effectively wield the sword of the Spirit, you need to know God's word. You need to read it consistently, daily. You need to commit it to memory. Beloved, you need to be under the teaching of God's word on a consistent faithful basis because that is how God equips you with the dagger of the moment that you need to respond to the temptation and the battle of the day. Someone, I can't remember quite who it was, a week or so ago said, "You know, I was thinking about just exactly what you were talking about from God's word today. I was thinking about it in a completely different context from a different Scripture and here's how it helped me." It was a great encouraging conversation. You see, what happens is that's what God does. When you're committed to God's word, when you're in it on a daily basis, when you're faithful with the people of God, God brings these things together in a way that gives you strength that you wouldn't have on your own. He equips you so that you can see how this particular Scripture answers the particular need or temptation of what's in front of you and if you're not taking in God's word, you're laying down the dagger and you're vulnerable once more to the devil.

Beloved, let's think about it this way, I'm almost done here. Think about this: our impeccable Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, lived his life that way. He met Satan that way. He submitted himself to Scripture and he used Scripture himself in order to rebut the temptations of Satan, so thorough and complete was his knowledge of God's word. Do you see that in doing so he laid forth before you the way in which you yourself survive and win in your battle with the devil? You know God's word. You respond to it with individual texts. If Christ lived that way, how much more do you need God's word to succeed in battle with the devil? These words are your life. These words are what equip you for a supernatural battle. These words are sufficient. As it was said in Jeremiah, "Take and eat. Your words were found and I ate them and your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart because I have been called by your name, O Lord God of hosts. I've been saved by the blood of Christ and this word is now my life."

Let's wrap up. It's sad for me to come to this conclusion because this encounter with the armor of God has been such a help to me personally. Let's just wrap it up. Let's review it one more time, shall we? We shall. God has given you a full broad revelation in Christ and in his complete word. He has imputed to you a perfect righteousness that cannot be assailed in your salvation and he has brought to you perfect reconciliation where your sins will never be called into account again. You take those things and you surround yourself with them and you let that be the anchor of the way you view the world and the

way that you respond to life, that which informs your affections. And then you remember that at the end of this is eternal glory and in the meantime you have a perfect word which Christ himself used to defeat Satan and you realize you have an arsenal, you have an armory of equipment that God calls you to that is sufficient for the battle. Oh Christian, you should never be discouraged. You should never be under the weight and feel like there is nothing but despair ahead. You need not fear Satan. You should take his threats seriously and use the armor of God but you do not need to be afraid because everything that matters has already been given to you by God in Christ and it prevails over the devil. Will you take up that armor and live life accordingly? That's the call on the soldier who belongs to Christ.

Let's pray together. The Apostle John said, "This is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith."

*Father, we thank you that in your word, in Christ, in the gifts that you have conveyed to us in salvation, we have everything that is necessary for successful conflict. Father, we thank you that we can rest in you, we can hide in you, and know that what you have given us will protect us and enable us to go forward in a way that will help us live obedient lives that glorify Christ and protect us from supernatural opposition that would kill us, that would harm us. But Father, in Christ, in your word, in your righteousness, in our future hope of glory, we're more than conquerors through him who loved us. May you take each brother and sister in Christ and build them up on these truths. Father, may the sense of isolation and threat and vulnerability in non-Christians cause them to cry out for mercy to Christ for salvation that they too might enter into this supernatural world of glory, bliss and love that you have given to us in our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in our Savior's name. Amen.*

Thanks for listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. You can find church information, Don's complete sermon library and other helpful materials at [thetruthpulpit.com](http://thetruthpulpit.com). This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.