

**Ephesians 6: 11; “To Put on the Armor of God”, Sermon # 2 in the series –
“The Whole Armor of God”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on July 22nd, 2012, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

How can I be strong in the spiritual battle for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom? How can we as His Church see the gospel go forward, with Satan opposing us at every step? The answer to these questions is that each believer must put on the whole armor of God, and join in supporting this battle together with the others in their local church who are following the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to stand against the wiles of the devil, in order to face the Satanic opposition which is sure to come to all those following Christ, the Christian must put on the whole armor of God. What exactly does this mean? We will consider what it means by asking 3 “what” questions of this verse. 1st – “What is this armor? (That is we will consider its description) 2nd – What kind or quality of armor is it? (That is, we will consider its origination) And 3rd – What does it mean to put it on? (That is, we will consider its exercise)

1st of all then – What is this armor? (What is its description?)

We need to understand that as a suit of armor, this armor actually is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Turn with me over to Romans 13: 11-14. When you were saved, your salvation was wrought out by God the Father bestowing salvation upon you, through His Son. He did this by imputing the merits of Christ’s perfect life to you and by His sacrificial death on the cross He forgave you of all of your sins. God not only clothed you, the believer, with garments of salvation, but He also presented you a suit of spiritual armor called here in verse 12, “the armor of light”. This armor is presented to you when you first believe, but you are given the responsibility of putting it on. There are some things in the Christian life that you as a believer cannot do because they are God’s work and you are passive in relation to those things. I am thinking now of regeneration, the dominion of sin being taken away in your heart, and a new disposition of righteousness implanted in the mind where God began to cultivate righteousness in you. Those things only God can do. But there are many other things which you are commanded to do in the Christian life, by His grace, and you must be active in them. You must begin to learn to do all of those things which you have been commanded to do, by the power of Christ working within you. Some of them are listed for us here. “It is high time for us to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than we believed.”

You need to grasp the fact that not all Christians think that they have a responsibility to fight in the spiritual warfare. They reason this way; salvation is all of God’s grace; therefore Christ will do it all for me. I can relax; I need not strive to be obedient. I all will come about in my life in due time. But this text says – not so. In fact this text says that this is going to sleep on guard duty and it is high time that you awake out of spiritual sleep. It is not for a Christian to be sleepy headed when God would have him to be active; awake and alert. We are much nearer our salvation; that is out meeting Christ face to face and having our life’s work evaluated than when we first believed. “Only one life, too soon is past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” Do you realize that when Christ was doing His greatest work for all of his disciples, for their salvation, by praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, that His closest disciples were sleeping? You should learn from this that your determination to stay spiritually awake will not be enough; you must believe in Christ and be clothed with Christ, just as you would go about to put on a suit of armor. This is how you will stay alert, and awake, and active in service to Him in these days. Put on Christ and do not think to be passive when Christ would have you to be active. If you have clothed yourself with Christ you will be in a position to think about loving your neighbor. If you are trusting in Christ then you can cast off the works of darkness by taking action by grace to think about what those sinful works have done to hinder your being able to do the will of God. Think about how they have hindered you from glorifying God in the past. Think about how

important they have been in times past in your life before this, and then begin dealing decisively with them. This happens only through Christ. You put off and leave behind your old ways of thinking; that life is one big party and that you are going to live for the next game, the next drink, or the next pleasurable experience. You begin to realize that you now have the armor of Christ's purity to cover your heart. Now can now consciously cultivate Christ in your life. You can begin to truly pursue righteousness when you have a proper hatred of sin and what it does to dishonor God and hurt other people.

Begin to ask yourself pertinent questions. How can I walk properly in love for the brethren and not be envious and fight with them to get my own way in everything? How can I really become the humble, self-denying, holy child of my God that He wants me to be? It is by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ and making no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. Physical sleep is a good thing, but not when it overruns your fulfilling your responsibilities. So it is with spiritual sleep. When I am sleeping spiritually, I cannot overcome Christ's spiritual enemies or mine. You must therefore believe in your Lord Jesus, and trust implicitly in His Word to have this armor of light. You are spiritually naked without it. When man was first placed in the garden of Eden he was created wearing his spiritual armor. He was created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. His was a true holiness, but it was something which he had to stand in for a time of probation. As the representative head of our whole race, his holiness would be tested, and then God would confirm him in it forever if he could stand in his original righteousness by his own free will. After a short time Satan came into the garden and through his deception of Eve and Adam's disobedience in listening to her voice instead of God's, he succumbed to sin against God. Satan stripped them of their armor which was their original righteousness. Now they were naked and they knew it. Now they were defenseless because Satan taken away their protection from them. They were vulnerable to every temptation and to physical and eternal death. This is now the state of every person without Christ. If Christ had not come into the world, being sent by the Father, then all mankind would have perished.

But when Jesus came, He said this in Luke 11: 20: "But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come among you." "When a strong man (that is Satan) fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are in peace." "But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils." Satan's weapons are lies and his armor the falsehoods that he tempts men with. Satan is the strong man fully armed guarding his own palace, that is his own kingdom of darkness by which he rules in the hearts of unregenerate, sinful men. Their hearts are his goods, and they are kept in a state of false security and false peace thinking that they love sin and darkness. But when Christ came, He was stronger than the devil, and overcame his temptations in the wilderness, and completely overthrew him at the cross by His suffering as a sinless sacrifice in our place. This has made all the difference in the world for the person who trusts in Jesus.

Look over at Ephesians 5: 8-12. "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." "Walk as children of light." (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord." "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them." "For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret." "But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever make manifest is light." "Therefore He says, 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.'" Before Christ comes into our life we are alienated from the life of God. We are in darkness – in a state of ignorance concerning spiritual things; we are without strength and in a state of friendship with the world. We are really in league with the devil whether we know it or not. But when we first trust in Christ all this changes. We are no longer in darkness, we are light in the Lord. We are no longer in darkness, we are light in the Lord; we are no longer weak but we have His strength, we have His friendship, we have His

nearness, and now we have armor and weapons to fight the spiritual battle. A Christian not only puts on Christ when he first believes, but He puts Him on every day as he goes out into the world. Let me ask you now, whether you are clothing yourself with Christ every day, consciously remembering that He is the Captain of your salvation, and the armor that you wear into the spiritual battle every day? After all, He is the One and the only One who has overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. And now He would have you to overcome them really and practically every day, by His mighty power.

2ndly – We want to ask - What kind of armor is this; what quality? (That is, we will consider its origination)

Well, it is of Divine origin. It is hammered out on the anvil of Divine purposes and Eternal love. God Himself, very lovingly and thoughtfully designed the weapons that would be fitting to save sinners and to make them good soldiers. Christ hammered them out Himself, by His becoming the ultimate weapon. And now that He has gained the victory over sin and death; he gives us the weapons of His making that will be effective to promote truth and righteousness, and to destroy sin. Isaiah 54: 16 and 17. “Behold I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire, Who brings forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the spoiler to destroy.” “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn.” “The is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me, says the Lord.” All this the Father purposed and has brought to pass in and through our Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father has created all things for His good pleasure, through the Son, in order to serve His purposes, so that whatever opposition which Christ’s Church faces, whether it is from the devil, or men who abuse their political power, or pope’s who counterfeit the spiritual authority of Christ; no weapon which they form shall prosper, and every tongue which tries to rise against His people in judgment, His dear people shall be able to condemn all those attempts to waste and destroy in the day of judgment. All of these adverse forces are “raised up” by His Providence, according to His secret purpose, even as Pharaoh was, so that He might show His power in them. As John Gill says, “They are entirely dependent upon Him, and subject to His influence, direction, and overruling providence; and therefore His people had no reason to be afraid of them.” This is their heritage. It is something which Christ has purchased for them by His righteousness and His death and gives to them by the power of His resurrection.

Look also at 2 Corinthians 10: 3-6. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.” “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” The weapons that Christ gives to us are not carnal; they are not weapons that men use in earthly wars. They are weapons related to the declaration of the truth. Our weapons are mighty in God for pulling down the strongholds (the word is *logismos* - λογισμος) in the Greek – imaginations) men make for themselves to continue on in sin, in error, opposing God’s righteousness and grace and truth found in Christ. It is by the holy use of the Word of God concerning Christ that a man’s boastful self-justifying, self-righteous pride in himself is broken down. It is when the believer is using the weapons of Divine revelation, skillfully wielded and prayerfully selected, that they are in a good position to defeat the devil and to submit to the authority of God and Christ to rule over them. Our thoughts are taken captive to Christ’s obedience and we become willing to obey through knowing and acting upon the truth of the Word of God, and declaring it by the power of the Holy Spirit to others. This is also the way to see the thoughts of many people around us brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. It is the way to bear witness to the truth so that others might be delivered from being held captive by Satan to do his will. This truth of the obedience of Jesus Christ is “mighty through God” to pull down the strongholds of Satanic

opposition. Christ was obedient in a perfect way, and His obedience which led Him to the death of the cross for our sins, has also become the way for every believer to be changed and transformed, and to see others also brought to the truth; out of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

3rd - What does it mean to put it on? (That is, we are considering its exercise)

What does it mean to put on the armor of God? It means to make use of the armor that you have been given. It is one thing to have armor in the house and it is another thing to have it buckled on. You must not only have grace, but this grace must be kept in exercise. This armor is made to be worn; it is not meant to be polished and set in a corner. Where do we begin? In Hebrews 5: 11 it says that the saints that Paul was writing to had become "dull of hearing". It says that they should have been teachers by that time, but they had need for someone to come and teach them the first principles of the oracles of God. They had come to need milk and not solid food. Then it says this: "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil." The reason that they had become babyish Christians was because they had not exercised their senses to discern good and evil. This is very significant. Maturity, or being of full age, is being able to take in the solid food of God's word and then exercise with it until you discern good and evil. We are those who do battle against evil and for the good. With regular practice we become good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

Listen to 2 Timothy 2: 1-4. "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier." Once you have put on the armor and used it for awhile, you become willing to endure hardship as a good soldier. You see what a hindrance to the battle for truth and righteousness it is to entangle yourself with the affairs of this world. The key word here is "entangles". I am aware that this verse is particularly to be applied to those in the full time ministry for Christ. But the principle is true also for anyone who would fight and win spiritual battles. All of us have responsibilities in this world. We are not and should not be hermits. But to become entangled in the world means that you spend so much time in doing worldly things and fulfilling earthly and material responsibilities that you do not devote time to God or to spiritual realities. Let us realize in closing that you and the minister of your church are in these battles together. It is Christ's kingdom that we would together advance, and Satan's kingdom we would pull down and see destroyed. So let us remember to pray for one another and work together toward the goals which Christ has set for us, putting our armor on, for Satan will not be still while we oppose him. Our Christ has overcome him, but He also expects us to overcome him in our everyday experience where we are tempted and tried. The way to overcome the evil one is through your having fellowship in your heart continually with Christ, and seeing this as your armor. You don't let this armor be stripped from you by worldliness. To the most worldly of the churches which He addressed in the letters to the Seven churches of Asia, our Lord Jesus Christ says in Revelation 3: 20 - "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Let us not love the world more than fellowship with Christ and obedience to Christ. Let us overcome the devil by having our armor on and learning to endure hardship, and let us overcome the world by not allowing ourselves to become entangled in the affairs of this life.

