

The Christian in Full Armour (Part 1)

Put on the whole armour of God.

Text: Ephesians 6:10-13

Introduction:

1. We now reach the climax of the Epistle as the Apostle exhorts the believers concerning the spiritual battle they are in and the need to put on the whole armour of God for the conflict. The words “Finally, my brethren” indicate that these are the Apostle’s final words in the Epistle.
2. Every Christian is a soldier! 2 Tim. 2:4 “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath **chosen him to be a soldier.**” The Christian life is a battleground, not a playground!
3. Satan cannot take the Christian to hell but He certainly will seek to neutralize us in the battle so that we are ineffective for the cause of Christ.
4. We face a three-fold enemy as believers – the world, the flesh and the devil. We have the enemies without (the world and the devil) and the enemy within (the flesh). Satan and the world system he controls knows all too well how to appeal to the enemy within each of us!
5. Review of Epistle Outline:
 - Our Wealth in Christ (Chp. 1-3)
 - Our Walk with Christ (Chp. 4-6:9)
 - Our Warfare for Christ (Chp. 6:9-24)
6. In this message we will consider the opening verses of this section where we are exhorted concerning the source of our strength for the fight, the reality of the enemy we face and the armour God has provided to stand firm in the battle.

I. THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER (Vs. 10)

A. The Submission required for Empowerment (Vs. 10a)

1. “my brethren” = you are certainly no match for the devil until you are one of the ‘brethren’ and that is only possible through salvation. You need to be saved before you can become a soldier.
2. “be strong” = pres/pass/imp. Means “to make strong, endue with strength, to become able. The idea is “to clothe one’s self with strength as one puts on a garment.” (Wuest)
 - a. The present tense indicates that this is to be an ongoing, day by day – “be continually strengthened”.
 - b. The passive voice reveals that this strengthening is not self-produced but is produced by another on our behalf.
 - c. The imperative mood reminds us that our part is to yield to the Lord and let Him do the work of strengthening us.
3. The same Greek word is translated “increased the more in strength (Acts 9:22), “strengtheneth” (Phil. 4:13), ‘enabled’ (1 Tim. 1:12) and “made strong” (Heb. 11:34).
4. The command to God’s people to “be strong” is one that is repeated often throughout Scripture. For example:

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- a. Moses commanded Joshua to “be strong” – “Have not I commanded thee? **Be strong and of a good courage**; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whithersoever thou goest.” (Josh. 1:9)
- b. David charged Solomon to “be strong – “And David said to Solomon his son, **Be strong and of good courage**, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.”

B. The Source of our Empowerment (Vs. 10b)

Christ is the source of our power for the battle. This is described in two ways:

1. Be strong in the Person of the Lord – “in the Lord”
 - a. Remember, as believers we are “in Christ”. Our strength is derived from our union with Him. We need to depend on the Lord to supply us with the strength we need for the battle. You need supernatural power to confront a supernatural foe!
 - b. Illustration: Vine and the branches (John 15).
2. Be strong in the Power of the Lord – “in the power of his might”
 - a. ‘power’ (kratos) = supernatural power. The same word is translated “mighty power” back in Eph. 1:19. It is also translated dominion 4 times in the N.T. (1. Pet. 4:11, 5:11, Jude 1:25, Rev. 1:6). The word has the sense of strength, might, dominion, mastery. (Hoehner)
 - b. ‘might’ = denotes inherent strength or a power that one possesses. So, the power is derived from God’s inherent strength, the power He possesses.
 - c. The hymn writer expressed it well in the words “Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armor on, Strong in the strength which God supplies Thru His eternal Son; Strong in the Lord of hosts, And in His mighty power, who in the strength of Jesus trusts Is more than conqueror.” (592 – Majesty Hymns)

II. THE ENEMY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER (VS. 11-12)

The Apostle now describes in detail the enemy we face in this battle. We are in conflict with:

A. The Head of Satanic Darkness (Vs. 11b)

1. His Title – “the devil”
 - a. Designations of Satan in Scripture
 - i. The devil – He is the accuser (Rev. 12:9; 20:2).
 - ii. Satan – He is the adversary (Rev. 12:9; 20:2).
 - iii. The god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - iv. The prince of this world (John 12:32; 14:30; 16:11).
 - v. The prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2).
 - b. Depictions of Satan in Scripture
 - i. Serpent – He is a Deceiver (Gen. 3:1; Rev. 12:9; 20:2). He is the “father of lies” (Jn. 8:44) and he “deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).

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- ii. Lion – He is a Devourer (1 Pet. 5:8). He was a “murderer from the beginning” (Jn. 8:44).
 - iii. Angel of Light – He is an Imposter (2 Cor. 11:14).
2. His Tactics – ‘wiles’
- a. ‘wiles’ = comes from the Greek word ‘methodeia’ from which we derive our English word method. It means “procedure, process, method, strategy or scheme” (Hoehner). The English word ‘wiles’ expresses the meaning well as it means “A trick or stratagem practiced for ensnaring or deception; a sly insidious artifice.” (Webster) They are “lying strategies”. Satan has had six millenniums to practice his deceptive ways and he is a master strategist!
 - b. Notice that the word is plural – ‘wiles’. Satan has multiple methods and strategies he uses to try and defeat us in the battle. You cannot defeat the devil with human wisdom and resources. 2 Cor. 10:3-5 “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: **(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)** Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”
 - c. The same Greek word occurs in only one other place in the N.T. It is earlier in the Epistle where it is translated “**lie in wait**” (Eph. 4:14) in reference to false teachers are instruments of Satan to do his bidding and they employ the tactics of their master.

B. The Hosts of Satanic Darkness (Vs. 12)

1. The Picture of the Battle (Vs. 12a)
- a. ‘wrestle’ (pale) = an old word meaning “to throw; to swing.” It is “a contest between two till one hurls the other down and holds him down.” (Robertson) It describes a contest at close quarters, face to face, hand to hand combat. In the ancient Greek games, it was a desperate struggle as the loser would have his eyes gouged out and made blind permanently. Spiritually, so much is at stake in this battle with the devil and his demons.
 - b. “not against flesh and blood” = we are reminded that this battle is not against people. People are merely the pawns on the devil’s chessboard of life whom he moves to accomplish his bidding.
2. The Personages in the Battle (Vs. 12b)
- “The Apostle would awaken his readers to a due sense of the power of the adversaries with whom they are to contend.” (Hodge) There is a four-fold description of the demonic host in this verse. Not only are we in conflict with the devil himself but we are also in conflict with the multitude of demons who work under him and do his bidding. Satan is not omnipresent; he runs to and fro and relies on a well-established network of demons to carry out his plans. Notice the word ‘against’ is repeated each time. We are definitely against some things as believers! We are in a state of spiritual conflict with:
- a. The Principalities of the Demonic Host – ‘against principalities’

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- i. The word 'principalities' comes from the Greek word 'arche' and means beginning or origin. It means "first ones, preeminent ones, leaders" (Wuest). Therefore, in relation to angelic beings it is a reference to those who are of first or high rank. The Bible reveals that there are ranks amongst the godly angels (e.g., archangel) and the same is true for the demonic hosts.
- ii. Illustration: Missionary friend's experience at youth camp in the Fiji Islands.
- b. The Powers of the Demonic Host – 'against powers'
 - i. The word 'powers' is the word 'power' in the sense of an authority. These are demons who have delegated authority from Satan to carry out his evil plans.
 - ii. Not all demons are of equal power (See Matt. 17:21 & Mk. 9:29 – "this kind").
- c. The Potentates of the Demonic Host – "against rulers of the darkness of this world"
 - i. The word 'rulers' is compound word made up of 'world' (kosmos) and 'power' (kratos – same word translated 'power' in Vs. 10). They are "cosmic potentates" (Hoehner). This world system is the primary sphere of influence and activity for Satan and his demons.
 - ii. "darkness of this world" = The spiritual darkness that envelopes this world (1 Jn. 5:19; Jn. 3:19-21) is a darkness that is generated and controlled by these evil spirits. This world's system is the devil's base of operations. He exercises tremendous power over this world.
- d. The Perversity of the Demonic Host – "against spiritual wickedness in high places"
 - i. 'wickedness' = depravity. Descriptive of these evil beings.
 - ii. "high places" = same Greek word translated "heavenly places" four times in the Epistle (See Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10). There are three heavens:
 - The atmospheric heaven.
 - The stellar heaven.
 - The heaven of heavens (abode of God).
 - Satan and his demons have access to the first two heavens. At times Satan is summoned to the throne of God to give an account of his activities as revealed in the Book of Job.
 - Illustration: The answer to Daniel's prayer was delayed for 3 weeks by a high ranking, powerful demonic spirit behind the Persian Empire referred to as "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" (Dan. 10:13, 20).
 - iii. Praise God our Saviour is enthroned above all of Satan's host (Eph. 1:20-22) and we have been seated with Christ in that position of victory (Eph. 2:6).

III. THE EQUIPMENT FOR THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER (Vs. 11a, 13)

Paul was very familiar with the typical armour of the Roman soldier. While writing this very letter, Paul was being guarded by Roman soldiers (Acts 28:16, 20).

A. The Principle for the Armour (Vs. 11a; 13a)

1. The complete armour must be embraced.
 - a. 'wherefore' = on this account, because of this, "because you have such formidable enemies, and because the conflict is inevitable" (Hodge).
 - i. "put on the **whole** armour" (Vs. 11) The phrase "put on" means "to be clothed with".
 - ii. "take unto you the **whole** armour" (Vs. 12) The phrase "take unto" Means "to pick up" (Robertson). It means "Take up as one takes up armor to put it on. The aorist imperative gives the command a sharp military tone.
 - iii. The word "whole armour" is translated "all his armour" in Luke 11:22. It is made up of 'pas' ("whole") and 'hoplon' ("weapon") so literally "all the weapons" (Wuest).
 - iv. "Leave no unguarded place, no weakness of the soul, take every virtue, every grace, and fortify the whole."
 - b. You cannot pick and choose which parts of the armour to put on in the battle. To neglect any piece of the armour is to invite defeat in the battle. To illustrate:
 - i. You may be diligent in relation to the Sword of the Spirit (God' Word) but be lazy in the area of prayer.
 - ii. You may have your Gospel shoes on, witnessing regularly, but not growing in faith and thereby become vulnerable to the devil's darts.
 - iii. You may be a person of great faith but dangerously weakened by a compromised view of Scripture (e.g., using a modern Bible version).
 - iv. You may have the assurance of your salvation (helmet), you know you are saved and on your way to heaven, but you compromise on the truth (belt of truth).
 - v. You may be quite fervent about all of the armour except soul-winning and do little to nothing to move your feet for the Gospel.
2. The character of the armour must be understood.
 - a. Observe that this armour is "**of God**" (Vs. 11, 13). It is of Divine origin. God has made provision for us to be able to survive the onslaught of the devil against us.
 - b. Man's armour will fail! Illustration: David refused Saul's impressive looking armour, choosing rather to go with the tried and tested weaponry of faith. 1 Sam. 17:39 "And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for **he had not proved it**. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have **not proved them**. And David put them off him."

B. The Purpose of the Armour (Vs. 11b; 13b)

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The word 'that' introduces the reasons why we are to put on the whole armour God has provided:

1. To Stand in the face of Satan's Deceptions (Vs. 11b)
 - a. "stand against" = means to "stand face to face. It is a soldier's expression, used for standing one's ground, as against taking to flight." (Wuest) It is the opposite posture to that of fleeing. In military terms it is a defensive stance. So much of the Christian life is about standing in the place of victory. We learned about that place of victory we have in Christ in the first section of the Epistle. Standing still in the battle is contrary to natural bent of human nature. Self wants to war its own way. We need to remember that we are most full of God when we are most empty of self.
 - b. Illustrations: Think about how often God's people in the O.T. were told to stand in the battle.
 - i. The Red Sea crossing – "And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, **stand still**, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." (Ex. 14:13)
 - ii. Gideon & his 300 men – "And they **stood** every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled." (Judges 7:21)
2. To Stand in the day of Temptation (Vs. 13b)
 - a. 'withstand' = compound word made up of 'against' (anti) and 'stand' (histemi) hence to stand against, resist, withstand. It speaks of defense against a frontal attack. Much of the Christian life is about standing on victory ground and holding the line for the truth. Retreat isn't an option, there is no armour for the back! The old saying "he who fights and runs away may live to fight another day" does not apply in Christian warfare.
 - b. Illustration: Shammah (one of David's mighty men) – "And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philistines. **But he stood in the midst of the ground, and defended it**, and slew the Philistines: and the LORD wrought a great victory." (2 Sam. 23:11-12)
 - a. "the evil day" = a reference to the day of battle. The definite article ('the') marks it out as a particular day, probably "the day of violent temptation and assault whenever that may come to us during the present time." (Expositors) There are periods of quiet on the battle front but these are not times to lay aside the armour. The armour needs to be in place every day as Christian so we are ready when the attack comes.
 - i. The temptation of Christ highlights this principle – Luke 4:13 "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him **for a season**."
 - ii. Alexander Maclaren: "...the whole Christian life is warfare, but in that warfare, there are crises, seasons of special danger...whilst all days are days of warfare, there

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will be, as in some prolonged siege, periods of comparative quiet; and again, days when all the cannon belch at once, and scaling ladders are reared on every side of the fortress.”

- b. “having done all to stand” = means that we have done everything with God’s help to prepare for the conflict and to stand when it come. This is no half-hearted affair. This speaks of total commitment on the part of the Christian soldier. So many of Christ’s soldiers are missing in action today. Worse still, many of them spend most of their time firing on godly people trying to take a stand for the truth rather than directing their swords against the devil and his demonic host.

Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? You need to be saved before you can be a soldier.
2. Are you involved in the battle for the Lord? Which side of the conflict are you on?
3. What part of the armour are you neglecting in your life right now?