

**Ephesians 6: 11; “Putting On the Armor of God”, A Bible Study prepared by
Pastor Paul Rendall for the evening of August 28th, 2024.**

How can you 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. We must join together with the others in the local church in waging this spiritual warfare. We must join together with all 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 you, you 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 laying down His life for you on the cross. It is on this basis that God forgave you of all of your sins. God not only clothed you, the believer, with garments of salvation, but He also presented you with 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. In this amazing and merciful act of regeneration, God plants a new disposition of righteousness in your mind towards the cultivation of righteousness in your life. This is something only God can do. But there are many other things which you are commanded to do in the Christian life, which by His grace, 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.” So, it is true, that each of us needs to grasp the idea that all Christians have a responsibility to fight in the spiritual warfare. You need to reason this way; salvation is all of God’s grace, but I need to fight in this holy war. I can’t relax. I need to strive to be obedient, this text tells me. In fact we must come to terms with the fact that it might be possible for me, if I am not careful, to go to sleep on guard duty.

This text warns us against spiritually sleeping when we are supposed to be on our guard. God would have us to be awake, active, and alert. Why? Because we are much nearer our salvation than when we first believed. It is our duty to remember that we will someday be meeting our Lord face to face. And He will be evaluating our life’s work. “Only one life, too soon is past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” Do you remember that it was when Christ was doing His greatest work for all of his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, that were sleeping?

They couldn’t watch with Him for even an hour. We should learn from this that our determination to stay spiritually awake will not be enough. We must be actively believing in Christ, and be clothed with Christ’s power, to win the spiritual battle with the Devil. You must spiritually put on your armor, just as a soldier goes about to put his suit of armor on, piece by piece. 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 actively trusting in Christ, then you can cast off the works of darkness by taking action to think about what your sinful works have done to hinder you from your being able to do the will of God. Think about how sinful works have hindered you from glorifying God in the past. You must begin deal to deal decisively all remaining sinful works in your life. This happens only through Christ. You as a true Christian will put off and leave behind your old ways of thinking. Life is not living for this world. The Christian life is not living for the next sports game, the next drink, or the next pleasurable experience.

You now begin to realize that you have the armor of Christ's purity to cover your heart. Now you can consciously cultivate the life of Christ in your life. You can now begin to 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 these pertinent questions. How can I walk properly in love for the brethren? How can I avoid being envious and fighting with other Christians 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 you are sleeping spiritually, you cannot overcome Christ's spiritual enemies or yours. 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. Remember Adam and Eve?

When God first placed them in the garden of Eden they were created wearing spiritual armor. They were 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, Adam's 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, he caused her to spiritually fall. And then Adam disobeyed God in listening to her voice instead of His. By this means Satan stripped them of their spiritual armor which was their original righteousness.

Now they were naked and defenseless, and they knew it. They were spiritually weak in every way 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 did come, 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 weapons of war are 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. Men's hearts are his goods. And unbelievers are kept in a state of false security and false peace, by thinking that they can love sin and darkness. But when Christ came, He was stronger than the devil. He overcame the Devil's temptations in the wilderness. And He 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: 8-14. "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.'" "But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever

makes manifest is light.” “Therefore He says: Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”

Before Christ comes into your life you are alienated from the life of God. You are in darkness – in a state of ignorance concerning spiritual things. You are without strength and in a state of friendship with the world. You really are in league with the devil whether you know it or not. But when you first trust in Christ all this changes. You are no longer in darkness. You are light in the Lord. You are no longer in darkness, you are light in the Lord. You are no longer weak but you have His strength, you have His friendship, you have His nearness, and now you 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. Christ is the Captain of your salvation. The armor that He has purchased for you by His death is the armor that you wear into the spiritual battle every day.

2nd – We need to ask ourselves, what kind of armor is this? What quality is it?

(That is, we will consider its origination)

Well, it is of Divine origin. It was hammered out on the anvil of the Divine purposes and God’s eternal love. God Himself, very lovingly and thoughtfully designed the weapons that would be fitting for His Son to use, to save sinners, and to make them good soldiers. Christ hammered them out Himself, by He Himself 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.” So we see here that all this the Father purposed. And He has brought it 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.

Whatever opposition which Christ’s Church faces, whether it is from the devil, or men who abuse their political power, or the pope who counterfeits 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 2nd 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* in the Greek – imaginations). These imaginations men make for themselves to continue on in their sin, in their 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 he is in a good position to defeat the devil. You submit to the authority of God and Christ to rule over you. Your thoughts are taken captive to Christ's obedience, and you become willing to obey through knowing and acting upon the truth of the Word of God. You are able to declare it by the power of the Holy Spirit to others around you. This is also the way to see the thoughts of many people around you brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. It is the way for you 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 this armor on? (That is, we will now consider 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? Well turn over to Hebrews 5: 10. "Christ was called by God as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing." Paul says here that the saints that he was writing to had become "dull of hearing".

Verses 12-14 say – "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need for someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food." "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 senses 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 your being able to take in the solid food of God's word, and then exercise your reading and meditating upon it, until you discern good and evil. You are a person who will be learning to do battle against evil and seek to bring forth what is good. With regular practice you will become a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Listen to 2nd 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."

So, 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 we 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 goal which Christ has set for us, in our putting our armor on. For Satan will not be still while we oppose him.

