

EPHESIANS

23. WHAT TO WEAR INTO BATTLE EPHESIANS 6:13-18

Last week in Ephesians, we explored spiritual warfare and what it means to be strong “in the Lord.” Some people think that it takes a lot of faith to believe in the spiritual realm, but not believing in it requires just as much faith. Christianity is not superstitious in that there are demons behind every problem; many of our issues are self-caused (due to our sinfulness).

Some people—who think of the spiritual world as nonsense—now believe in “biological determinism.” This kind of understanding emphasizes your genetics, chemistry, etc. We make our own choices to determine who and what we are. Which is true? Is it all me/us? Is it all the world? Is it all the Devil?

- **What’s your understanding of who or what is accountable for choices and problems in the world?**

Christianity has the most nuanced, multidimensional view of evil possible. According to Scripture, there is evil *inside* and there is evil *outside*. We must know how to address that evil correctly and that is what Paul talks about today: the full armor of God. To put on the full armor of God means to rely on Spirit-led wisdom and rest in our trust of, and surrender to, Jesus as Lord.

Read Ephesians 6:13-18.

- **When you think of armor, what comes to mind?**
- **Why is it easier to fight alongside people who have the same enemy and focus?**
- **How is unity with fellow believers related to our ongoing spiritual battle?**

Paul uses a military metaphor to convey the seriousness of what he is talking about. The armor of God is a symbol of the benefits and privileges of the Gospel. Truth, righteousness, and salvation. How we use them in our life creates a new way of thinking about ourselves and the world around us.

- **Even though we know Jesus has won the battle, why is it important to be aware of spiritual forces?**
- **How has God specifically provided each piece of armor listed?**
- **What other kinds of armor do you tend to rely on for security, comfort, etc.?**

DISCUSSION NOTES

We cannot be strong in ourselves and strong in Jesus at the same time. We are not the center of our strength; God’s Spirit is. **Which armor will you choose?**

- **‘Belt of truth buckled around your waist’** – The first way we stand firm is IN THE TRUTH! One of the ways the enemy works is through lies. Jesus came full of grace and truth. Paul is saying the only way for you to escape the deception of the enemy is to let the word of God interpret reality for you.

- **‘The breastplate of righteousness in place’** - Righteousness refers to a rightness in our relationship with God, centered in Him. The enemy wants you to walk in unrighteousness. Our righteousness is a gift from God.

- **‘With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace’** – Feet and Gospel are meant to bring the idea of urgency. God has pronounced peace to all people everywhere in the world by paying for sin... someone has to tell them the good news!

- **‘Take up the shield of faith’** – People get confused and try to accomplish things that Jesus has already accomplished. How do you protect yourself? FAITH—trust in what He has said and done.

- **‘The helmet of salvation’** – Jesus is our defense and our hope. We let the knowledge of our salvation dominate our thinking where we see all of life through the Gospel.

- **‘The sword of the Spirit’** – a weapon for offense! That is your Bible, the word of God.

- **Where are you weakest?**
- **What pieces of armor do you tend to neglect?**
- **Why are all the pieces important?**

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions – Pray for each other because the enemy longs to lead people into sin. Praying in the Spirit does not mean “in a trance”; it means when you are filled with the knowledge of God’s love. Prayer in the Spirit is prayer full of confidence in God.

- **Why do you think Paul ends the armor narrative speaking about prayer?**
- **What circumstances do you feel led to pray about?**
- **How, as a community, can you remind one another of the strength you have together in Christ?**

Prayer is the place where we most exemplify “being strong in the Lord” rather than ourselves. Let the Gospel dominate your thinking.