

TRUTH – A STUDY IN EPHESIANS PART 11 – EPHESIANS 6

Ephesians 6

<p>Verses 1-9 NKJV</p>	<p><i>“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”</i></p>
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Regarding these scriptures, I will only talk briefly. However, I encourage each of us to listen to Lucas’s message from a couple of weeks ago about loving each other as we are being sanctified, putting off our old selves, loving and respecting each other, and living in submission to each other.

Children, do you think God is telling you to obey your parents because He is, as one of my grandson’s describes me at times, the fun destroyer?

Or is it because maybe your parents have some wisdom that has been learned from having been a child and now grown to an adult? Or that maybe they have garnered wisdom from God through the Holy Spirit?

Kids, if you are a child of believing parents who love God, then guess what? They pray for you! Their ‘no’s’ or ‘yeses’ could be the result of them being on their knees crying out, “Lord, I do not know how to parent; I do not know how to guide These children you have blessed me with to be adults; I am so scared that I may get this wrong, so I cry out for your wisdom, your grace, your love, your heart, your everything so I can do a good job!” So, don’t give them too much of a hard time, they have never done parenting a child of your age before.

And don’t you worry about what they are doing so much because guess what? They have to make the decisions; you just have to say, “Yes Dad” or “Yes Mum”. I believe the way you honour your parents is a direct reflection of how you honour God, your Father in heaven.

Workers and Employers, what a task. Workers, work diligently and honouring just as if Jesus was sitting at the desk next to you; because he is closer than that; he is sitting with you. Employers, the same goes for you. God is not wanting your business to fail; He wants it to succeed! Success does not have to come by belittling your staff or treating them in a way that you would not want your family treated. Always remember who you work for, God.

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So the rest of Ephesians is about standing in the victory of what Jesus has done.

When the WW2 ended, that is the enemies of the allied forces surrendered the allied forces had victory. However, fighting continued for a period of time until the commanders of both sides could enforce the terms of surrender of the enemy. That's where we are at; the war has been won, but we need to stand firm in the victory until our commander comes to enforce the terms of surrender.

This is what Paul is doing here. He is letting us know how to stand firm; how to stand in the victory until our commander enforces the terms of surrender.

<p>Verses 10-20 NKJV</p>	<p><i>"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."</i></p>
<p>Verse 14</p>	<p><i>"..Having girded you waist with the belt of truth</i></p>

I have always heard this and read this as the belt of truth around your waist. And in most places when you study the armour of God, it also says 'belt of truth'.

Roman soldier had 2 types, the girding and the hanging.

A Roman soldier wore a tunic under his armour. A portion of the tunic was pulled upward above the corded belt wrapped around his waist and bunched up around it, providing a firm, thick wrapping which encircled the soldier's waist. The girding would transfer much of the weight of the breastplate to the hips, as well as reinforcing the soldier's back and abdominal muscles.

The second 'belt' was used to hang items used in battle such as a dagger, or other weapon used in close combat situations. This belt also provided identification and identity to a legionnaire was without this, the usual Roman 'uniform' looked like most other citizens.

So, this belt identified a soldier as a soldier.

I don't believe Paul was referring to the one that was the outer belt used to hang things from.

Why? This belt is also what identified a man as a soldier. They wore this belt always, even when not in battle. When they walked around town people knew they were a soldier. It was their identify. If they were being punished for doing the wrong thing or they were dishonourable discharged, they had to give up their belt, their identity. This belt represented man's work and achievements, the outer person etc.

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However, I believe Paul was talking about the first belt. The one that girded the under tunic of the Roman soldier and carried the weight of all the other bits of armour.

And the truth that girds up all the other pieces of our armour is Jesus. It is not necessarily referring to telling the truth and not lying, although that is how we should live. It is referring to the gospel of truth; the good news of truth; the truth of God's word. John's gospel tells us that Jesus is the word of God. God's word with skin on.

In John 14 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

So, unless we know this truth; I mean really know this truth. Unless you know and believe Jesus is the only way to God the Father; unless you know and believe Jesus was born of a virgin through the power of the Holy Spirit; unless you know and believe Jesus lived sinless on the earth and only did what he saw the Father do and only said what he heard the Father say; unless you know and believe that Jesus died, was buried and was physically resurrected and today is alive and is seated at the right hand of God, then you have not girded around your waist with truth.

If you do not know the truth of Jesus, you cannot gird your waist with truth.

Unless this is how we gird our waist; with the truth of Jesus, the truth of all He is, to carry the weight of the armour; we will buckle under the pressure and attacks of the enemy. We will not stand.

So, the first thing we must do as Christians, is to ensure we have girded our waist with truth. We need to ensure we are girded in the truth of who Jesus is; do we really believe he is who he says He is? With all that entails. If we do believe that, then we have to believe His word.

God's word tells us in John's gospel that,

'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.'

To even begin to be ready for battle, we must be girded with truth. It is only The Truth that is strong enough to carry the weight of the rest of the armour.

Verse 14

"..Having put on the Breastplate of Righteous"

The breastplate was designed to prevent a blow from an enemy's sword or other weapon from reaching a soldier's vital organs, particularly, the heart. It would be difficult to apply a death blow to the torso of a soldier wearing this type of body armour. A Roman soldier's breastplate is described by Polybius (vi.23) as "a bronze plate, measuring a span every way, which they wear on their breasts and call a heart-guard (*kardiophulax*)."

This armour was to protect the natural heart, but we do not fight a natural enemy. Remember Paul told us earlier that our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual forces in the heavenly realms. So, our breastplate is the breastplate of righteousness; not ours but Jesus'.

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We do not go into battle with the enemy with our self-righteous attitudes or opinions or what we think etc.

NO! We go into battle with the righteousness that was imputed to us through Jesus. THIS is the breastplate we bear. It has His name on it, not ours. It is this righteousness that will protect our heart.

God's word tells us in Proverbs 4 to:

Read: **Proverbs 4:23 (AMPC)** *"Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life."*

We guard our heart with diligence by being careful what we spend our time reading, listening to, and watching. Our heart can become hardened and bitter; it can also become deceitful and evil. Paul and Lucas both did outstanding jobs going through the second half of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 where Paul admonishes us to put off the old self with all the deceitful desires etc and to walk in love and submission to each other.

This is how we keep guard of our heart. We put off our old selves and put on Jesus.

Verse 15

"..Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace"

Did you know that it has been proven that the military success experienced by Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar are in large measure because of their armies being well shod? This enabled them to undertake long marches at quick speed and over rough terrain.

Caligae:

Heavy-soled boots worn by Roman soldiers of all ranks up to and including Centurion. Caligae resemble sandals but were actually designed for both marching and fighting. The open design allowed for the passage of air to the feet to reduce the likelihood of blisters forming while marching, as well as other conditions such as tinea and what is today called trench foot. Socks were not normally worn with caligae, although in colder climates (such as in Britain), woollen socks were often used. Caligae incorporated three layers of leather, with the top one forming the outer shell. These boots were laced up the centre of the foot and onto the top of the ankle. Iron hobnails were hammered into the soles of the boots to provide grip, reinforcement and act as a weapon (allowing the soldier to injure an enemy combatant through a stamping action).

The spikes also made a distinct sound as a legion, which consisted of more than 1,000 men, approached. The clacking acted as an early type of psychological warfare for approaching Roman armies.

Paul used these shoes as an example to the Ephesians and all of us of how prepared we need to be. The Roman army knew they had a lot of ground to cover and a lot of different obstacles to march over. They ensured their footwear was able to withstand it all.

If our feet are sore or injured, we cannot stand.

We need to be ready or prepared to take the gospel of truth wherever God says. We need to have 'shod our feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.'

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This is done first because of our peace with God. **Romans 5:1** says because we have been justified by faith through Jesus, we have peace with God. This peace: the peace that surpassing all understanding, means we do not need to fear the attack of satan or anyone else. But if we haven't girded our waist with this truth, then our feet will not be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

We also should be prepared to go and share the gospel. Being prepared to go and share means we are ready to stand and then above all else stand.

Read: 2 Timothy 4:2 – 5

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

Verse 16

"..Taking the shield of faith'

The shield of the Roman Legionnaire was like no other. It was large, rectangular and curved. It was typically red in colour in honour of the Roman god of war, decorated with iconic images representing the Roman empire; winged eagle representing victory, lightning bolts for power. They also included markings identifying their Cohort number, their name and which century group they belonged to; so basically name, rank and serial number.

The curved design of the shield helped deflect the blows from the enemy much more effectively than a flat shield. This meant far less impact on the soldier and of course less fatigue.

The edges of the shield had a metal edging applied that stopped blows to the edge from damaging the shield.

The shields were made from 2 to 3 layers of wood glued together and then covered in calf skin and then leather. This construction aided in deflecting any arrows or missiles that had been set alight from burning the shield and rendering useless.

The slightly curved edges (from the metal applied to the edges) meant the shields could overlap with each other without actually locking in place.

This ability provided almost complete protection against enemy attack for those on the front line. It also allowed the roman army to use different formations during battle to enable them to defeat their enemy.

Our shields of faith need to be like these. They need to be sturdy and fashioned in such a way that they will deflect the blows of the enemy. To extinguish the fiery darts of the enemy they must be built correctly.

Our faith shields must be built on the foundation of Jesus as our Lord and saviour first and foremost. That is the basis, the wood. Then we ensure we know God's word so that when a particular fiery dart is cast our way our shield will deflect it and it will be extinguished; it will not penetrate. For instance, things like, 'Did God really say healing is for you?' or 'Those promises were only for those people at that time.' or 'God has lost all patience with you because you still do.....'.

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Unless we know the truth of God's word in these areas those fiery darts will penetrate. But when we know His word in these areas, and we believe it, then our shield of faith has the covering that will not allow those fiery darts to burn or penetrate. They are extinguished.

Verse 17

"..The helmet of salvation"

At the beginning of this passage of scripture in Ephesians Paul tells us who our enemy is and who we are fighting.

Satan only really has one trick, deception. If he can get us to doubt God and what He says; if he can get us to question who we are and who we belong to; if he can get us to believe even just the smallest of lies, he wins.

This is why our 'helmet' of salvation is so important. It is about knowing who you are in Christ.

Read: Romans 12:2 (NKJV)

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2 Corinthians tells us:

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

We need to protect our minds from the flying debris the enemy throws around. By ensuring we know the **TRUTH** of God's word by studying and meditating on God's word, knowing God's doctrines, then our helmet is in place and will protect us from the enemies lies.

Verse 17

"..The sword of the spirit"

Gladii were two-edged for cutting and had a tapered point for stabbing during thrusting. A solid grip was provided by a knobbed hilt added on, possibly with ridges for the fingers. Blade strength was achieved by welding together strips, in which case the sword had a channel down the centre, or by fashioning a single piece of high-carbon steel, rhomboidal in cross-section. The owner's name was often engraved or punched on the blade.

The hilt of a Roman sword was the capulus. It was often ornate, especially the sword-hilts of officers and dignitaries. It was at the time, the most feared sword of any army.

Paul tells us that our sword, the word of God, is sharper than any roman sword. In Hebrews it tells us it divides right down to our inner most being.

Read: Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV)

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Jesus' only weapon he ever used against the enemy was the word of God. When he was tempted to sin, yes tempted to sin, his greatest attacking weapon was God's word.

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Our greatest attacking weapon is God's word. But in order to use a weapon we need to know the weapon. We need to know how it feels, how it works, how to use it.

I have learnt in life that if I want to be able to actually do something, I have to learn how to do it.

When I started powerlifting, I didn't just go to a gym and pick up barbells and dumbbells. I learnt how to do it. I read up on technique, I watched videos of people lifting heavy weights. I got a coach to show me how to lift correctly. I went to lifting competitions and watched people, strong people lift correctly and learnt from that.

We have to do the same thing. As Christians, if we want to be able to wield our swords, we have to learn how. We have to know the word, we have to see others living the word out, we have to find people who know the word to help us, we have to watch how people live and follow their example as they follow Christ.

You cannot use a weapon if you have not been trained in how to use it effectively. Train yourselves on how to use it effectively.

All this armour is for a reason, to stand. And how do we stand?

Verse 18-20

"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

Prayer is how we fight. Our fight is not against anyone we can see, touch, hear or smell. It is: ***"against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"***

We are to pray ALWAYS with all kinds of prayers. Does that mean I no longer work or go to school or do anything else? No. What it means is that I ensure my communication with God is always on.

You see, prayer is the key to everything. It is the only way God works. Unless we pray, nothing happens. I don't mean that God cannot move sovereignly, of course he can. However, He cannot violate His word or go against what He has said. If He did, He would not be God. So, He has given us the wonderful ability to pray and when we pray legions of angels are set to flight.

James tells us:

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Our armour should always be on. We should never take it off. We need to ensure we are girded in truth to carry the weight of righteousness, faith, salvation, and the word.

However, you are not alone in wearing your armour. God has placed you, us in His body, in a community of other people wearing the same armour to come along side us, to help each other fight. We need to know we are not alone in this fight. We have each other.

Paul has not used this example of a Roman soldier for the fun of it. These people knew what the Roman soldiers were like, they knew how they walked in unison; they knew how fierce they were in battle; they knew how well disciplined they were. They knew how good they were at soldiering.