

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 28

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Our Suit of Armor – Pt. 1”

Ephesians 6:13-14 ~ October 9, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers apply the power of God in their life.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Baptism – next Sunday 10/16
- Fall Festival sign-ups
- Youth Night – tonight @ 6 p.m.
- Men’s Ministry Pizza & Comedy Night

Opening prayer

If you are a Christian, you are under attack. This is not an alarmist view of life – nor is it an “*us against them*” view. As we saw last week in 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

It is Satan’s desire and practice to destroy the work of God in history – which means that he wants to destroy God’s work in us – and if he can destroy us in the process, then so be it. Like we see in the book of Job, he would love to destroy us physically, but he’ll destroy us and our work on behalf of Christ (ministry) in a variety of ways. I have listed eight “schemes” the Devil uses...

First, he will tempt us to doubt God’s character.

This happens most often when we are enduring pain or difficulty in life. Doubting God’s goodness, love, mercy, power, care, and sufficiency is a foothold Satan loves to use to draw us away from God. The result is we blame God and get angry at Him instead of resting in Him and trusting Him.

Second, Satan will use false teaching to confuse believers (or to keep others from belief).

False teaching about sin, salvation, the sufficiency and inspiration of Scripture, grace, holiness, judgment, and heaven and hell, will distract believers, and keep them from applying these truths in their life. If we don't have God's truth firmly planted in your heart and mind, you will be:

"... tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming." (Eph. 4:14)

Third, Satan will hinder our ministry.

He will oppose us – and cause our ministry to be more difficult than we expect. His opposition may be a form of persecution, or simply practical difficulties. For many who volunteer to serve in the church, when the ministry becomes difficult, they get discouraged...and maybe even quit, preferring to simply attend church on Sundays, but avoid serving because of the challenges involved. (See 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 12:7; 1 Thess. 2:18)

Fourth, Satan will use divisions to attack us.

Jesus prayed that His followers would be united (John 17:11, 21-23) and that when we had a conflict or disagreement with another believer, that we would reconcile quickly, using His truth as the mediator. (Matt. 5:24, 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 1-3)

Fifth, Satan will attack us by tempting us to trust in ourselves.

This tends to happen in two ways. First, we tend to use our own wisdom and our own understanding of life to determine how we should live and what our attitudes should be. We put our trust in our own abilities, and try to live in our own power.

Proverbs 3:5 is a warning against this kind of ‘self-trust’. Another way this happens in our life is when we know the truth of Scripture, but we try to live in our own knowledge, instead of relying on the Spirit’s leading. “*Right doctrine without right devotion is a serious pitfall for many Christians.*” (The

MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians, by John MacArthur, p. 347)

Sixth, Satan will tempt us to live a hypocritical life.

A hypocritical life will rob our life of the power of God. Proclaiming the truth must be accompanied by applying the truth. We must strive to obey God’s Word in all areas of our life, and when we sin, we must seek His forgiveness and grace.

Seventh, Satan will attack us with worldly satisfaction.

The world has many things to offer – and many things that will distract us and destroy our ability to fight the spiritual battle. We live in the world, but God commands us to make sure we don’t pursue the world’s standards and values (Rom. 12:2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world...”). We must love Christ more than we love the world, and be willing to choose Christ above the choices the world offers (1 John 2:15-16).

Eighth, Satan will tempt us to disobey God’s Word.

Disobedience will not only cause you to be ineffective in the spiritual battle, but it will bring discouragement, guilt, and it will rob you of joy in the Christian life. (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Ephesians, by John MacArthur, p. 346-348)

God commands you to act faithfully; Satan will tempt you with unfaithfulness.

God commands moral living, Satan tempts you with immorality.

God commands we speak truth, Satan tempts us to lie.

God commands us to love, Satan tempts us to hate.

God commands us to worship Him, Satan tempts us to worship ourselves.

God commands us to be content, Satan tempts us to covet.

God commands us to live by faith; Satan tempts us to live by sight.

God commands us to forgive, Satan tempts us to revenge and grudges.

God commands us to submit, Satan tempts us to oppose.

God commands husbands to love their wife as Christ loves the Church, Satan tempts us to demand that our wife serve our wants and needs.

God commands children to obey their parents; Satan tempts children to disobey, and to disrespect their parents.

As you can see, there are many areas that Satan will attack us. No Christian can avoid the battle. You are either fighting the battle on behalf of Christ, or you are creating a problem for those who are actively fighting for the Lord! Our struggle is primarily against the Devil! So, how do we oppose him? How do we resist him? How do we gain the power of God in our life and stand against the Devil and his schemes?

Read 6:13

Fighting the spiritual battle requires work. vs. 13

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

In some ways, vs. 13 is a repetition of vs. 11: “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.” But, there is some additional information here that is helpful for us. Paul first commands that we “put on the full armor of God...” In English, this doesn't appear to be any different than the command in vs. 11. However, Paul uses a different Greek word for “put on”. The idea in vs. 11 (*if you remember from last week*) was to get dressed, from the Greek word *enduo* (*en* = in; *duo* = sink into, sink in). The word Paul uses here is *analambanó* – which means to pick up, take up, carry away, etc. The emphasis here is on our work – our responsibility to put on the armor. We can't expect God to dress us as if we were a toddler getting dressed by their parent. God expects us to be capable and motivated enough to get dressed by ourselves! Not in our own clothes or in our own power, but in His clothes (“full armor of God”) and in His power (vs. 10). Paul expands the reason for clothing ourselves with the armor of God. In vs. 11 he simply told us the purpose was so you could “...take your stand against the devil's schemes.” But here, in vs. 13, he expands on that truth by telling us “the day of evil” will come, and we need to be prepared to stand our ground when it arrives. This probably refers not to some day in the end times, but the increased intensity in a spiritual attack that each of us will encounter throughout our life. As you know, some days are pretty ‘normal’ when it comes to your spiritual life, while other days are filled with spiritual temptations and frustrations. Satan will take advantage of a fight with your spouse, and tempt you to refuse forgiveness,

refuse apology, or tempt you with thoughts of an attractive co-worker. Satan will seize upon your anger, and work to escalate your temper, which will lead to more conflict. The “day of evil” never alerts us that it is coming, so we need to be clothed with the “full armor of God” every day, which will empower you to “stand your ground” – holding your position of obedience to God. We need to do “everything” we can – prayer, bible study, seeking Godly counsel, and applying Godly wisdom in living. What is Godly wisdom in living? Let me give you two examples.

First, if you struggle with pornography and sexual temptation, you need to confess this to a trusted Christian friend. Then you need to ask your friend to help you take practical steps which will hold you accountable and make it more difficult for you to access pornography undetected. **Second**, if you are tempted to gossip, you need to confess this to a trusted Christian friend, and seeking their counsel and instruction to help break this sinful tendency. That’s how you fight the spiritual battle! It’s called troop reinforcements!

The idea in vs. 13 is our duty / responsibility to stand our ground. We need God’s strength since we are unable to stand on our own power.

Take a minute and think of those you have known in your life, who were once committed and faithful believers, but over the years they have fallen away from the faith. They no longer attend church and they’re no longer active in their faith. I’m not saying that they lost their faith, but they have disengaged from the battle (AWOL) – and maybe they have started living in a way that encourages the enemy!

2 John 8 – “Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.”

1 Cor. 9:27 “...so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

Standing your ground when the day of evil is upon you, requires that you are active in your faith. It requires that you are “work(ing) out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (Phil. 2:12)

Our first weapon is God’s truth vs. 14a

“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist...”

For the first century soldier, the belt was vital for their freedom of movement. They wore a tunic or robe, which was loose fitting. If they needed to do physical labor, or hand-to-hand combat, the tunic would get in their way. To avoid this obstruction, they would “gird their loins”, which meant they would tie up their tunic so it wouldn’t restrict their movement. The belt enabled the soldier to move freely, without being hindered by the fabric of his tunic. In a similar way, God’s truth gives the believer the confidence and freedom in battle.

John 8:32

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

The believer who is competent and confident in the truth of God, is able to navigate life and is prepared for battle.

There are two ways to understand the truth in this context.

First is the truth of God – the doctrinal truths we learn from the pages of Scripture. **Second** is the truth of our heart...our character. We must know the truth of God’s Word, and we

must also be truthful to those doctrines in heart and our character.

“It is significant that Paul puts truth first. This suggests that successful spiritual warfare begins with fixing Christianity’s great doctrines firmly in our minds.” (An Expository Commentary – Ephesians, by

James Montgomery Boice, p. 244)

Of course, when we learn the truth of God, it should transform our heart and mind. Knowing and learning God’s truth is not just an intellectual pursuit. It’s a life transformational pursuit! So when Paul says the Christian should secure the belt of truth around their waist, he is expecting that we know and live by God’s truth.

Our second weapon is our personal holiness. vs. 14b

“...with the breastplate of righteousness in place...”

The breastplate protected the vital organs of the soldier. It was usually made of “...*leather or heavy linen, onto which were sewn overlapping slices of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body.*” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary –

Ephesians, by John MacArthur, p. 351)

No soldier would ever go into battle without this vital part of his armor and no Christian can fight against the Devil if they do not have a personal holiness in their life! **(REPEAT)**
How can you resist the temptations of the Devil, if you don’t resist the temptations of the Devil?!

Righteous living is a weapon that we bring into the spiritual battle. Sin is one of the Devil's weapons – and we must counter with righteousness!

We know from Scripture that each believer has two kinds of righteousness. The first kind each believer has is the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed to us. This righteousness is not earned by our *behavior*, but it is imputed to us through the grace of God at the moment we place our faith in Jesus Christ. It is the righteousness of Christ given to us, so that when God looks at us, He sees the holiness and righteousness of His Son.

2 Cor. 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

But Paul is not referring here to the imputed righteousness we have from Christ, because he is commanding us to “put on” this righteousness. So, the righteousness that protects us in the spiritual battle – just like the breastplate protected the Roman soldier – is our daily, practical righteousness. In 4:24-25, Paul told us to “...put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” The next verse gives a practical application of the righteousness our “new self” should foster. “Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor...”

Application

Vs. 13 – Be prepared for battle every day.

Vs. 14a – Learn and live God's truth.

Vs. 14b – Live a righteous life.