

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 30

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “Our Suit of Armor – Pt. 3”

Ephesians 6:17 ~ October 23, 2011

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

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Fall Festival sign-ups – 2 golf cart drivers for 2nd shift
- Annual Business Meeting – 10/30 after 2nd service
-

Kim and I were able to attend our association’s (Southwest Church Connection – www.swchurchconnection.org) Pastor & Wife Conference in Prescott, at Prescott Pines Camp www.prescottpines.org earlier this week. This is week #30 in our study of Ephesians... 1 more week to go! We’ll finish out study of this great book next Sunday on Reformation Sunday. Then, beginning in November, I’ll re-visit a series we did at the end of 2010 as we take a look at some “Heroes and Zeros” we find in the Bible and learn from those who were faithful, and learn from those who were spiritual disasters.

Our fifth weapon is our helmet. vs. 17a

“Take the helmet of salvation...”

This verse goes back to the command in vs. 13 “Put on” and the command in vs. 14 “Stand firm”.

My son, Brian, who is a freshman in high school, plays football. Football is a full-contact sport where bodies are colliding against one another all the time. One of the things that make football pretty cool for kids is the equipment. Now all the equipment they wear is important, but none is more important than the helmet. Motorcycle

riders refer to a helmet with the negative term of ‘brain bucket’, but football players know the importance of this piece of their equipment. Without a helmet, every player knows that injury would be certain.

But why is a helmet necessary for a Christian? We don’t usually think of our faith as a full-contact activity...so why does Paul talk about wearing a helmet?

Of course, the helmet Paul refers to here, like all the other pieces of armor, is figurative – but like all the rest, it has a literal meaning. A Roman soldier wore a helmet when they were engaging the enemy. When it was time for battle, every soldier put on their helmet. Like today’s football players, they knew that going into battle without their helmet would mean certain injury...and probably even worse. A common weapon of Rome’s enemies was a large sword – about 4-5 feet long. This sword was very heavy, and was used more as a club to deliver a devastating blow than as a weapon that would cut or slice (although it could do that also). The helmet protected the soldier if he was hit in the head, and it enabled him to withstand the blow, and continue fighting.

As Christians, we know from 6:12 that we are in a battle – but our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the spiritual powers of evil. This doesn’t mean that people aren’t involved in the battle, but it means that other people are not the true enemy we are called to fight against.

The “helmet of salvation” is another spiritual ‘weapon’ that protects us in the battle. It’s helpful to understand this more by looking at the word Paul connects to the helmet...salvation. Salvation simply means that you have been saved – delivered – or rescued from sin.

In describing salvation, the Bible speaks of three different aspects of our salvation...three different aspects of sin we are saved from.

First: we are saved from the *penalty* of our sin.

This is our justification in Christ. God declares you righteous because of the blood of Christ that has been applied to you through your faith. When you place your faith in Christ, the penalty for your sins is taken from you – and put onto Christ.

Second: we are saved from the *power* of our sin.

This is our sanctification. This has two applications for the believer. First, you are set apart by God for His purposes. Second, you begin ridding your life of sin, and pursuing holiness.

Third: we are saved from the *presence* of sin eternally.

This is our future glorification. When you get to heaven, you will be glorified - eventually with a new body, but immediately you are glorified because in heaven there will be no sin...ever!

When you first place your faith in Christ, your salvation results in your *justification*, then your salvation works to sanctify you each day helping you become more like Christ, and eventually your salvation will lead to your glorification in heaven, where sin will not be present.

1 Thess. 5:8 “But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.”

Many commentators have combined this verse with our verse today – and they conclude that the helmet of salvation must refer to the hope we have of our future deliverance from the presence of sin. The idea they promote is that Paul is encouraging us to “stand firm” – to keep fighting because you have a great prize awaiting you in heaven! It’s certainly true that the promises of God that tell us about the glories of heaven should cause us to live with eternity in mind. But if Paul wanted us to focus on the hope we have in salvation, he would have included the word ‘*hope*’ in our verse today. But he doesn’t modify the word ‘salvation’ in any way – which makes me believe that he wants us to think of the total impact of our salvation – not just the future impact of it!

How does our salvation protect us as a helmet protects a soldier or a football player? Well, a helmet protects your head. In your head is your brain – the center of your knowledge and thoughts. So, a helmet protects your thoughts...and Paul is telling us that knowing the truth about your salvation in Christ guards and protects you as a helmet protects a soldier. The knowledge of your salvation protects you from the attacks of the enemy!

The “helmet of salvation” protects you from *deceit*.

You must realize that your faith has an intellectual component to it. Your faith is based in truth...the truth about our sinful condition...the truth about Christ...the truth about the gift of salvation through faith in Christ...the truth about the power of

sin...the truth about the power of the Holy Spirit...the truth about the Bible...the truth about the lies of sin...the truth about our future restoration...the truth about us. You cannot live your faith...you cannot fight the good fight (1 Timothy 6:12)...without knowing the truths of God.

Satan loves to deceive you and lie to you. He does this through multiple avenues in the culture, through philosophy, and through a general world-view that discounts anything to do with Christianity.

Colossians 2:8 “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”

The “helmet of salvation” - the new mind we have in Christ - enables us to rebut the lies and deceit with the truth.

1 Peter 3:15 “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...”

When you are learning the truths of God, you will be equipped for the battle. The truths of God will protect you from being deceived and help you navigate the battlefield of life.

The “helmet of salvation” protects you from discouragement.

Knowing you are saved, and that you cannot lose your salvation will be a great weapon against the great attacks of the Devil in which he accuses you of your sin and leads you to doubt the love of God toward you and to doubt the thoroughness of Jesus' forgiveness. As we discussed last

week, when we looked at the Gospel of peace, many believers don't have assurance of their status with God. They have faith in Christ, but they think they also need a certain level of good works in order to maintain their salvation credentials! But our only credential is Christ! We have no credentials and no merit or virtue that would be credit enough to either gain or maintain our salvation. When we truly understand the Gospel – that we gain the forgiveness and righteousness of Christ through our faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection – then our thoughts are protected from the lies and deceit of the Devil, who will try and convince us that we're not good enough for God to love us, and therefore, God doesn't love us! The Devil is smart...he always uses a kernel of truth as he tries to sell you a bushel of lies. He is right when he says we aren't good enough. And that's the whole point of the Gospel...we aren't good enough! "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) It was "while we were still sinners that Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8b) And sinner, when you put your faith in Jesus and seek His grace and forgiveness for your soul, "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1).

Thy "helmet of salvation" will protect you from being discouraged by the lies of the Devil.

The "helmet of salvation" protects you from *distractions*.

Knowing what is true...knowing what the Bible teaches, allows you to resist temptations. The Devil tempted Adam and Eve by twisting the words of God. Instead of relying on what

God had told them, they bought in to what the serpent was selling. The new Adam – Jesus (Rom. 5:12-21) was also tempted by the Devil. In each case, his knowledge of God’s Word repelled the temptation before Him. More on this in our next point.

One of Satan’s greatest strategies is not to have a bold frontal attack which blatantly attacks the truth of Christ and His Word, but his greatest strategy in our culture is to distract us from what is right and to accept what seems reasonable. If you stand up for truth, many times you are accused of being closed-minded, out of date, superstitious, unenlightened, and other unfavorable labels. Two illustrations:

If you stand up for life in the discussion over abortion, you are accused of not caring or loving the woman who is with child – even though the reality is that you *are* caring and loving not only for the unborn child but for the woman because abortion will leave deep physical and emotional hurts that will scar her for life.

If you stand up and state your belief (and the Bible’s position) that sex both before marriage and outside of the marriage relationship is wrong, you are labeled as a prude and someone who wants to take society back to the Puritan days. However, the truth is that sex before marriage will cause great harm to the people involved, and that many of society’s ills are directly linked to the promiscuous lifestyle that so many embrace and promote. Don’t be distracted away from the truth by what seems ‘*reasonable*’. The knowledge of God’s truth in your head will

protect you and act as your helmet as you fight the spiritual battle!

Our sixth weapon is specific truths in the Bible. vs. 17b

“...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

This is the only weapon / piece of armor that is an offensive weapon. Of course, a sword can be used defensively to block the blow from the enemy. But, most often, the sword is an offensive weapon, used to strike a deadly blow on the enemy. The Romans soldier’s sword was a small sword, best suited for close hand-to-hand combat. It was no longer than 24 inches long, and was sharpened on both sides of the blade. The metaphor that Paul uses here – equating a sword to the Word of God means that:

Hebrews 4:12 “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

So the “sword of the Spirit” is indeed a weapon that can slice deep into whatever issue we bring before it.

Paul defines what the “sword of the Spirit” is – it is the “word of God”.

Normally, when we speak of the “word of God”, we mean the entire Bible. The Apostle John wrote in the first chapter of his Gospel that Jesus was the “Word”. The Greek term that the Apostle John uses in that first chapter, and the most common Greek term that is translated “word” is *logos* – which refers to general statements or a complete message. But *logos* is not the

term that Paul uses here in 6:17. He uses the Greek term “*rhéma*” which refers to individual words or specific statements.

So, the verse literally reads “*and the sword of the Spirit, which is the specific truths of God*”.

This means that the way we attack the Devil is by using specific verses. Jesus’ rebuttal to Satan in Matthew 4 is the best example of this. Jesus – God in the flesh – didn’t just say “*Get out of here Satan!*” He used specific passages that gave the correct view of the situation Satan had tempted Jesus with. In our own life, we need to have more than a general knowledge of what the Bible teaches. We need to have Scripture memorized – we need to meditate on specific passages so we can use them not only to defend ourselves, but to attack the Devil as he tries to make us fall.

The psalmist wrote: (Psalm 119:11) “I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You.”

AWANA is our Wednesday night Children’s ministry. We have 60-70 kids in our AWANA ministry, and the primary goal of that ministry is for kids to memorize specific verses in the Bible. If you have a child from pre-school to fifth grade, you would need a pretty convincing reason why you don’t have them in AWANA. Memorizing verses is a lethal weapon against the schemes of the Devil!

Application

Romans 12:2

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Knowledge of salvation protects you from the Devil.

Learn and memorize God’s Word.

Close in prayer