

Put on the Whole Armor of God - Part 1

Ephesians 6:10-13

Ephesians 6:10-13 (ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Introduction

- A. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians is a brief but thorough summary of the Christian life.
1. In Ephesians 1-3 we see the glories of God's gospel of grace put on full display. A mystery (indicative - meaning things we cannot see) is explained in detail.
 - CARS (trinity), we once were dead in sins but God made us alive, God's cosmic purpose is in the church, all of this is because of the love of God.
 2. Therefore, God has called us to truth-based unity (see Ephesians 4:1-16). May we treasure what God treasures. Here we begin to read a series of commands (imperative).
 - Walk in humility, gentleness, patience, love and peace. Leaders are given by grace. We are not to be independent but connected to one another.
 3. Therefore, God has also called us to purity (see Ephesians 4:17-the end) or holiness.
 - Put off sin (the old self), put on the godliness (the new self). Be imitators of God and walk in love. Walk wisely and use time wisely.
 - Be filled with the Spirit (singing to one another and the Lord, be thankful, submitting ... wives, children and slaves.

The whole letter is thus a magnificent combination of Christian doctrine and duty, Christian faith and Christian life, what God has done through Christ and what we must be and do in consequence. John Stott in *TBST Ephesians Commentary*, p 25

- B. Only one thing needs be added to this thorough summary of the Christian life. As Christians we live our lives in a time of war. Is this your mind set (like say, WWII)?
1. The command is clear. **Put on the Whole Armor of God.** This will be our focus in this sermon and next week as well (next week is how to put the armor on).
- C. I will cover three points:
1. Why the command matters.
 2. Who the enemy is.
 3. What the schemes of the enemy are.

I. Why does the command matter?

- A. Let's review the command:

Ephesians 6:10-11a (ESV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God.

- B. Why? First, the Scriptures teach **we are weak apart from God**. We are not naturally inclined to think of ourselves as weak and in need of help. We are naturally inclined towards pride.

John 15:5 (ESV) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

1. On the other hand, with God's help, we are strong:

Philippians 4:13 (ESV) I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

- C. Second, we are **in a fight**.

1. Why can't we say something like this? Thanks for the offer God but I've got it, I'm not an incompetent wimp you know!
2. The problem with that is that we don't have it despite any bravery we may think we own. Think about it like this:

Ex: Guys ... you wake up to find yourself lined up out wide going over the middle against Troy Polamalu (#43). Pass on way and you notice this: no uniform. How will you do?

Ex: Or, you are with Company Bravo going across Western Europe in WWII but no gun, no bullets, no helmet, no food. How will you do?

Ex: Did not even the disciples, those eyewitnesses for three plus years, fall away when the heat was on? Peter ... I'll die with you. How did they do?

3. The text says we wrestle. We are responsible to do so.

In all the preceding sections Paul has described salvation as being, on the one hand, the product of God's sovereign grace, on the other hand the promised reward of human effort, the latter being made possible from start to finish by the former. These two elements — divine grace and human responsibility — are again most beautifully combined in this closing section. *Man* must equip himself with a full suit of arms, that is, it is he who must *put it on*. It is also *he, he alone*, who must *use* this entire panoply. Nevertheless, the weapons are called "the full armor of God." It is *God* who has forged them. It is *God* who gives them. Not for one single moment is man able to employ them effectively except by *the power of God*. William Hendriksen in *NT Commentary on Ephesians*, p 270

- D. Third, we live in **an evil day**. We recall this from Ephesians 5:15-16.

1. The day is evil because three enemies remain. The flesh (sinful hearts), the world, and as explained here in Ephesians 6, the devil (Satan).

- E. These three reasons summarize why we need the full armor of God in our lives.

1. We are weak.
2. We are in a fight.
3. We live in an evil day.

II. Here in Ephesians 6:11 we read that the enemy is the devil.

- A. Who is the devil? The devil has many names.

1. Lucifer, Satan, Beelzebub, the evil one, the wicked one, the strong man armed. He was once the greatest angel. He is strong and powerful (though not in God's league).

1 John 4:4 (ESV) Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

B. What does he do?

1. The devil has one main objective. He seeks to destroy the work of God. He seeks to bring confusion, trouble and chaos.
2. The devil rules an empire that consists of fallen angels. The devil and his kingdom are not to be messed with. They are to be resisted.

C. We need the full armor of God to stand against these wicked, evil powers. They cunningly scheme against us for our fall.

1. The very idea can strike fear in our hearts. It should comfort us because alone this explains why so many things are so wrong in this world. God's perfect will is not yet here.
2. Christ has triumphed over the devil by his death and resurrection.

III. Now, what exactly are the schemes of the devil?

A. We need the whole armor of God to stand against the devil's schemes. You need to see and know the schemes are real and powerful or you will lack conviction to put the armor on.

B. Here is what the Bible says about what Satan does. I only have time for highlights.

1. The devil has a certain amount of power over nature - when God permits (not always).

Ex: Job and his children.

2. The devil may have power over animals.

Ex: Demons sent into pigs.

3. The devil is subtle. He blinds people.

Ex: Did God really say?

Ex: The modern man believes he is free. He thinks, he acts. Caught in sin, the wrath of God being poured out, and folks are blind.

4. Satan brings doubt (though not absolutely).

Ex: Does God really exist?

5. Satan instigates false teaching.

Ex: Doctrine of demons.

6. Satan attacks us with evil thoughts and fears.

Ex: Nations where darkness abounds.

7. Depression and discouragement.

8. Pride (humility is our greatest friend).
9. Temptation.
10. Perhaps most current and deceitful: He does not exist at all.

Close

- A. Here is our situation: We have an enemy with whom we wrestle.
 1. We are weak (apart from Christ)
 2. We are in a fight (it is real).
 3. We live in an evil day (obviously).
- B. We need to know how to fight. To fight we put on the whole armor of God. Next week we will look at how to put on God's armor.
 1. For now, stand. Where are you pressed? Stand firm because this is a wrestling match. I pray that your faith perseveres.

Pray