

Armor Up!

I try to imagine, as best I can, what this was like for Paul. We know he's in prison (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). You try to imagine him in prison. You've got to feel alone, though you have opportunity to speak to guards and brethren who visit. However, they come and go as they please - you stay put. I recently read an article stating our minds wander 47% of the time - thinking about the past or future. We're not always present. You know that Paul's thoughts were all over the place. Not necessarily a bad thing. He had much he wanted to do for the Kingdom and much that had been accomplished. So many saints throughout the world that he cared for - cared about. Worried about. He's been around the block a few times. He's seen the battle between good and evil face to face many times. Though it would seem they came in the shape of men and women, he came to realize, there were greater forces behind ungodly deeds and thoughts. Behind it all were evil forces. Demonic. There was a spiritual battle taking place that would not cease until Christ returns. I wonder if, before "penning" today's passage, he wrote this down with a grin after looking up and down a Roman soldier.

I'd prefer to look at verses 10-13 towards the end of our study, so let's first consider verses 14-18:

14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth,

- The belt was the foundation of the armor because it held everything together. Everything falls apart when truth is not on your side.

and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

- This piece covered from the neck down to the thighs. It covered your chest/heart. It's not just about what we know, but how we live. We should be, at the core, godly people. Executing on what we know is right. When we commit, from the heart, our hearts will be protected. We cannot be penetrated.

- There's no mentioning of the back being protected - we go forward with the fight! We do not give our backs.

15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

- Their shoes were made with hobnail spikes or rocks of the bottom for traction during war or marching.

- The language is a bit confusing and scholars are divided as to its meaning. One area of agreement: the point is focus is preparedness. Being ready. What's the readiness rooted in? The gospel of peace! The message we carry empowers us and helps focus our efforts. Either we are at peace inwardly because of the powerful message (even though we're at war outside) or as some think, we take the message of peace into enemy territory and spread the good news. In other words - we fight against the dark with the light of the gospel. In this way we defeat Satan.

16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

- The Roman soldiers were known for their use of shields. They were the number one piece of defense. They would interlock their shield in order to protect their whole bodies from all attacks (spears, swords, rock, etc.).

- Simply put - if we're getting hit by Satan's flaming darts, it means our shield isn't up. What are we talking about? We're talking about faith. We're talking about a complete trust in God and obedience to His counsel.

17 and take the helmet of salvation,

- The mentality of a soldier is everything. If he goes into battle unsure with a lack of confidence - he's already been defeated. For Christians, we fight this battle confidently because we know that the victory is already ours in Christ Jesus. He has won. We have been forgiven. It's not a "if" we'll win, but rather "when" we win.

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

- This is the only offensive part of armor. It was the weapon of choice for a Roman soldier.
- The word of God is the weapon of choice for a Christian soldier. It's powerful and active, is it not? Is this not what caused Satan to flee from Jesus? Jesus' shield of faith was up and he hit Satan with God's word. So what did Satan do? He fled.
- **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

- The most powerful soldier is the one who is on his knees. We're no longer considering a piece of armor. Paul has moved on and gets to the practical once again. We cannot win the battle without the help of God. We cry out for help to our great Commander.
- How many times have you attempted to win the battle without prayer?

BACK TO THE BEGINNING:

10 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.

- **Matthew 16:21-28.** It's amazing how oblivious we can be. We can be overconfident in our own strength and awareness. We think we're tuned in only to find out we're watching the wrong show.
- Jesus was familiar with the darkness:
 - **John 12:31-32** Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.
 - **Luke 22:52-53** Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against Him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness."
 - **Acts 26:14-18** This was Jesus' instruction for Saul. It's what Saul would commit to for the rest of his days! Paul knew about darkness in the world (**Ephesians 2:2**).
- I want to be clear, because this can come across cold and it's not meant to at all. We have a tendency to focus on the physical well being of our loved ones and ourselves. There's nothing wrong or abnormal about caring for the physical well being of one another, but have you ever

considered your prayers and what we focus on verses what you read about, in particular, in the New Testament? During the OT, God would physically bless or curse Israel. However, that was really a representation of their spiritual standing with God. If they were trusting in God and obedient, then He would care for them. If they chose to go their own way, then punishment was sure to come. Fast forward: there's sickness in the world. Christians are not saved from that. Children are mistreated. People starve to death. We'll always have the poor with us. We'll always have racism. We'll always have corrupt governments. Always. Brethren - always. "So we don't pray about it?" Well, no. You could give examples showing support for such prayers. However, it's just clearly not the main priority. What's does a man profit if he and his loved ones have long healthy lives, prosperity, happiness, and worldly peace . . . but forfeit their souls?

- We're in a battle and it's really not in the physical realm. However, if you didn't know any better from listening to those around you, you'd think this is where it all begins and ends. Paul knew so much better. This week, most of my thoughts centered around **vs. 12**. It won't take me long to briefly mention each part of the armor. Knowing your enemy. Acknowledging the other side. This seems to be key. Why? **Because if you refuse to see that you're in a battle - you've already lost.** On the other hand: the reality of the battle is what makes the armor so valuable. Those who acknowledge the fight and the ability of the enemy have entered into the correct mindset and carry with them the motive needed to war. The fainthearted and denial fighters are sure to fall prey. There's a time to pick up the armor and fight.

- So, what are you struggling with these days? Where's the battle taking place?
 - Doctrine? Remember **4:14**?
 - Purity? Holiness? Language? **4-5**.
 - Family? Marriage and parenting? **5-6**
 - Work? We don't have masters, but we have bosses.
 - Spiritual depth? Really before Paul gets into the practical application he speaks about our lives as a whole.
 - It doesn't do a soldier any good to think he's equipped when he's not. The enemy isn't your momma, but he'll lie to you like your momma. "You're wonderful! Everything is fine! Etc."
 - We all need those around us who will help us identify the battle and help us through the fight.
 - At the end of the day, you know what we all have to do? Acknowledge the fight and then commit. This is where the armor comes into play. You don't put on armor for show. You put on armor because fighting is inevitable. You don't put on your armor because you plan on failing either. This is the one unique aspect of our fight: we KNOW we can defeat Satan. Doesn't mean you won't go to war without feeling worn out and bruised. But you will win. I think we tend to forget that as well. We focus on the struggle rather than the promised victory.

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.

- The armor originates from God. It's divine. God Himself is seen in armor in such places as **Isaiah 59:17** "He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped Himself in zeal as a cloak." Of course, this is a different context. God armors up against His own people and their wickedness in this passage.

- Side note: the Greek is “panoplia”. Our English word, “panoply,” is directly transliterated from this Greek term. We sing about the “panoply of God.” It referencing the armor of God that Christians put on.
- I wonder what Satan would say if you could ask him how legitimate the armor is?
- The evil day is one of temptation. You never know when it will appear. Take Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness as an example: “*And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*” [Luke 4:13](#). You never know . . . and it doesn’t stop coming. Or consider Jesus’ conversation with Peter in [Luke 22:31-32](#), “*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*”
- Since you don’t know when it could happen, you must be ready at all times. I remember our honeymoon in New York. After the plane landed we took a train into town. I’d always heard about New York’s trains being a dangerous place. At that time I’d invested a few years of my life into Martial Arts. I mention it only to illustrate how at that time I was more aware of my surroundings. I’d noticed three men entered the train together, but then they separated (one in front, one beside and one behind Jordan and myself). They’d been talking, but were now quiet. There was plenty of room for them to sit together, but for some reason they split up. Then I noticed how they were looking at each other. They seemed to be signaling to one another (making subtly facial expressions). I began to go through my mind what I could do, where the exits were, etc. I can’t remember who got off first - I just remember telling Jordan that could have gone very badly and I was shocked nothing happened. She didn’t have a clue what I was talking about. Totally unaware. I’m not putting her down by any means - I’m not as aware today as I used to be back then. But it illustrates the point. You don’t want to be caught off - you’ve got little to no chance of surviving if you’re mentally unprepared.

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Finally: Brethren, we may be at war, but we’re not without hope. Take courage and believe Paul when he wrote: [Romans 8:37-39](#) No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.