

Cheltenham
Ps Charles Widdowson
14 & 15 June 2014

THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS (6)

Armour of God

Message Notes

Text: Ephesians 6:10-18

First - a question: Do YOU put YOUR armour on? WHEN DO YOU PUT IT ON?

The very moment we give our lives to Jesus – He gives us the armour and, AT THAT TIME, we should put it on – but, so often, at that time we don't even know there IS armour to be put on!

I've lost count of the people who have told me that they're all right because they put the armour on every morning.

Family, IF YOU PUT THE ARMOUR ON EVERY MORNING, THEN YOU HAVE TAKEN IT OFF EVERY NIGHT . . . SO, ALL NIGHT LONG YOU ARE OPEN TO ATTACK!

Our morning prayer is: "Thank you Father for the continuous protection of Your holy angels; thank You for Your arms of love around all our family, our fellowships and our friends – and thank You that You keep us constantly clothed in Your heavenly armour, robed in Your righteousness and covered with the precious blood of Jesus."

MAYBE WE DON'T REALISE IT, BUT EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A SOLDIER **OF** CHRIST AND A SOLDIER **FOR** CHRIST.

We CANNOT hope to be resolute, firm, unwavering or STEADFAST unless and until we are wearing every piece of armour our God and Father has supplied for us!

Our position in God is INCREDIBLE and UNBEATABLE, and I call it the 2:14 principle. Follow it with me . . .Colossians 2: 13-15, Hebrews 2:14, 2 Corinthians 2:14

WITH JESUS AS OUR SAVIOUR and fully clothed in our armour WE HAVE THE VICTORY; WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS simply because our 'enemy' is a DE-POWERED DEMON WITH A DIS-ARMED ARMY!!!!!!!

Paul wrote his Ephesians letter, whilst he was in prison – being guarded by a Roman soldier. Hence the word picture Paul paints for us.

THE BELT OF TRUTH

It was because of the belt that the soldier had freedom of movement – it went round his waist and held his armour together, and – from it – hung his sword (which we'll see represents the Word of God!)

With our belt of truth – the Word of God – buckled on we are ready to face any enemy and do everything God wants us to do.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness is a doctrinal word – so let's have a brief doctrine lesson!

Righteousness is both imputed and imparted. Imputed righteousness: Is Jesus' righteousness. It's Jesus' gift to us when we accept Him as our Lord. It's the reason we can stand, unafraid and unashamed before Father God. It's almost too good to be true – but it IS true! Imparted righteousness: Is the 'being right' with Father God that Jesus is working in all of us right now, as we co-operate with Him. Our desire to be in church, to read the Bible and pray regularly is part of this impartation.

It's Jesus' gift of will-power to live above sin and conduct our lives in a God-honouring way.

FEET FITTED WITH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

In Paul's day not every army wore shoes – but the Romans did.

Jesus' birth, life and redeeming death and resurrection is GOOD NEWS!

Why? Because it secured for us – for you and for me – both FORGIVEN-NESS and FORGETFULNESS! This is the Gospel of peace with which God wants us to wear and in which He wants us to walk!

Someone once wrote: "We are shod so we can STAND unashamed and unafraid on GOD'S WORD and DO HIS WILL – BEARERS OF PEACE."

If we want to 'GO' anywhere, we step out – our feet do what we tell them!

If God wants us to go somewhere, we are His feet down here NOW – as Jesus was when He lived among us.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

The Roman shield was approximately the size of the normal door – it completely covered the Roman soldier.

I want to share two things about this shield: a) it's a shield of faith. God given faith will cover each and every situation that we may face and b) What is faith? Try this: "Forsaking All I Trust Him"!

Whatever Father tells us to DO – we can do it! Wherever Father tells us to GO – we can go there!

The Roman routine: Every morning, as soon as he awoke, every Roman soldier was required to perform a regular routine. He would take a small bottle of oil and, after saturating a piece of cloth with the oil, he would begin to rub, rub and rub that ointment into the leather part of his shield to keep it soft, supple and pliable.

Any soldier who neglected this daily application of oil and allowed his shield to go without the necessary care was, in effect, inviting certain defeat – if not death!

NOW . . . can we apply this to our prayer life? It's only through constant and consistent prayer that we can increase our faith.

SO – do WE rise early every morning and spend time in prayer – so that both WE and OUR LOVED ONES are saturated with the DAILY OIL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Father God won't force us BUT if we don't – then don't be surprised if you have a kill-joy day, or a member or members of your family do, because the enemy will start to hurl his fiery darts!

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

We have the Breastplate of righteousness to protect our heart – how we feel.
We have the Helmet of Salvation to protect our mind – how we think.

We use our minds, protected by the helmet of salvation.

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Why does Paul describe 'the sword of the Spirit' as 'the Word of God'? I, too, was puzzled until (because I love to play with words!!) I realized that 'GOD'S WORD' **IS** the 'GOD SWORD'!

The Romans used various types of swords.

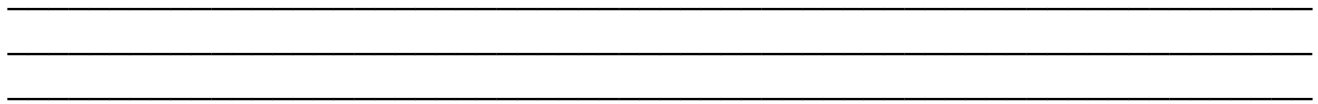
There was the huge 'double-edged' sword, a sword that could only be wielded by using two hands! (Not much use in battle!) and there the long sword, used in battle – but more often merely wounded the enemy, rather than killed him.

There was also another sword that was like neither of the other two. It was an exceptionally brutal weapon. It could be up to 19 inches long but was more often shorter and shaped more like a dagger than a sword, and was razor sharp on both edges of the blade – AND the tip of the sword was turned upwards, sometimes even corkscrew shaped.

However it was only used in close combat, but the attacker could shred the insides of a victim just by twisting it!

The sword was called, in the Greek, 'machaira' – and THIS is the word that Paul uses to describe THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT!

Paul is telling us that Father God has given us a weapon that is frightful to the devil and all demonic forces – in CLOSE COMBAT the Sword of the Spirit will slash our demonic foes to shreds AND THEY KNOW IT!



PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

Paul finishes this section by adding: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests - - - and keep on praying."

One final remark.

I know that in 1 Peter 5:8, he says: "Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour . . ."

But remember, he only prowls around LIKE a roaring lion . . . but he isn't a ROARING LION, HE'S A RAGING LIAR, and clothed in our heavenly armour WE HAVE THE VICTORY! AMEN.