

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Standing Strong - Part III

Ephesians 6:16-24

1999

I The Believer's Existing Armor

Put on (*endysasthe*) = "Having been clothed in"

A. The belt of truth

1. Jesus is the truth

John 14:6 "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

2. Protects us from Satan's lies about God, ourselves and others

B. The breastplate of righteousness

1. Jesus is our righteousness

Rom 1:17 "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

1 Cor 1:30 "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."

2. Protects us from the temptation of a works-based faith

C. The footwear of peace

1. Jesus is our peace

Micah 5:5 "And he will be their peace."

2. Protects us from a spiritual insecurity that leads to anxiety and fear

II The Believer's Available Armor

Put on (*elabete*) = "Take up, assume"

A. The shield of faith

Shield (*thyreon*) = A large oblong or oval shield the Roman soldier held in front of him for protection. It consisted of two layers of wood glued together, covered with linen and hide, and bound with iron. Soldiers often fought side by side with a solid wall of shields.

Flaming arrows = "fire-tipped"

Herodotus, a famous Greek historian, described how cane darts tipped with tow (hemp and flax fibers) were dipped in pitch and then ignited. These flaming arrows proved to be a very effective weapon against an advancing army. So the linen and hide that covered the shields would be soaked in water so that the flaming arrows were not merely deflected, but actually quenched, or put out, to prevent the flames from spreading.

The Christian's shield of faith effectively counteracts the danger of Satan's wicked schemes and effectively extinguishes all the flaming arrows launched by the devil.

What is Faith?: By Hallmark

"Faith is not belief without proof, but trust without reservation."

"Faith is our response to God's initiative."

Gen 15:1 "After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

It is a strong conviction that God can protect us from every "flaming arrow" that Satan may aim at us, whatever form it may take:

1. Persecution - 1 Pet 5:8-9; Matt 10:22; 5:11
2. False doctrine - Mk 13:22-23; 1 Tim 4:1-2
3. Temptation - Gen 3:1; Matt 4:1; 1 Cor 10:13; Jam 4:7
4. Trials - Job 1:9-11; James 1:2-4; 1 Pet 5:10
5. Personal conflict - Ps 109:1-5; Eph 4:26-27; 2 Tim 2:23
6. Unresolved sin issues - 1 Jn 1:9; Matt 5:23-24; 18:15-17
7. Discouragement - 1 Kings 19:1-4

1. Where does faith come from? Faith comes from the Word of God.

Rom 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ."

2. Why is faith so important? **Faith is the foundation of our defense.**

1 Pet 5:8-11 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Faith can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

3. What is the product of faith? **Faith leads to overcoming victory.**

1 Jn 5:4-5 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

B. The helmet of salvation

Take (analambano) = "Receive up, take (in, unto, up)"

The helmet is critical because it protects the head -- the thinking and nerve center of our entire body. Satan knows that if he can put our minds in the cross hairs of his flaming

arrows, and if our head is unprotected, then we are extremely vulnerable. Because, as a general rule, most battles are over if your opponent's head is removed.

Again and again the Bible emphasizes that salvation, which is the believer's source of protection, is a gift that is received by faith. And the selection of wording that Paul has chosen here reflects that fact. Salvation requires the act of receiving and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Salvation is our hope (earnest expectation)

1 Thess 5:8-9 "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. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Cor 3:12 "Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold."

It is the "hope" that salvation provides that can protect our minds against things like despair and fear. It also motivates us to keep on pursuing the eternal things of God, knowing that there is a great reward and blessing awaiting us.

2 Cor 10:5 "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

C. The sword of the Spirit

Sword (*machaira*) = "A short sword or dagger"

Vs. (*rhomphaia*) = "A Thracian sword or spear of large size,"

Take (*analambano*) = "Receive up, take (in, unto, up)"

The Word of God

Logos = The full revelation of God and Jesus Christ

Rhema = The right word at the right time. A specific word.

Scripture-arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel temptation with. Christ himself resisted Satan's temptations with, "It is written, ..."

1. The Word is our defense

Matt 4:1-11 "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' Jesus answered, '**It is written:** 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. **For it is written:** "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will

not strike your foot against a stone." Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him."

2. The Word protects us from sin

Ps 119:9, 11 "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word. I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Heb 4:12-13 "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. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

3. The Word brings victory

Rev 12:10-11 "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

1 Cor 10:13 "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

D. Two additional protections against Satan's schemes

1. An attitude of alertness

Be alert = To be sleepless, to keep awake, or to watch

a. The mark of being alert

1 Pet 5:8 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

1 Thess 5:6 "So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled."

1 Pet 4:7 "The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray."

b. The benefit of being alert

Matt 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Luke 21:36 "Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

2. A lifestyle of prayer

a. Pray in the Spirit

Rom 8:26-27 "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

1 Cor 14:15 "So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind."

b. Pray on all occasions

Luke 18:1 "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."

Col 4:2 "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

Rom 12:12 "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

1 Thess 5:17-18 "... pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

c. Pray with all kinds of prayers and requests

1. Adoration: To worship and honor God

2. Confession: To acknowledge and admit our sin

3. Thanksgiving: To express of gratitude

4. Supplication: To make requests or petitions

1 Tim 2:1-4 "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Phil 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

d. Pray for one another

1. Pray for others

Rom 1:9 "God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times ..."

Col 4:12 "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."

2. Let others pray for you

1 Thess 5:25 "Brothers, pray for us."

Rom 15:30 "I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me."

e. Pray for boldness in the proclamation of the gospel

Fearless (parrhesia) = "Out-spokenness, marked by assurance and confidence."

Paul had a great command of his theology and multiple languages. By this time he had presented the gospel literally thousands of times. Yet he requests prayer that God would give him boldness.

He was a man of great courage-- seemingly fearless in the face of opposition and danger. Nothing could dissuade him from being a faithful ambassador of Christ. Yet he requests prayer that God would give him boldness.

He was the most forceful, effective, persuasive of all the apostles. Yet he desires them to pray for him, that he may speak as he ought to speak.

All this information tells me that no matter how experienced Paul may have been in presenting the gospel and winning others to Christ, he still depended on the prayers of his fellow believers for courage and boldness.

Acts 4:29 "Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness."

Acts 4:31 "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."

Conclusion

1. When we arm ourselves with the armor of God ...

- a. His truth
- b. His righteousness
- c. The gospel of peace
- d. Faith
- e. The hope of salvation
- f. The Word of God
- g. Prayer

... we will be able to resist anything and everything that Satan throws at us and stand firm against his schemes.

2. In verses 21-24, Paul concludes this wonderful epistle...

- a. With a comment concerning Tychicus, who will bring the brethren up to date about Paul's circumstances - Eph 6:21-22
- b. And with a closing benediction that I will use to close our time today ...

"Peace to you, my brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love."