

Theme: The Armor of God

How did you determine what you were going to wear today? Are you one of those people who chooses and lays out your outfit for the next day the night before? Did you put a lot of thought into it? Maybe because it's Sunday you chose to wear nice clothes to church. Maybe you're just wearing what your wife told you you should wear, or, in the case of our young children here, you're probably wearing what your mom picked out for you to wear? The important thing is that it does appear that all of us have, in fact, successfully gotten dressed today. Congratulations!

However, just because we've gotten dressed for the day doesn't mean we're fully clothed. Did you remember as you got dressed this morning to put on **The Armor of God**? The Apostle Paul speaks of this in words of our sermon text for today:

Text: Ephesians 6:10-18 (EHV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can stand against the schemes of the Devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to take a stand on the evil day and, after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand, then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness fastened in place, ¹⁵ and with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace tied to your feet like sandals. ¹⁶ At all times hold up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the Evil One. ¹⁷ Also take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ At every opportunity, pray in the Spirit with every kind of prayer and petition. Stay alert for the same reason, always persevering in your intercession for all the saints.



When you came to church this morning it probably didn't look or feel like a warzone. You weren't dodging enemy fire as you came in the front doors. We didn't need to do a sweep of the parking lot looking for IEDs or landmines this morning. No, it's actually a very pleasant day! Hopefully you came very much filled with peace in your heart as you came to worship this morning.

Clearly, we are not in the midst of a *physical* war. But our text reminds us—as God's Word does in other places as well—that we are, in fact, in the midst of a *spiritual* war. It is a battle that rages every day, and you and I are soldiers in God's army.

Listen again to how the Apostle Paul describes this battle in our text, **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”** (v. 12).

Because it is a spiritual battle we can sometimes forget that we're in it, or not even realize that we're in it. Our enemy, **“the Devil”** (v. 11), would like nothing more than for us to forget this fact and not even fight. The devil, as our text indicates, is a schemer. He is a master tactician on the field of spiritual warfare. He's more clever, cunning, and ruthless than we can imagine. He will use any tactic he can to attack us spiritually—including sneak attacks to hit us when we least expect it, or even make it seem like we're not even being attacked or at war at all.

Yes, it's true, sometimes the devil lines up the **“powers of this dark world”** and the **“spiritual forces of evil” (v. 12)** around us like an intimidating army to frighten and intimidate us, but most often his best tactic is to convince us that he's not even there. To lead us into the false sense of security that we aren't actually under spiritual attack, or that we're not actually soldiers in a spiritual battle that has eternal consequences, and therefore we really don't need our spiritual armor or weapons.

Remember, at his core he is a liar. He will use whatever lies, half-truths and deceptions he can to let our guard down, to tempt us to sin, to draw us further and further away from Jesus with the goal of leading us into unbelief and eternal death. “God doesn't love you. Is He even real? Where is He in the midst of all this tragedy? You're too sinful. There's no way God can forgive what you've done!”

He'll even try and “infiltrate” our own ranks with one of his most successful tactics: false teachings and false teachers. If he can convince us to believe things God really doesn't say in His Word—oftentimes by using leaders and teachers from within churches—think of the spiritual damage he can do, and has done throughout history.

This is why it's so essential for us to put on **The Armor of God**—and never take it off! Paul encourages us in our text, **“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can stand against the schemes of the Devil ... For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to take a stand on the evil day and, after you have done everything, to stand” (v. 11, 13).**

So, that's the enemy we are facing. He's terrible and terrifying. But take heart, fellow soldiers of Christ! Not only do we have **The Armor of God** for our protection, we have Someone more powerful that fights for us and protects us! Listen again to how Paul begins our text for today, **“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (v. 10).** Notice he does not say, **“Be strong in yourself and in your mighty power.”** No! If we do that we will lose. Guaranteed. Every time. But if we rely on the **Lord** and are strong in **His** mighty power we cannot be defeated—in fact, in Christ, we've already won!

The Apostle Paul also once wrote these words to remind us of our complete and total victory in Christ: **“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him [Christ] who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37-39).**

On that cross, on that hill of Calvary, Christ defeated the devil—and all our enemies: sin, death, and even hell itself. His empty tomb and His resurrection remind us that when our “battle” is done in this life we have eternal life—eternal rest—waiting for us with Him in heaven!

In the meantime, while we are still here fighting the spiritual battles of life in this sin-filled world, He gives us the most powerful protective armor and weapons available for spiritual warfare. Listen again to Paul's words in our text and pay attention to what each piece of armor represents, and how each piece is used in our spiritual battle with the devil:

“For this reason, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to take a stand on the evil day and, after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand, then, with

† **“the belt of truth buckled around your waist” (v. 14) –** The truth of God's Word and Jesus Himself who is **“the Truth” (John 14:6)** to counter the lies of the devil.

- † **“with the breastplate of righteousness fastened in place” (v. 14)** – Jesus’ righteousness covers us completely like a breastplate shielding our hearts and souls from sin. The devils accusations can no longer stick to us. When God looks at our hearts He sees only this righteousness of Christ protecting us and covering us.
- † **“and with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace tied to your feet like sandals” (v. 15)** – This “Good News” of the Gospel of Christ is what we march forward with into the world.
- † **“At all times hold up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the Evil One.” (v. 16)** – Because of the gift of faith God has given us in Christ, the devil’s lies and attacks bounce off us like a shield.
- † **“Also take the helmet of salvation” (v. 17)** – Your head is the most vital part of your body. In our spiritual warfare our “head” (our mind and spirit) is protected by **“the helmet of salvation.”** The truth that we have eternal salvation because of Jesus keeps the lies and false teachings of the devil “out of our heads.”
- † **“and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (v. 17)** – This is the most unique piece of the “Armor of God” because not only is it used for defense and protection, it is also a weapon we can use to “attack.” But our “attack” with the Word of God does not produce casualties or death. No, the **“sword of the Spirit,”** the Word of God, produces life! It convicts and converts the hearts of those who were once lost in the devil’s lies and fighting in his forces to the life and light of Christ and produces more “soldiers” for His army and His heavenly kingdom!

Finally, don’t forget one more “weapon” Paul reminds us to wield in our spiritual warfare: Prayer! **“At every opportunity, pray in the Spirit with every kind of prayer and petition. Stay alert for the same reason, always persevering in your intercession for all the saints” (v. 18).**

So, as you get dressed each day, don’t forget to put on **The Armor of God**. We’re not really fully “dressed” for the day without it. With it, we are truly ready for any day. We have Christ’s armor, His weapons, His strength and His **“mighty power” (v. 10)** fighting for us! In Christ, we cannot lose!

*Be strong in the Lord In armor of light,
With helmet and sword, With shield for the fight;
On prayer be dependent, Be belted and shod,
In breastplate resplendent: The armor of God.*

*So wield well your blade, Rejoice in its pow’rs,
Fight on undismayed For Jesus is ours!
Then in Him victorious Your armor lay down,
To praise, ever glorious, His cross and His crown. Amen.*