

Are You Ready to Suit Up? Putting on the Armor of God

OT Scripture: II Kings 6:8-17

NT Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-18

TOD: Prayer is where “Heaven rules” lives and breathes. And overcomes. Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth

If you were here in April for the last message I gave, you’ll recall that I mentioned my next talk would be about the armor of God. But let me tell you what put this topic and passage on my heart. A very dear friend of mine had sent me a link to a radio program in which the speakers were talking about spiritual warfare and how certain things can open up pathways and create strongholds in which the enemy – Satan – can infiltrate our lives, even as believers. And while they were talking about some very specific areas of demonic attacks and oppression, one thing that the guest said really stuck with me. He stated that Christ followers need to know what it really means to put on the whole armor of God. He said, “It’s one thing to say, ‘I put on the full armor of God,’ and that’s unfortunately an immature way of looking at it.” He continued, “What Paul is trying to say is that you need to know all these subject matters...backwards and forwards.” By subject matters, he means the spiritual virtue or element that is associated with each piece of armor.

I have to admit that I sometimes feel the topic of the whole armor of God, much like Jeffrey’s take on the book of Jonah, has been – not necessarily dumbed down, but relegated to cute children’s lessons. Which again, as Jeffrey stated, isn’t necessarily a bad thing. One author of an article I read even mentioned that her grandmother, a church pianist, had as one of her favorite hymns, “Put on the Whole Armor of God.” Do you think I could find a recording of this on YouTube? What came up were videos of children’s songs. I did find a couple of Black gospel songs and one or two contemporary ones that I’m sure weren’t the hymn that was being referenced. I even found a hokey country song. I was finally able to find printed copies of two different hymns; when I played through them, one of them did sound vaguely familiar. And if you read this week’s Weds Worship email, I finally did find a hymn that referenced the armor of God; it just wasn’t in the title. We’ll be singing it as our closing song.

But this disturbed me. And so I was determined to explore the topic of the armor of God. There are numerous references in Scripture to the armor of God, both in the Old and New Testaments. We’re going to focus on one of the better known passages, Ephesians 6:10-18. I’m reading from the New Living Translation.

10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor (breastplate) of God’s righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. 16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the

sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

In the time after God put this on my heart, I have read numerous books and other resources, and completed a 7-session video Bible study. What I'm going to try to do is summarize and synthesize what is important for us to know and apply to our lives. Perhaps this will prompt you to continue to study this further for yourselves.

I have provided a note-taking sheet for you in today's bulletin. I put this together earlier in the week – thank you to Mary for the final formatting. At the top is the heading “The Armor of God is important because.” But I want to change the word “important” to “significant” or maybe even “meaningful.” One commentator stated, “the main point of the armor is not the analogy of the individual pieces but the reality and power of the spiritual weapons God has given you.

I have 3 things that we need to keep in mind, or maybe 4, when thinking about the significance of the armor of God.

Christ followers need to remember that we have an enemy. Collectively as the church and as individuals. Christ had an enemy, Satan the deceiver, and Satan is also our enemy.

Now, I want you to understand that for the most part, Satan and his minions do not operate as shown in Hollywood horror movies. They are much more subtle than that.

But we in the “western church” need to remember and we are reminded in Scripture, verse 12 in our passage we are “not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers, and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”

Charles Kraft wrote in his book *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural*, concerning how westerners picture the world; “We are taught to believe only in visible things. ‘Seeing is believing,’ we are told. If we can see it, then it must exist. If we can't see it, it must not exist. We are allowed to believe in certain invisible things only if our scientists tell us they exist. Such as radio waves, etc. He goes on to say about the so-called “Enlightenment thinking”: “They threw out or at least raised questions about belief in anything that could not be rationally understood. This thinking has so permeated our societies, modern Westerners – both non-Christian and Christian – now find it extremely difficult to believe in angels, Satan, demons, and even God... For the spiritual real is not considered scientifically or rationally verifiable. It is no longer considered a part of the Western understanding of the REAL.” If you've spent any time with people from other countries, particularly Africans or Asians, or with missionaries who have served overseas, they'll tell you stories about the “spiritual real” that will make your hair raise. I took a seminary class called Power Encounter in Ministry and Missions that dealt more specifically with what most of us think of as all-out spiritual warfare. That is not our focus today.

I don't want to belabor this point, but “one of Satan's most clever strategies,” per Priscilla Shirer, “is to make us think there is no struggle (or spiritual warfare) when there really is by virtue of our relationship with Jesus.” She also says that “the enemy wants us to think that just because he's

invisible, he's fictional." Folks – he's real. He wants us to "ignore the spiritual reality behind the physical one."

Elisha knew this, as was just read in the Old Testament passage for today. Daniel knew this. Do you remember the passage where it said he prayed and waited for an answer? In Daniel 10:10-13 we read, 10 A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11 He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

12 Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. (NIV)

People – that's an example of warfare in the heavenly realms. And what happens there affects every aspect of life here on earth.

I have to thank Duane Weaver for recommending a book that was based on Daniel, Heaven Rules: Take courage. Take comfort. Our God is in control. by Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth. I bought it couple of months ago and have been reading it alongside my study of the armor of God. I would highly recommend it to you.

Paul and the early Christians knew this. Now it's time for us to open our "spiritual" eyes.

So number 1 – we have an enemy.

Number 2 – there is biblical precedence for putting on armor to fight spiritual battles. In Isaiah, there is a word picture of the "divine warrior." Chapter 59, verses 17-19 say of the Lord...

17 He put on righteousness as his body armor
and placed the helmet of salvation on his head.
He clothed himself with a robe of vengeance
and wrapped himself in a cloak of divine passion.
18 He will repay his enemies for their evil deeds.
His fury will fall on his foes.
He will pay them back even to the ends of the earth.
19 In the west, people will respect the name of the LORD;
in the east, they will glorify him.
For he will come like a raging flood tide
driven by the breath of the LORD.

Number 3 – God made his armor available to us to protect us. We just need to put it on. And not in the way that David tried on Saul's armor when he was preparing to battle Goliath. God's armor fits us perfectly.

Reason number 4 is the most critical to understanding the armor of God.

David Kim writes, “To put on the whole armor means to believe all that Jesus has done (Eph. 1-3) and to live it out in daily life (Eph. 4-5). It is living in the power of everything that God has done in every area of life even when there are challenges. In other words, to understand the armor of God in Ephesians 6 correctly, you have to look at what Ephesians chapters 1-5 say. It has to be understood in its right context. Putting on the whole armor of God is not mainly about a technique or paying attention to darkness and evil. It’s not about a secret prayer, a mystical spiritual experience, or visualization techniques. The whole armor is the expression of your full trust in God and what He has done for you through Jesus Christ. Your victory in spiritual warfare was secured at the cross of Christ and the blood that was shed there.” Let me repeat that - **The whole armor is the expression of your full trust in God and what He has done for you through Jesus Christ. Your victory in spiritual warfare was secured at the cross of Christ and the blood that was shed there.**

While we don’t have time to go through the entire book of Ephesians today, my objective is to briefly identify the individual pieces of armor that Paul uses to emphasize the spiritual virtue, concept, or element associated with each one.

Here’s an outline of the book of Ephesians; I’ll be touching on some key verses when we go through the pieces of armor.

- The first 3 chapters of Ephesians explain our position in Christ. It describes how we’ve been seated with Christ in heavenly places. In other words, it’s **what we have**.
- Ephesians 4 through 5 describe how we’re to walk, or live, as followers of Jesus. It’s what **we’re to do**.
- Ephesians 6 is the conclusion that describes how we’re to stand even in the face of opposition. It’s what **we’re supposed to do with what Paul has already explained**.

This letter to the Ephesians was written about A.D. 60 from Rome, where Paul was in prison. He was being guarded by Roman soldiers and, perhaps being inspired by the divine warrior as portrayed in Isaiah, he was looking at the armor of these soldiers and the part each piece played in protecting them. The people to whom this letter was written would also be familiar with the armor of the Roman soldier, as they were under the rule of the Roman government.

Funny thing – the best representations of the pieces of armor as they were described in my study were found on a website called biblecartoons.co.uk based in the United Kingdom. These were the free ones available for download. I was actually impressed with the bible references and research that accompanied each one. I don’t think they are cartoonish at all. I found this note from the illustrator: “I decided early on in the design process to include a white cross on each piece of the armour, which is my way of signifying that this is not merely metal armour, but is spiritual, God-given armour, empowered by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.”



The Belt of Truth – verse 14

When thinking about a belt, most of us probably picture a belt that is holding up someone's pants. But the Roman soldier's belt was much more than that; it was actually more like a girdle, something to protect the core or belly, which is very vulnerable. Picture a belt that a weight lifter might wear or a back support belt that delivery people often wear. It would have been very critical for the soldier to put this on first because it essentially supported everything else. It also had loops for carrying essential equipment, such as the sword and dagger, which allowed the soldier's hands to be free. And it also was used for securing the tunic which allowed the soldier to move more freely.

Ephesians 1:13-14

And now you Gentiles have also heard the **truth**, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Ephesians 5:8-9

For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and **true**. (NLT)

Surprisingly, I found a really good definition of truth on Wikipedia. "The Greek word rendered as 'truth' in English translations is '**aletheia**', which literally means 'unconcealed' and connotes sincerity in addition to factuality and reality; Jesus' use of the term appears to indicate absolute, revealed knowledge."

The exact opposite is the word, "lie." A lie is an intentional violation of the truth. Lying is to practice deceit, falsehood, and treachery either by word or action. Satan has been called the father of lies in Scripture and we know he manipulates the truth.

John 8:44 says For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The second part of Ephesians 4:14 into verse 15 says We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.

Ephesians 4:21-25

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God-truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.

Putting on the belt of truth means that we are supported and grounded in God's truth.



The Breastplate of Righteousness – verse 14; Ephesians 4:17-5:9

Once a soldier had his belt on, he would put on the breastplate. One description that I found interesting is that it was actually tucked into the belt, so that the weight of the breastplate was not resting solely on the shoulders. It was a metal shield worn over the midsection from the neck to the thighs, which was worn over a leather garment. If the soldier could afford it, he would also wear a coat of mail – iron rings stitched onto a backing – for extra protection. As you can probably surmise, the breastplate was to guard the heart and other vital organs from a direct hit.

We're all probably familiar with the passage in Proverbs, which says "Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life. (Proverbs 4:23, HCSB)

In addition to our physical heart which is central to keeping us alive, we tend to think of the heart as the center of our feelings and emotions. However, a biblical definition of the heart is what is being referred to in Proverbs. In the Bible the heart is considered **the seat of life or strength**. It means mind, soul, spirit, or one's **entire** emotional nature and understanding.

Righteousness protects our spiritual heart, as the breastplate guarded the soldier's physical heart. Righteousness is a loaded theological term, as there are many facets of it.

I have heard righteousness defined as "upright living that aligns with the expectations of God." But before you get discouraged, I want to touch on three sides of righteousness.

There is perfect righteousness – God is perfect and so is his righteousness. Left to our own devices, no human is righteous. In Romans 3:23 we read - for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We cannot be perfect as God is perfect.

There is comparative righteousness – comparing ourselves to others to determine our own righteousness. Can we say "holier than thou?"

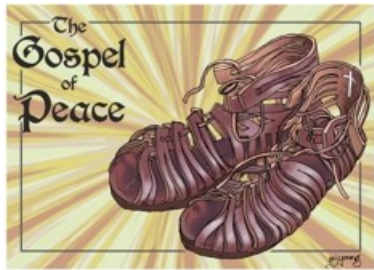
Most importantly, there is what is called imputed righteousness. OK – imputed might be a more technical term, but it means that because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross – the perfect son of God paid the penalty for *our* sin – his righteousness is given – imputed – to us. If you have personally accepted this gift, it is credited to your spiritual account. God sees us through the filter of His Son. Imputed righteousness defines us and declares us innocent before all accusers.

It is important to understand that the enemy is trying to keep us from utilizing this gift, so we need to wear the breastplate of righteousness to block him from attacking the most vital part – our heart. This means that we don't have to trust our own goodness. We trust Jesus to be righteous for us.

There is actually a fourth type of righteousness – practical righteousness. It's where we throw or put off our old nature and put on the new nature. Listen to Ephesians 4:21-24 again.

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy.

In Colossians 3 we're told to "put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Putting righteousness into practice is also what guards and protects the heart.



The Shoes of Peace – verse 15; Ephesians 2:11-4:16 (1:13)

Of all the pieces of armor that I studied, the shoes of peace fascinated me the most. Simply because the description that was used in the online Bible study included something that I don't remember hearing before. She merged this description from a book about the armor of God with another which was about Roman military equipment: "Roman soldiers wore heavy military sandals called caliga, half boot and half sandal. The uppers were pierced with openwork designs, which gave 'good ventilation, the many straps allowed adjustment to fit the peculiarities of an individual's foot, while parts of the boot that might rub (toe joints, ankle, big toe nail) were cut away.' The soles were made of several layers of leather and 'were clenched with hobnails, frequently arranged in patterns.'" The picture of these shoes do not fit this description very well. There would have been leather straps and pieces that would have gone at least up to the knees and of course, we can't see the bottom of the shoes. In fact, I couldn't find any pictures or illustrations that showed the soles of the sandals in the usual renderings of the armor of God.

Why did Paul even mention shoes? A soldier's boots hardly seem like body armor. I mean, aren't shoes kind of basic? Well, I learned something that might change your mind about any previous description of the shoes of the gospel of peace you may have heard.

Most translations say something about being prepared or ready with the gospel of peace and immediately our minds, with the help of commentators, equate this with spreading the gospel/Good news – in other words, evangelism.

Bear with me, that is essential, but I think that we're missing a very important point. I like how the New Living Translation puts it:

15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

Prepared for what? And what is meant by “the peace that comes from the Good News”? Just a side note, one commentator mentioned that the Greek word for Good News, which is not often used, actually means something akin to “almost too good to be true.”

Remember I said that these shoes had studs on the bottom of them? Let me continue with the rest of the description. “These hollow metal studs provided a firm grip on the soil. These protrusions dug into the ground and kept the soldier sure-footed and stable when holding his ground or advancing against an enemy.” I’ll come back to that in a moment.

I believe there are two types of peace that can be referred to here. Peace **WITH** God and the peace **OF** God.

Peace with God means that we are no longer his enemy. Our debt of sin has been paid through Jesus Christ who bridged that gap and restored our relationship with God. Remember that God sees us as righteous. Therefore, we are at peace WITH God. But God’s peace is also an inner tranquility and calmness of the soul, says Shirer. She goes on to say that “God’s peace gives us a firm grip which we need in a world that is not firm. It gives us stability, allows us to keep our footing, and will help to keep us sane.” That is the peace OF God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

There are too many other benefits of God’s peace to list here, but we also need to remember that is it not only our guard, but our guide.

One of the areas that Satan most loves to disrupt is our peace. We need to stand firm with our shoes of peace, but also be ready to go. I think of these shoes/boots like the traction straps that people put on their shoes when walking in the snow and ice. They keep you from falling, but you can still move forward. Quoting Shirer again, she indicated that “the Greek word translated preparation or readiness in Ephesians 6:15 is used nowhere else in the New Testament, but it does occur several times in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament). It’s implication is of being sure-footed and established. Ready to go.” She calls them “go shoes” – “designed to move forward and announce the good news of victory.” So yes, there is an element of evangelism – sharing the good news with others that they can have peace WITH God which leads to the peace OF God.

Ephesians 2:13-14

But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.



The Shield of Faith – verse 16; Ephesians 2:1-10 (1:1, 13, 15, 19; 3:12, 17; 4:5, 13)

The Shield of Faith is the first piece of the armor that we are told to take up or hold up. There were two types of shields used by soldiers in this time frame. The one that Paul intends to bring to our minds is not the small round one – the size of a trash can lid. What we need to picture here is a much larger shield that was two feet wide by four feet long. It consisted of wood planks fused together, covered by canvas and then by leather. Then iron was built into the center and on all the edges. This was to protect the soldier from the hard-hitting strokes of the enemy’s broadsword and was so large that it covered the whole body when the soldier was crouched down. We’ll come back to this.

Here are a couple of simplified, yet easy to remember definitions of faith. Faith is believing – knowing in your head what is truth - even though you can’t see it, and acting upon it. Tony Evans says “Faith is acting like it is so, even when it is not so, so that it might be so, simply because God said so.” That’s a good paraphrase of Hebrew 11:1; if you recall Hebrews 11 is often called the “hall of faith.” The writer of Hebrews appropriately begins that chapter with a definition of faith.

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. (NLT)

Shirer says that “We will never see the benefits of our faith and our relationship with God unless we are willing to marry faith with our actions.” She calls it the “Faith Place;” which “is stepping into a situation or circumstance where you put yourself into a position for God to have to come.” It involves the ability to discern how God has called you to act. Think about this quote, again from Priscilla Shirer, “Faith is one of the most overused and yet underutilized expressions in Christian circles. Which is completely backward. Because really, talking about faith is not the same as having it... Plain and simple, faith is an action.”

When the darts or arrows of the enemy come to wage war against your faith (belief), that’s when it’s time to hold up the shield of faith to thwart his attack.

But what do you do if those arrows feel more like flaming missiles. Javelin-sized with tips coated in pitch and set on fire, sometimes even launched by a catapult. Do you ever have moments, days, weeks, years that feel like there is one missile after another being launched against you?

When the Roman soldiers encountered these flaming missiles, they used their shields in a different way. “They would dip their shields in water, then huddle together in a group, hoisting the shields overhead. Strategically placed hooks on the sides would allow them to be linked together. When formed into a unit like this, their water-soaked shields would create a damp, dense shell of protection above them – called the turtle formation. And because the shields actually ‘had a gap between the layers ... flaming arrows could penetrate far enough into the shield to be quickly extinguished.”

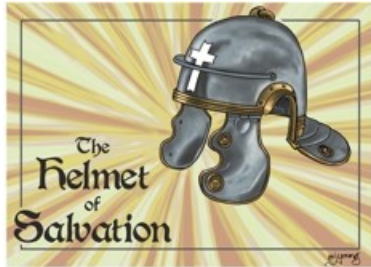
There is strength in community. When we lock our shields of faith together with others, we can extinguish the flaming missiles of the enemy.

I want to caution us here – we might begin to think that we somehow have the power to protect ourselves. I heard Charles Stanley say “don’t confuse confidence in Christ with cockiness in the flesh.” We need to remember that faith doesn’t control God. Faith gives us access to what God has already intended for us to do. And faith says more about God than it does about us.

Ephesians 2:8

For by grace you have been saved *through* faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

There is a connection between truth (the supporting belt of the armor) and faith (the shield) – we have to know and believe the truth in order to act upon it.



The Helmet of Salvation – verse 17; Ephesians 1:1-23 (2:5, 8; 5:23)

The helmet is an essential piece of the armament of God. Paul says that we are to put on the helmet of salvation. The Roman soldier's helmet was basically a skullcap made of iron, perhaps covered with bronze. Over time, it evolved to include a flared neck guard and hinged cheek guards. It protected the head, but also the neck and shoulders – some of the most exposed places of a soldier's body.

The helmet of salvation is comprehensive coverage, positioned to fit snugly, and it represents the high-value items that are ours “in Him” – our inheritance in Christ. While the physical brain needs to be protected, our minds – our souls – need to be protected as well. It is the control center. The soul consists of the mind (thoughts), will (ambition), emotion (feelings), and conscience (moral compass).

Think about it – the Divine Warrior himself put on the helmet of salvation. And that salvation is our liberation. Galatians 5:1 “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.”

Salvation is not just about redemption, it is more than just about eternity. Which is important – don't get me wrong. But it is a defensive, protective device which reorients our entire identity. It was meant to implement a whole new way of thinking into our lives. And trust me, the enemy is after our minds.

The Ephesians 4 passage I used earlier also applies here:

Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy.

And yes, our brains – our minds – our thinking can be rewired. There is recent scientific evidence that the neuro-pathways in our brains can be changed. A couple of these studies have been done by Christ-following neurologists – it's really fascinating.

Let me remind you of Romans 12:2 – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the *renewing of your mind*, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

There is power in the helmet of salvation for restoration and wholeness. The truth of our salvation is used to keep the enemy from getting control of our minds.



The Sword of the Spirit – verse 17

The last named piece of the armor is the sword of the Spirit. What makes this piece of equipment unique is that Paul actually describes it in the text – “the word of God.” And it is the only offensive weapon of the whole armor of God.

This sword is a small or short sword – not like the large broadside sword that many of us picture. If you can tell from the slide, it is very small, more like a dagger; probably 18-24 inches in length. It is double-edged and needle-sharp and it was perfect for hand-to-hand combat.

There are three different words in the Bible that are translated *Word of God*.

Graphe means the words on the page, literally “the book.” This is where we begin to know the Word of God.

I’m sure most of us have heard *logos* being referred to as the Word. It is the message behind the *graphe*. It’s where we begin to understand the message; sometimes it’s the explanation of the Word that we get from Bible studies and sermons, for example.

But the Greek word used here is *rhema*. The utterance of God, the spoken Word of God to you in your life. Have you ever had something grip you in your soul? Something that settles in your heart? That’s *rhema*, the *word* of God that helps you see clearly.

Rhema is the Spirit’s weapon that is given to us to be used to fight on our behalf. In essence, the Holy Spirit gives us his sword to use against the enemy. Bear in mind, in order to be effective, when we use this offensive weapon, it needs to be spoken. As Jesus did when the devil was tempting him.

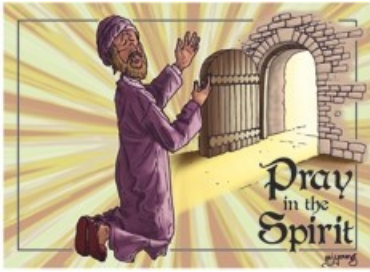
I Peter 1:25 is a quote from Isaiah, “But the word of the Lord remains forever.” And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.”

And Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive 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.

As I was studying this piece of the armor of God, what came to me is that maybe, just maybe the weapon or piece of the armor is the Holy Spirit himself. In general, we tend to minimize the power of

the Holy Spirit in our lives. What if we took up and put on the Spirit? One of the prayers that I pray most often is that I want to be infused with the Holy Spirit of God.



There is actually a 7th piece of Armor – Pray in the Spirit (at all times)
With all Prayer and Petition – verse 18; Ephesians 1:16, 18 (3:14-18)

While biblical scholars and commentators differ on whether or not to “count it,” this is a component of the armor of God. Shirer says, “Prayer is the final piece. It’s what activates and infuses all the others with the power that we need to be victorious against the enemy.” She was the author and creator of the video study I went through. At the end of each week, which consisted of video teaching and 5 days of homework, we wrote out a prayer strategy based on what intel we had gathered that week about the enemy.

And we’re to pray these prayers OUT LOUD. To God, but so that Satan and his henchmen will hear them. Did you know that Satan cannot read our minds? He’d like to make us think he can; he can certainly influence our thoughts based on our human tendencies and behaviors, but in order to rebuke Satan, in Christ’s name, you have to speak out loud – with your voice. And with the power and authority given to us by God.

Paul’s final admonition at the end of verse 18, is to be on the alert with all perseverance and petition (pray) for *all* the saints – that means you and me.

Prayer
Releases
All
Your
Eternal
Resources
- Richard A. Burr

I took this statement from the Christian Standard Devotional Bible, so I don’t know who wrote it. “It is easy to look at the situations we face with our natural understanding and forget the very real unseen world that impacts everything around us. When we become so focused on our day-to-day lives, we can forget altogether the existence of angelic conflicts and wars waged. When we remember that supernatural events have earthly effects, we are better positioned for prayer.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 reminds us...

For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds.

So are you ready to suit up? Now that we hopefully know more about the armor of God and most importantly about it's spiritual equivalent, we need to put on the armor that God has given us and become active soldiers in this war.

Some of you are thinking – what? Me? A soldier? A warrior?

Yes, you! If you are a Christ follower, you are a warrior. If you have ever uttered a prayer, you are a warrior. If you are thankful for your salvation, you are a warrior. If God's righteousness covers you, you are a warrior. I think you get the picture!

Maybe you think that the armor doesn't fit you or that when you put it on, there's a chink in it. A place that is weak or vulnerable. I would challenge you to identify which piece that is and read through the book of Ephesians (or other Scripture) that will help you to strengthen that part of your armor.

I Timothy 1:7 says "For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline." The enemy will make us question our ability and will try to rationalize us out of obedience. Take your stand against him.

Dr. Walter Kime, a former Ashland Seminary professor, says of his book, *Fighting With God: Becoming a Christian Warrior*, "Fighting **WITH** God describes the spiritual warfare we face today as active spiritual terrorism... The Christian life is not meant to be good thoughts that are simply accepted. The Christian life must be put into action."

We are at W.A.R. and We are Ready!

PRAYER

BENEDICTION:

From I Corinthians 16:13

Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.

Let's suit up and stand up for Jesus – we're soldiers of the cross!

Don't forget that the Prayer Corner is available.