

Dressed for War

Ephesians 6:10-19

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. 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. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 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, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel.

There is a saying “Dress for Success.” There is even a company by that name that supplies ideas on how to dress so that you can be confident in how you look. You would not want to dress in shorts and a T shirt if you want work with Fortune 500 company. Our Armed Service people dress for war and so should we as Christians.

Paul is writing to new Christians as he addresses the Ephesian congregation. He knew that they would come under severe attacks from the world and devil, now that they were believers in Christ. He urges them to be strong in the Lord instead of their strength. Toward that end Paul urges them to “put on the whole armor of God.” (v. 11, 13) We may not be new but we are targets of the devils wiles. First Peter 5:8 explains it well when it says: “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

The armor Paul is speaking of is spiritual. The following are some of weapons needed to fight off the devil:

- *Belt of truth* – A belt holds loose clothing in preparation for moving quickly. God’s truth alone can counter the devil’s lies. (TL SB) Jesus says in John 17:17: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”
- *Breast plate of righteousness* – This is the righteousness of Christ put on by faith. No righteousness of our own could be proof against Satan. The breastplate covers the vital organs, especially the heart. Righteousness is the central part of all saving truth. The heart of the Word makes our heart invulnerable against the devil.
- *Shoes for your feet* – The Roman sandal was furnished with nails that gripped the ground firmly; even when it was sloping or slippery; so the good news of peace keeps us upright and firm. Keeps the soldier standing.
- *Shield of Faith* – A Christian armed with faith, can overcome Satan. The fiery darts here represent the doubts, lusts, temptations, fears, etc. which Satan uses against us. Sooner or later every Christian understands what is meant by these words of Paul. Fiery arrows are destructive, a frightening prospect. With Christian faith we can quench them.
- *Helmet of salvation* – The helmet is very important. Think of how important a helmet is for motorcycle riding in our day. Many die because they do not wear a helmet. Likewise the helmet was very important for the soldier. Injuries to the head can be fatal.
- *Sword of the Spirit* – God’s Word originates from the Spirit. The Spirit works through the Word. For that reason God’s Word is a victorious weapon.

Prayer: LSB – Hymn 660 – *Stand up, Stand up for Jesus* Verse 3, line 3 “Put on the Gospel armor; Each piece put on with prayer.” And, help us pray for others. (TL SB)