

"WHAT TO WEAR TO THE WAR"

Ephesians 6:14-20

Introduction:

Introduce Leroy Eims – Served in the US Marines in the South Pacific during WWII. He served with the Navigators for about 50 years. (Play audio clip.)

Review - If we are going to successfully defend ourselves against the enemy's onslaughts we need to use the protection and the weapons God has given us. Today we are going to look briefly at the armor of God as outlined for us by Paul in these verses.

Mention book by Warren Wiersbe.

Beware of Hypocrisy – The Belt of Truth v.14a

Describe the girdle – a leather apron which protected the middle part of the body – held the sword, held the robes and the armor together. It keeps everything together so that the soldier would be unencumbered to fight the battle. 1 Peter 1:13 – "Therefore, prepare your minds for action (gird up the loins of your mind); be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."

The girdle of truth represents a life and mind that is pulled together and ready to serve for the glory of God. It speaks of integrity.

What is Integrity – singleness, wholeness of life, truth in the inner being. Psalm 51:6 – "Surely you desire truth in the inner parts." The opposite of integrity is *duplicity – the idea of being divided. Satan hates integrity – his goal is to get us divided – living a double life.

If we are going to stand our ground against Satan and his forces, we must remain firm in our allegiance to Christ and maintain our integrity. The minute we display division or duplicity in our lives, we have given Satan an opening where he can attack us. Once he gains a foothold, his influence in our lives begins to grow until he finally controls us.

There are so many ways we can be divided:

A divided heart – treasures on earth & in heaven

A divided mind – double minded – unstable – James

A divided will – loyalties – "No man can serve two masters"

The only solution to this duplicity is integrity – taking the girdle of truth, saying, I have no other master. I am committed to him and to him only. **An absolute commitment to the truth and the one who is the truth is the only protection we have against the devil's hypocrisy.**

Silence the Accuser – The Breastplate of Righteousness

Describe the breastplate of the Roman soldier – a coat of mail that covered the front and back of a soldier's body from the neck to the thighs. It was a crucial part of the armour as it protected the soldier's vital organs.

The Christian's coat of mail is the righteousness which is received from God through faith in Jesus Christ. This is also a vital piece of armor for the believer. You see Satan is our accuser. He loves to stand before the throne of God and bring accusations against the brethren. In our consciences he loves to continually remind us of past sins and failures. That is why we need the breastplate of righteousness.

When Satan tries to denounce and destroy us by his endless accusations, we can stand against him, unharmed, because we are protected and covered by the righteousness of Christ – we know that God has forgiven us. That is our protection against the onslaught of Satan's denunciations – knowing that our sins have been forgiven and we have been given His righteousness.

However as we wear the breastplate of Christ's righteousness we also need to realize that our lives must also be continually lining up with Him in terms of righteousness being lived out. **We have His righteousness imputed to us in Christ, but we also need His righteousness imparted to us in our daily walk with Him.**

Stand Firm on the one true Gospel – The Shoes of Readiness

Shoes are also vital to a soldier. Roman soldiers wore sandals fixed firmly by leather thongs. On the soles were spikes or cleats to give firm footing in any conditions.

This is the image painted by the word “preparation” or “readiness”. It means a strong foundation, a firm footing. If a soldier has trouble with his feet he can’t stand, and he can’t fight.

So we also need the firm footing that comes from standing on the gospel of peace. What is the gospel of peace – see 1 Cor. 15:1-5 (*Look up and read*) – the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – that is the gospel of peace on which we must firmly stand. Satan hates this gospel message and is constantly trying to get people to turn from it to another gospel. But when they do they lose their footing.

Just as a soldier with the right footwear is prepared for battle, so we need to be prepared with a firm footing on the gospel of peace.
When we do we will have the stability, the balance and the mobility we need to defend ourselves against the onslaughts of Satan and his forces.

Put out the Fires – The Shield of Faith

There is another way that Satan tries to defeat us – the flaming arrows of doubt and discouragement. How often, at critical times in our lives does Satan attack with his darts? Trying to bring doubt to our minds? Causing us to question God, His Word, His power, His love, His wisdom?

We cannot keep these fiery darts from being thrown at us but we can protect ourselves. How? By taking the shield of faith.

The shield of the Roman soldier was large, almost like a door. By crouching behind it, the soldier could hide himself completely. The shield was made of wood covered with cloth or leather. Sometimes it was soaked in water so that the fire-tipped arrows shot by the enemy would be extinguished when they struck the shield.

God has given us a shield – that shield is faith, trust in God and His word. It is that faith which protects us from Satan’s darts.

Gen 15: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield,"

There are many darts Satan likes to use against us – fear, *confusion, *evil thoughts, *depression.

In order to protect ourselves we need the shield of faith.

Think Like a Soldier - The Helmet of Salvation

Another of Satan’s tactics in the warfare is to attack the mind. If he can steal our victory by getting us to think wrong thoughts, by making us think discouraging thoughts, by making us think that all is hopeless and that the war is lost, we will never be able to stand against him.

It is crucial to think like a soldier. Wear the helmet of salvation.

The Roman soldier had a bronze helmet with a leather strap on it. It was crucial to the soldier because it protected one of the most vulnerable areas of his body. He would never enter the battle without first putting his helmet on.

What is the purpose of the helmet of salvation? It protects your mind from the attacks of the enemy. Salvation involves your mind. Repentance is a change of mind – Sincere repentance means changing our minds completely about our sins and what God has to say about them.

We grow in our Christian lives as we cultivate our knowledge of the Word of God. We use our mind to grow, both mentally and spiritually. But God wants us to have a spiritual mind. He wants our minds to be transformed – renewed – Rom. 12:2

In order to grow and have victory in the Christian life, something has to happen to our minds. Our mind needs to be enlightened; we need to be growing in our knowledge of God and His word. We cannot ignore the helmet of salvation. **We must prepare our minds before we enter the battle or Satan will deceive us and defeat us.**

Think like a soldier – Prepare your minds for action.

Use Your Weapon - The Sword of the Spirit

As valuable as all the armor is for the protection of the soldier, he would still be most ineffective in a battle if he had no weapon with which to attack the enemy and defend himself. The sword Paul refers to here was a short, straight sword (like a dagger) that was used for close, hand-to-hand combat by the Roman soldier.

God has given us a weapon with which we can attack our enemy, Satan, and defend ourselves against his onslaughts. That weapon is the Word of God – the Bible, literally, His sayings, the truth that comes from God. Use his Word. The only way to resist the enemy when he moves in on us with all of his forces is to attack using the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

There is something to remember, however about the use of the sword. Sometime we fail because we try to use the sword by itself. It cannot be separated from the Holy Spirit of God. It is the sword of the Spirit. It was given to us by the Spirit and it must be wielded by the power of the Spirit. It is a spiritual sword, alive, with its own power –

Heb 4:12 – “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.”

You also cannot separate the sword from the rest of the armor.

Without both the protection of the armor and the power of the sword we leave ourselves open to attack and defeat.

Above all, PRAY -The Power of Prayer v.18

All of the armor is useless to a soldier unless he has the energy to use the armor and to wield the sword. That is why we need to pray. Prayer is what puts us in touch with the source of our energy.

Prayer is the power behind the Christian’s armor. It is vital if we are going to win in our battle against Satan.

Prayer is:

- the means by which we put on the armour.
- the power that makes the armour work.

- the source of the strength by which we are enabled to win the battle against the enemy.

This verse goes with all the previous verses. It is not a separate thought. Read v. 18. The word “all” is used 4 times in this verse in the original. **Put on each piece of the armour with prayer; then continue in prayer.**

Conclusion

We are in a battle... If you know Jesus Christ, then he has given you a wonderful inheritance and great spiritual wealth and blessing. But Satan is out to steal that wealth and rob you of your inheritance. That is why we need to be prepared for battle. But to be victorious we must:

- put on the armour
 - The belt of truth
 - The breastplate of righteousness
 - The shoes of the gospel
 - The shield of faith
 - The helmet of salvation
- wield the sword of the Spirit, our weapon
- above all else, PRAY

Close with challenge and invitation.