

November 27, 2022

"God Gives Tools for Our Protection"

Ephesians 6:10-18

Lesson 4 of Unit

Intro

As was mentioned in an earlier lesson, Ephesians is unique in that it wasn't written to address specific problems. Instead, it functions as a presentation of the truths of Christianity and as both an encouragement and a teaching tool to strengthen the young Christians in the churches Paul had established. Paul's life of unjust imprisonment likely has reminded him of Satan's schemes and what is necessary to be prepared for them, the focus of today's passage.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

1. vs. 10: Paul says, "Finally"

In chapters 4-6, Paul has written about the daily expression of our faith

Pursuing unity among believers (4:3-4)

Speaking truthfully and dealing honestly (4:25-28)

Being forgiving (4:32)

Avoiding sexual sin (5:3)

Being a good spouse and parent (5:22-33)

Demonstrating a strong work ethic (6:5-9)

Paul reminds believers that the power to do all this isn't within us

We are to be "strong in the Lord and in His mighty power"

He has provided us with His word and His Spirit to access "His mighty power"

2. vs. 11: We are reminded that God has provided us with armor to protect us during battle

It is "full" armor; nothing is missing which would make us vulnerable

Our battle is not a physical military one, but a spiritual battle

Paul says we are to "stand against the devil's schemes"

So if our battle is spiritual, our armor is going to be spiritual to fight that fight

If we have a hard time with earthly behaviors (see vs. 1) and need God to help us in those, how much more do we need Him when we fight spiritual battles?

3. vs. 12: Paul explains the nature of our battle here in vs. 12

We think of warfare as people against people, "against flesh and blood"

Paul instructs that our battle is against an entirely different type of enemy

"against the rulers...authorities...powers of this dark world"

"against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"

Judaism taught that good and evil angels all lived in the heavens above this world

Paul is writing from this viewpoint

The "flesh and blood" people Paul mentions can be influenced by Satan

Even so, they are not the true enemy; spiritual evil is

This is a good reminder that people, even bad people, are not the real enemy

Our fight is always against Satan and those angels that willingly follow him

4. vs. 13: Paul repeats the phrase he used in vs. 11, “put on the full armor of God”

This repetition shows it is something important, something to be remembered

Paul says, “when the day of evil comes”

Evil will come; it is inevitable

Satan opposes everything that is Godly, so he will attack it

It is a question of “when”, not “if”

“You may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand”

We are to be prepared to face the day of evil, that we may stand against its coming

We are to do everything in our power

This includes putting on and using the full armor God has provided for us

We are not being paranoid to do this; we are being prepared for a certain eventuality

5. vs. 14: Paul now begins a description of each of the pieces of armor we have

“the belt of truth buckled around your waist”

Truth here is meant as two things at the same time

The truth of the gospel message as presented in Scripture

The truth of our living out that life/message daily

Truth is our defense against Satan’s lies

“with the breastplate of righteousness in place”

The Roman breastplate covered the torso, protecting it from a frontal attack

Paul connects this breastplate with righteousness

Righteousness is living correctly in God’s eyes

We protect ourselves from Satan’s attacks by living rightly, with God’s help

The habit of living rightly forms our character

That formed character serves as a defense against various temptations

6. vs. 15: Our feet are “fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace”

The implication is that we are going somewhere

We need shoes (footwear) that will allow us to go safely

The gospel has prepared us to go, to tell others about our experience with Jesus

This gospel brings peace

The Romans brought peace through subjugation

The people weren’t at peace; they just weren’t able to stand up to the Romans

The gospel brings a change of heart, bringing peace where it used to be opposite

7. vs. 16: The next is “the shield of faith”

Shields are protection from the enemy’s weapons (arrows, etc)

Roman shields were able to be locked together by soldiers standing side-by-side

This made a protective wall for all of the soldiers

So faith is our protective shield

Faith is a trusting commitment to God

Our lives are in His hands to provide for, protect, and direct

Obedient faith to Him protects us from “the flaming arrows of the evil one”

All temptations and challenges are blunted and manageable this way

Just like the Romans, we are meant to be a community of believers

We are to stand together, supporting and protecting each other

8. vs. 17: Two of our most powerful parts of our spiritual armor are given in this verse

We are to “take” the helmet of salvation

It will not be given to us passively; we must seek it and take it intentionally

Salvation is more than an assurance of life after death alone

It is also a restoration of life in the present

Our salvation gives our lives meaning, purpose, joy, and love

We are also to take “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God”

The sword is the only offensive weapon given in this passage

All the others are defensive protections

Obviously, the sword can be used defensively as well

This sword is “of the Spirit”

It comes from God and is meant to be used in spiritual warfare

“The word of God” is the sword of the Spirit

This phrase has been explained in two different ways

First, it is referring to Scripture, God’s words used by us and enable by the Spirit

Second, it could refer to the oral message passed on before it got written down

Jesus’ words as recounted by the apostles

The story of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection being repeated

The stories of God’s actions toward and for His people throughout history

“The word of God” is a spiritual weapon designed to fight and to protect against evil

9. vs. 18: Paul finishes by admonishing believers to pray

“on all occasions”

“with all kinds of prayers and requests”

Paul has just been talking about spiritual battle and the armor used to fight against it

This call for prayer is part of the same discussion

These prayers are meant to be requests for aid and strength in the spiritual battles

We are called to pray “for all the Lord’s people”

We are to pray/request for their strength and protection in their spiritual battles

We are to “pray in the Spirit”

This doesn’t mean some mystical prayer language

This means we pray knowing that the Spirit will be taking our requests to the Father

It also means that we pray in the same mindset as the Spirit

The Spirit does what the Father wants; so does the Son

We are to pray for what the Father’s will to be done, not our own.

Application: The armor in this passage is meant to fight an enemy. That enemy is Satan, the Accuser and the Liar. Our armor and the sword provide us the means necessary to fight against the enemy of our souls. This armor is from God, which means we can have confidence and the strength to stand firm no matter what we face. As we fight, let’s remember who the enemy is (Satan) and not who it isn’t (any human who was made in the image of God but isn’t yet following Him). We are to recruit those who need God’s armor. We should offer them protection which comes from God’s salvation. And we are to pray for those who fight and those who are currently vulnerable, not being protected by God’s armor.

Prayer: Father God, thank You for providing for our every need, especially for our spiritual protection. Help us to stand up faithfully for You and against spiritual evil. Thank You that we are able to stand in Your name and because of what You have given to us as weapons. In Jesus' name, Amen.