

Wearing the Helmet of Salvation: Clinging to God's Securing Promises

Ephesians 6:17

As Bonnie & I set out for our ride through the shaded woods and sunny breezes of the tall grass prairies of the Al Sabo Nature reserve, we had no idea of the spiritual lessons we would glean.

Moments after gliding onto the Texas Township Bikeway we crossed paths with some serious bikers. They had the gear, the cadence, and the helmets.

We had none of those things. But, they swept past us so quickly they hardly saw us.

The Dangers of Helmet-free Biking

Soon, around the next corner, a family came toward us on the bikeway.

This time our condition was clear.

The mom and dad's eyes instantly locked onto those two bad examples. Two irresponsible adults peddling down the bikeway. Almost simultaneously they looked at us, looked at their children and then locked their eyes on our unprotected heads.

That family all had helmets, right down to the very youngest; and even their pet riding in a pet trailer behind dad was safely riding, and I'm almost sure that that pet probably had his helmet on also.

But we were clearly noticed as not wearing our helmet.

Physical Dangers of Not Wearing Our Helmet

For the next 45 minutes we were singled out by looks and gestures, over and over again, as we peddled along.

You could almost read people's minds as they passed us by.

We were: reckless, unprepared, and almost endangering our lives by having no helmets.

Why is that? Years of studies, public safety announcements, and advertising have put a stigma on those who don't wear their helmets. I can wear a ball cap and lessen the looks, but the public-safety minded enforcers always make me aware of what I am missing.

Are we as conscious of our even more vital helmet of salvation?

Spiritual Dangers of Not Wearing Our Helmet

Just as physical trauma to an unprotected head always causes damage: some permanent, some passing, but always dangerous. So spiritual trauma to an unprotected mind is even more deadly.

Much anguish & many fears would be gone if more believers put on their helmets.

Nearly everything to do with spiritual life is tied to the mind: faith is an operation of the mind, so is worship, and so is spiritual warfare. Our mind is the primary vehicle for spiritual life.

That is why Paul goes on to instruct all of us that we need to be personally taking up and putting on our helmet of salvation.

Just as everyone seemed to be checking us out to see if we had on our helmets, so we should become sensitive to the preparation of our own protective gear, and as Hebrews 10:24-25 says, of the believers around us.

We should be peddling through life always aware of those on the spiritual trail around us. We are called to stir up our brothers and sisters in Christ's Body around us to not just carry around the helmet issued to us at the instant of salvation, but to all wear it.

Wearing the Assuring Helmet of Salvation (Eph. 6:17a)

The backdrop for Paul's lessons on war gear come from the soldiers that were always around him, both as a prisoner, as well as from his Empire wide travels.

The legionnaires were always prepared for battle.

That is what defined Rome's greatness.

Soldiers couldn't survive long in the dangers of war without that helmet.

The waves of enemy missiles flying, and the long battle swords swinging, would soon wound or kill them.

Roman helmets were made of metal to protect and leather to cushion.

Often the sides extended down for face protection.

A head wound took a Roman soldier out of battle.

The same is true for us as believers.

For Us As Believers

Paul explains that again Satan's goal is to attack the secure reality of our eternal life.

Paul calls it the helmet of the HOPE of the Gospel in 1 Th. 5:8

Our assurance of salvation, when shaken, debilitates our trust in God and sidelines us from battle. Much like the 36-48 inch long, double edged battle sword called in Greek the *rhomphaia* (that word is found in Rev. 1:16, 2:12, 6:8), Satan's realm is swinging the razor-sharp doubled edged sword of doubt and discouragement.

Doubting God's goodness often comes when we look at our struggles with our health.

Doubting God's love often comes when we fear the supply of our finances.

Doubting God's wisdom often comes when we feel the pains of our relationships.

Doubting God's power comes with question why He isn't doing a better job at helping us.

That opens the way for a flood of further doubts leading to discouragement and despair about how we could even be saved as we think of all our sins, failures, weaknesses, and struggles.

But the solution to doubts, fears, and anguish is always the same.

The helmet of the hope of our salvation.

Believing truth about what God has done through Christ.

Just as the words to that 1863 hymn entitled, In Christ Alone, reminds us:

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.

Trusting Our Father

The helmet of salvation is a firm confidence in our Heavenly Father's character and power. This helmet is not getting saved, because Paul is telling believers to put it on. The first element of salvation is defined by doctrine of justification, which is trusting in the finished work of Christ, already accomplished on the cross for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Justification ignites the second element of salvation, which is sanctification.

God wants to make each of His children useful for His plan and uses His Word and trials, under the guidance of Spirit of God to shape us more and more into likeness to Christ (1 Th. 5:23). The final element of salvation is yet future, our conformity to Christ forever is finally accomplished when we are glorified fully like Him forever as 1 John 3:2 reminds us.

We Live Always in 3 Time Zones

A solidly grounded, and secure believer constantly lives and operates in 3 time zones.

Or secure assurance of salvation is based on:

A past event we trust called justification;

A present work in our lives we see called sanctification; and

A future completion we hope for called glorification.

Salvation's helmet always has these three aspects: past, present, and future.

We know our sins are forever gone.

We see our sinful ways presently being sanctified away.

We await the end of the struggles as we become like Him when we see Him as He is.

We know the ultimate victory is ours.

We Must Act Upon Each Piece

Each piece of this spiritual armor must be responded to.

Just like we had to call on the Name of the Lord to be saved.

So we must respond to God's call to take & wear each piece.

Shield of Faith	Believing God's Word extinguishes flaming arrows
Helmet of Salvation	Clinging to God's Securing Promises
Sword of the Spirit	Using God's Word to attack unbelief & sin in my life

Salvation's Mighty Work

Through seven divine works of God, guilty sinners are made ready for dwelling in the Presence of God forever; and their bodies formerly slaves to sin instantly become the very dwelling place, and temple of God.

How does God do all that? He does it through the seven elements that make up the Helmet of Salvation. Remember with me what God offered to each of us who believed:

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's FORGIVENESS component means:

I behave like I really believe my debts are paid.

God has removed all my debts.

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the **forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace

Because of our sin—we are all debtors to God's Righteousness; so we need forgiveness.

So Christmas is all about Jesus coming to live and then die the substitutionary death to take the hopeless debt we owe to God and pay with His own life our eternal death sin has caused us to be responsible to pay--**that's forgiveness**. A Sinner stands before God as a debtor and that debt is forgotten by His payment.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,

And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace NKJV

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NKJV

Forgiveness means that we can offer people the "remission of sins" in Jesus' name (Luke 24:47) which brings "life through His name" (John 20:31). We can then come asking our Father

for help in Jesus' name as we pray (John 14:13–14; 15:16; 16:23–26). Because we've been forgiven, when we ask the Father "in the name of Jesus Christ," it is as though Jesus Himself were asking it. If we remember this, it will help to keep us from asking for things unworthy of His name.

Have you **experienced the relief of knowing that all your sins, everyone of them—past, present, and future, are GONE?** Your sins are paid for, and your eternal life is purchased—and you have the receipt in your hand, written in the very blood of the One who paid the price. Christ's record of that payment is forever settled in this book the Bible!

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's JUSTIFICATION component means:

I behave like I know my status has changed.

God erased the record of all my sins.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of our sin—we are all guilty convicts in God's sight; so we need justification.

So Christ died to take guilty convicts and destroy any record that that ever committed a crime and takes their place in the punishment—**that's justification!** A Sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.

But justification is only for those who confess their crimes (sins) to the judge (God) and ask for His pardon and forgiveness. All of those who refuse to believe they are a guilty, hopelessly sinful convict in Christ's eyes are denied any relief from the penalty of their sins—both now and forever.

Have you experienced the peace of justification, all guilt removed, all punishment forever taken away from God's sight?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's REGENERATION component means:

I behave like I know my heart is brand new.

God gave me a new Heart.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give **you a new heart** and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Because of our sin—we are all dead in our trespasses and sin; so we need regeneration.

So Christ died to take dead and rotting spiritual corpses and make them vibrant, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

Have you **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the

powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's RECONCILIATION component means:

I behave like I know that God has "Friendened" me.

God becomes my Friend.

Romans 5:10-11 For if when we were enemies **we were reconciled** to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Because of our sin—we are all enemies of God; so we need reconciliation.

So Christ died to take enemies and make them friends—**that's reconciliation!** A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.

Have you experienced the wonder of friendship with God?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's ADOPTION component means:

I behave like I know that God has really brought me into His family.

Romans 8:14-15 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption** by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

Because of our sin—we are all strangers to God; so we need adoption.

So Christ died to take strangers and make them part of the family—**that's adoption!** A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.

Adoption is not our entrance into God's family, the way a homeless child would enter an adoptive family in our society. Rather, our only hope of getting into God's family is by *regeneration* or "the new birth" (John 3:3). In New Testament language, the word used by God for *adoption* means "placed into a family as an adult son." This denotes our *standing* in God's family of God: we enter God's family not as little children but we enter as adult sons with all the privileges. **Entrance** into God's family is by regeneration, but **enjoyment** of God's family is through adoption.

Have you experienced the joy of being adopted into Christ's family?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's REDEMPTION component means:

I behave like I know that God now owns my life.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For

you were **bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Because of our sin—we are all slaves to unrighteousness; so we need redemption.

So Christ died to take slaves and make them freed forever—**that's redemption!** A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by His ransom.

Have you experienced the thrill of being liberated, set free, rescued by God forever?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's SANCTIFICATION:

I behave like I know God is using every event in my life to changes my behavior into Christlikeness.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Because of our sin—we are all defiled; so we need sanctification.

So Christ died to take our soiled and spotted lives that always get wasted and make them clean, focused and fruitful—**that's sanctification!**

To best understand what God has done, let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification. Because we are saved (justified) this is how we should live (sanctified).

Justification is what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.

Justification is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.

Justification is activated the moment I trust in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—**sanctification** grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Justification is my position declared right in God's sight—**sanctification** is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to His image.

START A NEW SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

If you have never tried this I'd encourage you to start a new dimension of your spiritual life by opening your gifts God gave you in salvation. Let me share with you one of the more wonderful spiritual exercises you can ever do.

As you begin each day, each month, and as we begin this new year, one of our greatest privileges is to open and enjoy the gift of salvation God has given to us. By faith we please God when we believe what He's said about us. We need to not live by what others say or have said about us all your life.

Satan is the Accuser and wants us to only remember all the many times we have fallen; Satan delights in the days, weeks, or months he can keep us condemning ourselves for what we've done. That is his plan, so don't fall for it. Resist Satan as you believe the truth; speak the truth; and preach the Gospel to yourself.

And when ever we fall down, God says to just turn back to Him and repent, confessing our sin immediately—and believe that what God has promised in His salvation. We are forgiven, justified, regenerated, reconciled, adopted, redeemed, and sanctified. That makes us precious in His sight, special in His plan.

One of the most powerful habits you could develop is to take these truths about the gift of salvation and rejoice by faith in what God has done and wants to do in you!

Keep this list of what God did in salvation for you in your Bible, at home, on your computer, put one on your mirror where you start your day, and in your car. Put this truth into your mind as a reminder of what great things God has promised and done through Christ's death for us!

Slowly as you understand and lay hold on these truths a life-changing transformation take place in our minds, and then in our emotions, and finally throughout our entire life as we live each day based on God's eternal truth.