

## The Weapons of our Warfare (Part 1)

**Text:** Ephesians 6:14-15

### Introduction:

1. In our last lesson, we considered the Apostle's exhortation to put on the whole armour of God in order that we might stand in the spiritual battle we find ourselves in. We were also introduced to the fearful enemy we face.
2. The Apostle now proceeds to give us a piece-by-piece description of the armour we have been provided for the battle. God has given us 7 powerful weapons to use in spiritual warfare so that we might stand for Him.
  - The Belt of Truth (Vs. 14a).
  - The Breastplate of Righteousness (Vs. 14b).
  - The Gospel Shoes (Vs. 15).
  - The Shield of Faith (Vs. 16)
  - The Helmet of Salvation (Vs. 17a).
  - The Sword of the Spirit (Vs. 17b).
  - The Weapon of All Prayer (Vs. 18-20)
3. Each piece of armour must be consciously applied – “put on” (Vs. 14); “take unto you” (Vs. 13).
4. In this sermon we will consider the first three pieces of weaponry in the list.

### I. THE BELT OF TRUTH (VS. 14A)

#### A. The Priority of the Belt

1. It is of significance that the girdle of truth is what is first mentioned. The belt was an essential part of the soldier's armour as it helped hold in place the other pieces. Expositors writes, “Passing round the loins and by the end of the breastplate (in later times supporting the sword), it was of especial use in keeping other parts in place, and in securing the proper soldierly attitude and freedom of movement.”
2. The ‘loins’ are the waist area, the middle of the body and the center of movement. The truth is to occupy a central position in the soldier's armament.

#### B. The Practice of the Belt

How do we put on the belt of truth in the Christian life? We need to...

1. Know the Truth
  - a. Ignorance of the truth leaves me vulnerable to spiritual defeat. It also means I will not be effective in the use of the other weapons as the truth is our Divine instruction manual that informs us on the nature and use of the other parts of the armour. “Let not any one imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness if his mind is stored with his own theories, or with the speculations of other men.” (Hodge)
  - b. The believer needs to make familiarity with the truth the foremost priority of his Christian walk. The Bible is to be our passion! We need to:

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- i. Read the Word – “Till I come, give attendance to reading...” (1 Tim. 4:13). See also Neh. 8:18 & 9:3.
  - ii. Mediate on the Word – Josh. 1:8 “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt **meditate** therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.” Psalm 1:1-3 “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he **meditate** day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”
  - iii. Memorize the Word – Psalm 119:11 “Thy word have I **hid in mine heart**, that I might not sin against thee.”
  - iv. Study the Word – 2 Tim. 2:15 “**Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
  - v. Hear the Word – Rev. 2:11 “He that hath an ear, let him **hear** what the Spirit saith unto the churches...” It is vital you not only study the Word in your personal life but that you make it your number 1 priority each week to get to as many church services as you physically can. The church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15) and you need to be under its influence as it is preached more than once a week!
  - vi. Fellowship in the Word – Acts 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and **fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (See also 1 John 1:7)
  - vii. Live the Word – James 1:22 “But be ye **doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
2. Live the Truth
- a. The picture of the loins girded is a figure used in the Scripture to describe an attitude of readiness. The picture therefore indicates that the soldier is equipped with the truth and ready for the battle.
  - b. The girdle held the sword. Unless we practice the truth, we cannot use the Word of truth. Knowledge of the truth on its own does not bring power. The truth needs to be applied to our daily lives.
  - c. James 1:22 “But be ye **doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”
  - d. Alexander Maclaren: “God’s truth must be received and its power submitted to, if it is to implant in us the supreme grace of perfect truthfulness. Our minds and hearts must be saturated with it by many an hour of solitary reflection, by meditation which will diffuse its aroma like a fragrant perfume through our characters, and by the habit of bringing all circumstances,

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moods, and desires to be tested by its infallible criterion, and by the un-reluctant acceptance of its guidance at every moment of our lives.”

### II. THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (VS. 14B)

The ancient breastplate was “a coat of mail or scale plates that covered the trunk or chest. In Paul’s time it was probably a metal plate worn over a leather jerkin or a coat of mail to protect the chest. Polybius, the Greek historian, wrote that the common soldier had a brass breastplate covering his chest to protect his heart, while wealthier soldiers had a coat of chain mail.” (Hoehner) The spiritual breastplate provided for the believer is righteousness. The breastplate symbolizes several truths:

#### A. The Positional Righteousness of the Believer

1. Practical holiness is rooted and grounded in our positional holiness. Salvation precedes sanctification. Imputed righteousness makes practical righteousness possible.
2. The righteousness of salvation is not a self-made or earned righteousness. It is not man’s own righteousness but God’s Divine righteousness which He gives the repentant, believing sinner. It is imputed righteousness. The Book of Romans deals extensively with this righteousness.
3. Paul’s own salvation testimony summarizes it perfectly in Philippians 3:8-9 “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.**”
4. Romans 10:9-10, 13 – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus...”

#### B. The Practical Righteousness of the Believer

1. Paul is speaking to those who are already saved – “my brethren” (Vs. 10) so this is not an exhortation to receive saving righteousness but an exhortation to live out sanctifying righteousness. Essentially Paul is saying “live right!” “Here Paul gathers up the whole sum of Christian character and conduct into one word.” (Maclaren)
2. “The righteousness here is not justifying righteousness given the believing sinner when he first believes, but sanctifying righteousness, the product of the Holy Spirit in the life of the yielded saint.” (Wuest)
3. Personal holiness is not a side note or a matter of personal preference in the Christian life. It is a key doctrine of New Testament Christianity.
4. 1 Peter 1:15 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy **in all manner of conversation;**”
5. 1 Thess. 4:7 “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto **holiness.**”

#### C. The Protective Righteousness of the Believer

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1. The breastplate shields the vital organs, most importantly, the heart. The heart represents the inner part of man, the mind and the seat of the affections. The mind and emotions are two areas where Satan most fiercely attacks us as believers.
2. Prov. 4:23 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”
3. Living in sin and spiritual compromise as a believer leaves my heart exposed and makes me susceptible to a knock out blow from the devil.
4. Someone has said, “When a man is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable. Words are no defense against accusation, but a good life is.” If our conscience is void of offense toward God and man, the devil has nothing to shoot at. (William Macdonald)

### III. THE BOOTS OF THE GOSPEL (VS. 15)

The Gospel shoes speak of:

#### A. Our Standing in the Gospel

1. “feet shod” = the verb always means to bind or fasten under. Ancient sandals were bound on with straps. (Hoehner)
2. The ancient Roman sandals: “The Roman legionaries wore heavy sandals (caliga, a low half-boot) with soles made of several layers of leather averaging 2 centimeters (3/4 inch) thick, studded with hollow-headed hobnails. They were tied by leather thongs half-way up the shin and were stuffed with wool or fur in the cold weather. These were not running sandals but ones able to dig in with their hollow-headed hobnails and stand against the enemy.”<sup>1</sup>
3. In the context of spiritual warfare, the primary truth in view is the shoes as being a part of the defensive armour provided the believer in his battle with principalities and powers. Now that we are saved, we stand in the assurance of our salvation in the face of the enemy’s attacks.
4. “preparation” = “in classical times the noun reflected the idea of “readiness” or “preparation”. The verb form means “to make ready, prepare.” (Hoehner) It means “preparedness; the state of mind of the man who is ready.” (Maclaren)
5. This state of readiness has its source in the gospel – “of the Gospel of peace”. We are in a state of readiness in the battle because we stand in our salvation. The truth of your salvation is what enables you to stand firm in the battle.
6. “the gospel **of peace**” = the good news that believers are at peace with God. By responding to the Gospel in repentance and faith, we are brought into a state of peace with God. We have the peace of our salvation in the midst of spiritual warfare.
  - a. Romans 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”

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<sup>1</sup> Bishop and Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment*, Cited by Harold Hoehner (Bible Commentator), p. 842.

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- b. Col. 1:20 “And, having made **peace** through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.”
7. “It is the believer’s “surefootedness” in the tranquillity of the mind and security of the heart in the gospel of peace that gives them readiness to stand against the devil and his angelic host.”  
(Hoehner)

### B. Our Walking in Accordance with the Gospel

1. As Christian soldiers, our walk/conduct needs to be consistent with the Gospel. We are to be a witness both by our lives and our lips.
2. Php. 1:27 “Only let your conversation be as it **becometh** the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;” The word ‘becometh’ is the same word translated ‘worthy’ in Eph. 4:1. We are to conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel message we profess to believe.

### C. Our Proclaiming of the Gospel

1. While the context primarily deals with the Gospel shoes as being a part of our defensive armour against the attacks of Satan, the importance of being ready and prepared to share the Gospel is certainly a valid application of the text.
2. Soul-winning Christians tend to be stronger and sharper spiritually as they are actively involved in the battle against principalities and powers for the souls of men. “The most victorious Christian is a witnessing Christian.” (Wiersbe)
3. Isaiah 52:7 “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that **publisheth peace**; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”
4. Romans 10:15 “...as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach **the gospel of peace**, and bring glad tidings of good things!”
5. Song 7:1 “**How beautiful are thy feet with shoes**, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs *are* like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.”
6. Macdonald: “This suggests a readiness to go out with the good news of peace, and therefore an invasion into enemy territory. When we relax in our tents, we are in deadly peril. Our safety is to be found in following the beautiful feet of the Saviour on the mountains, bearing glad tidings and publishing peace (Is. 52:7; Rom. 10:13).”

## Conclusion:

1. Are you saved? Have you made peace with God by accepting His offer of salvation through the Gospel?
2. Christian, which piece of the armour are you neglecting?