

**Ephesians God's New Community**  
**New Enemy, New Armour, New Power!**  
**Ephesians 6:10-18**  
**13th March 2022**  
**Preacher: Pastor Roy Summers**

**Introduction: Cruise Liner or Battle Ship?**

May I ask every true Christian a question? When you heard the voice of Jesus Christ say to you, "Come follow me!" did you think you were boarding a cruise liner, headed for the Bahamas, or did you think you were boarding a battleship, sailing into an enemy-infested war zone? [Pause]

Paul is wrapping up his most encouraging letter to his Ephesian friends. He has explained what God has done for us through Jesus Christ in chapters 1-3, "Because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions"( 2:4); Paul has described the new relationships we are to enjoy in church, in marriage, in the home and at work. But Paul has one more truth to share with us—we have an enemy who is hell-bent on destroying God's new community, breaking up Christian marriages, wrecking Christian families and ruining our witness at work.

This enemy does not need to succeed! Paul wants his Christian friends to live victorious Christian lives: "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power", verse 10. But in order to stand strong we must "put on the whole armour of God so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything to stand...."

Today's sermon is about putting on the full armour of God which will enable us to stand our ground and fight the good fight of faith.

*"In heaven we shall not appear in armour but in robes of glory; but here armour is to be worn night and day; we must walk, work, and sleep in them or else we are not true soldiers of Christ." wrote the puritan William Gurnall.*

(By the way, What was your answer? Cruise liner or battle ship?)

Let's take a brief look at the enemy, then let's consider the armour, then finally let's get on with our fight.

**(1) Our Enemy**

Who is the enemy? Soldiers use intelligence to suss out the enemy. The Scriptures tell us all we need to know about the Devil, who John Bunyan called Apollyon in PP.

Satan is an invisible non-human enemy. Someone said to me the other day—and I'm sure they are not the only one to think it, if not say it; that if Vladimir Putin was in the same room with them and they had a gun, they would shoot him! We all understand the sentiment, which arises out of our God-given outrage at wickedness, but Paul says, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood." This is the first thing we learn about our enemy, he is not human. Although Christians may have human enemies, those human beings are not themselves the enemy. Behind those human beings—or governments- lie Satan and his invisible host.

Perhaps this fact will be a light-bulb moment for someone listening. There is a person in your life who constantly opposes your attempts to follow Jesus Christ. And you have thought they were your enemy but today you have been reminded that no, Satan who is behind them is the enemy.

Our enemy is powerful. Satan along with all of his evil spirits or demons is a powerful foe: “Our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (verse 12) At this very moment a huge invisible battle raging in the heavenlies, and you and I who have been gloriously delivered from Satan’s dominion are somehow caught up in that fight. We have a powerful foe: think of what he was able to do to Job: take away his wealth, and his family and his health. Or closer to our time, think of the thousands of sheep, right across the world, Satan has led astray or scattered during the isolation of the recent pandemic?

It would be a mistake to overestimate Satan’s power: the universe is not run by two equal and competing powers, one day God wins, the next day Satan wins, we are not dualists. No. “Be strong in the Lord and his mighty power.” says Paul.

*Should all the hosts of death,  
And powers of hell unknown,  
Put their most dreadful forms  
Of rage and mischief on,  
I shall be safe, for Christ displays  
Superior power, and guardian grace.*

We must not fear Satan, but on the other hand neither must we underestimate his power.

The enemy invisible, powerful and cunning. Verse 12, “put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the Devil’s schemes.”

Sometimes Satan roars like a lion, he’s full-on, blatant, in your face, obviously evil; at other times he comes disguised as an angel of light. And part of his shifty craftiness is that he fits the temptation to the person. Some people buy their suits from a tailor, who measures them up and makes a suit to fit them perfectly. That’s how Satan attacks us. An attack designed for John would never be tried on James, because it just wouldn’t fit: what attracts John does not appeal to James.

Have you ever said to yourself: How is that person led astray by drugs or astrology or doubt, or something else that wouldn’t lead you astray? Temptations are bespoke!

None of the temptations Satan used on Jesus in the wilderness would work on you and I: they were crafted for the Son of God. “If you are the Son of God tell these stones to become bread.” (Matt 4:3) You and I can’t turn stones into bread, so that temptation wouldn’t work on us, and so with the other temptations. Satan’s temptations are bespoke.

Are you and I aware of our individual weaknesses? Because that’s where Satan will strike.

Our enemy is invisible, powerful and cunning. It’s time to talk armour.

## (2) Our Armour

With a typical Roman Soldier in mind, gives us six pieces of spiritual armour, seven if you include prayer. Dressed with this protection, we’ll be able to fight the good fight of faith. It’s all spiritual armour, because our battle is a spiritual one.

1. The belt of truth. If truth is the first causality of war, truth is also the first piece of armoury in the Christian’s arsenal. Satan is called a liar and the “father of lies.” John 8:44. To expose and oppose him, we must put on

the belt of truth. We must know the truth, treasure truth in our hearts (Psalm 51:6), love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10) and speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15).

The first weapon in our armoury is simply walking in truth.

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness. This piece of armoury is like the modern flak jacket we have seen so many journalists on our screens wear, to protect the vital organs such as the heart.

If a Christian tolerate unrepentant sin in their hearts then Satan will be able to say “You’re unrighteous, you’re not a true Christian.” But if we are putting our sin to death by the Spirit, his attacks are repelled by the breastplate of righteousness: a Holy life is protection against the enemy. If it is not unrepentant sin that Satan points to, but occasional sin which trips us all up from time to time, then we must recall the words of Romans 8:1 and hide in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1);

*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 Saviour died,  
My sinful soul is counted free;  
For God, the Just, is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me.*

The breastplate of righteousness protects us against the evil one. So do Gospel shoes...

3. Gospel Shoes. “With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace.” Believing the Gospel, which teaches us that we are put right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, and taking every opportunity to share the Gospel with others, protects us from the attacks of the evil one.

4. Shield of faith. This is the long Roman shield perhaps 2ft by 4ft designed to protect the body of a soldier and to put out arrows tipped with flaming tar. “In addition to all this take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”

What do you do when Satan fires an arrow of doubt or guilt at you, or a suggestion of red-hot wickedness (I knew of a Christian who had thoughts of burning down the property of an enemy! He knew it did not come from himself, but was a fiery dart from the pit of hell!)? How do you protect yourself from Satan’s evil suggestions? You hold up the shield of faith. “This is what I believe.”

You want me to burn down my enemy’s property? I believe I am to love my enemy! (Matthew 5)

You tell me God doesn’t love me? I believe he will never leave me or forsake me. (Heb 13)

You say that I will never be forgiven? I believe God’s promise that if I confess my sins he will forgive me! (1 John chapter 1)

5. The helmet of Salvation. The helmet of salvation protects your mind. Sometimes the battle is so intense, all we can do is to hold our nerve and remind ourselves that we have been saved, we are being saved and one day we shall be saved.

*Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come:  
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,*

*and grace will lead me home.*

6. The Sword of the Spirit. The sixth piece of armour and the only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word, the Scriptures. Every time Satan whispered an evil temptation into his ear, Jesus quoted the Bible back at him:

"Turn these stones into bread"

Jesus answered, "It is written: man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

"Throw yourself from the top of the temple, angels will protect you"

"Jesus answered: It is written Do not put the Lord God to the test."

"Bow down to me and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world"

"Jesus said to me, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only."

Jesus used the sword of the Spirit to defeat Satan.

7. All prayer. Paul does not link prayer to a piece of armour, but he ends this section with an encouragement to pray all the time for everyone, verse 18. Wherever you are, whatever the circumstances pray, pray, pray, pray.

- The belt of truth
- The breastplate of righteousness
- The shoes of Gospel peace
- The shield of faith
- The helmet of salvation
- The sword of the Spirit
- All Prayer

These are the weapons of our warfare.

**So, how does all of this teaching apply to you and to me?**

*(1) If you are not yet a believer?*

Perhaps you are not yet a Christian and you find all this talk of the devil childish and medieval. You don't believe Satan exists? Seung-Hui Cho killed 32 people in a gun-rampage at Virginia Tech in 2007. A Newsweek journalist—not a Christian— wrote "Somehow, somewhere, someone planted the evil seed in Cho—if not the devil himself."

If there is no devil how do you explain the Hitlers, the Stalins, the youth who gun down their friends at school? If you say "those are just human beings" then you must also say that "you too are capable of such crimes." Few people are prepared to admit that! Doesn't it make more sense to believe that evil powers lie behind evil men?

If you do not believe in a real Devil, perhaps he has pulled off one of his greatest feats of trickery on you, by convincing you he does not exist! According to the Bible every unbeliever is under the power of Satan, "the whole world I under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). You're like a naïve tourist who does not believe

in lions walking across the Serengeti Plain! No lions, no lions, no lions. Turn to God and ask him to rescue you from the dominion of darkness and bring you into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

*(2) Perhaps you are a young Christian, and this teaching is new: you did not realise that an invisible spiritual battle is waging all around you.*

But now you do, and from today onwards you will fight the good fight by truth-speaking, righteous-living, Gospel-sharing, word-believing, salvation-wearing, Scripture-wielding and constant praying.

*(3) Perhaps you have been a Christian for many years but today's sermon has been a much-needed reminder of the Spiritual battle.*

Did you know that perhaps 90% of preaching is reminder preaching? Nothing particularly new, but old precious truths we need to constantly be reminded of. Paul says twice "Put on the full armour of God" (verse 11, verse 13). Are you wearing it? A reminder.

*(4) A eureka moment?*

For some Christian listening today, this sermon may shed light on an immediate issue you are facing. That person you thought was your enemy, that difficult person in your family in your work place, in your neighbourhood, is not your real enemy at all. So there will be no success fighting them with carnal weapons. No, the real enemy is Satan, and so the weapons you must use are these spiritual weapons.

*5) But perhaps I am speaking to a Christian whose in the middle of the greatest spiritual fight of your life, so far.*

Have we a "Job" in our midst? Assaulted by Satan on every side? There have been seasons of my own Christian life where I wondered if I'd ever make it through! What do we say to you?

We say, (i) make sure that you do not give Satan any advantage in the battle. Don't be angry with someone, that deep simmering unforgiveness that gives Satan a green light (Ephesians 4:26,27). Don't allow unrepentant sin to chase the Holy Spirit away from you (Psalm 51:11). Don't rebel against God telling him that painful difficulties can't possibly be part of his will for your life. Remember Peter was convinced that Jesus should not suffer and die. How did Jesus reply? "Get behind me Satan." (Matt 16:23)

We say, (ii) Keep on fighting! You are on the Victor's side, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" You will come through this battle!

We say, (iii) One day the battle will be over. One day, very soon, you will be able to say with Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Timothy 4)

How did Graham Kendrick put it?

*There'll be crowns for the conquerors and white robes to wear,  
There will be no more sorrow or pain.  
And the battles of earth shall be lost in the sight  
Of the glorious Lamb that was slain.*

Brothers and sisters, we're in a battle! May the Lord help us to "Put on the full armour of God" (v.11 and v.13.)