

The whole armour of God

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- [0 : 00] The passage and from the reading, the final point that he is making has to do with the duty that the Christian has of fighting for the Lord and buckling on his armor in this present life.
- We must never dream of ease or relaxation as the people of God until we get clean out of this world. We are warriors, we are fighters against the devil, against error and superstition and irreligion and immorality and darkness of every kind.
- That's what it means to be a Christian.
- Now briefly it is this that he has been telling them. He has been revealing to them the profound purpose of God in this world.
- We looked at some of that purpose this morning in chapter 1 of this very letter. And all the way through he is talking about the great plan of God.
- [1 : 48] And this he says is what the plan is. It is to bring a people out of this world to Christ in the course of time and to give those people to Christ as his own church.
- So the church is a distinct entity in the world. There is nothing to compare with the church so far as God is concerned.
- It doesn't bear comparison with anything. Nothing can be said beside it as of any equivalent value in the eyes of God. The state is comparatively little or nothing.
- All the institutions that men have set up in their society are comparatively little or nothing. But the church is the great focus of all God's purposes.
- His people are his inheritance. So the church is supreme. The people of God are what the eye of God is upon.
- [3 : 11] And always was upon. And always will be upon. All throughout history. All throughout time. Indeed the whole Bible really is just a record to us.
- Of how God has kept his church in the world. Whether we look at the phase of the patriarchs.
- Or even before that in the days of the flood. Or after that in the days in Egypt. Or in times of the kings. And through to the Messiah and the apostles and the early church.
- The whole of the Bible is a record to us of this great plan. To gather a church. Out of the world. And to give them to Christ. And in the epistle to the Ephesians.
- We have a synopsis of all their plans. We have a compendium. And a breviary. And a shorthand account. Of all that God is doing.
- [4 : 10] By gathering his church. We read about the election of the church. The regeneration of the church. The gathering of the Gentiles into the church. Chapter 3.
- One of the great mysteries of scripture. And we are told that the church is called the fullness of Christ. If you please. What an expression.
- The church is the fullness of Christ. It is further he says. The temple of the spirit. The body of Christ.

And the bride of Christ. Now in between all this exposition. Which we have in Ephesians. He weaves various exhortations.

To humility. To unity. To fidelity. And to charity. And having done all of that. He now comes to his last heading.

[5 : 12] Finally my brethren. Be strong. Be strong. In the Lord. And in the power of his might.

Now you will notice from the reading in Revelation. Chapter 12. That. There we have. Exactly the background we need.

To understand. This section. Because Revelation. Chapters 12. Through to 19. Those 7 or 8 chapters. Are.

An expansion. Of. The warfare. Between. The church. And the devil. The devil.

We saw. In that chapter. Did his best. To destroy Christ. But was not successful. The church. Like the mother. In the illustration.

[6 : 11] Gives birth. To the man child. The church. Gave birth. The Jesus. The mother of the Jesus. Is the church. In a way of speaking.

Figurative speaking. And so the devil. Tries to destroy Christ. But is unsuccessful. And next we see. Our Lord is. Swept up to the throne.

In his exaltation. But the church. Is left below. Here is the mother of Christ. Here is the bride of Christ. Left here in this. Dangerous world.

With all the powers. Of hell. Let loose. And the dragon. With his horns. And his tails. Ready to sweep her. And to. Destroy her.

And to overwhelm her. But then we see God. Secretly working. To protect her. She is given wings. Like an eagle. To fly away. And then the earth.

[7 : 08] Opens her mouth. And helps her. And all of this. Is to go on. Until the second coming. Time. A thousand. Two hundred and sixty days. I think it is.

Is it not. And then. Again by another figure of speech. A time. Times. And half a time. That is to say. All the period. Until Christ returns. When our beloved.

Savior comes back. When our blessed bridegroom. Appears upon the clouds. To gather us. Out of this world. And to take us home. Ever until then.

We must fight. Because. He says. There is a great. Cosmic battle. Going on. Michael and his angels. That no doubt. Means Christ. And.

The dead. Dragon and his angels. Are in. Locked in mortal combat. And the devil. Is going about. To do all the. Mystic he can. Because. He knows. His time.

[8 : 03] Is short. And he goes about. As a roaring lion. Says Peter. In his epistles. In order to devour. Whom. He can.

Now. I want. To suggest. To you. My beloved friends. Tonight. That this. Passage of scripture. In Ephesians 6. Is extremely.

Relevant. To the day. And age. In which we are living. How is it. That the church. Has shrunk. In our land. Before our very eyes.

If you go to Glasgow. And talk to the old Christians there. They speak about huge congregations. In the 1940s and 50s. And then somehow.

They melted away. And that is true. In many parts of the country. London had vast congregations. And powerful. Evangelical institutions.

[9 : 01] Christians. But it seems to have melted away. What about Edinburgh. The capital city of Calvinism. In the whole world. A hundred and so many years ago. In the Sabbath day.

You wouldn't hear. Any noise on the Sabbath. Apart from the noise of people. Walking along the streets. And crossing and passing each other. To go to their different congregations. All over the city.

What has happened to the church. What has happened to the power of the gospel. Well the answer is in terms of our text. Men began to relax.

They began to take it easy. Now they didn't realize there was a fight on. And so the devil got in. And he robbed heaven.

In our beloved land. And he minced up the churches. And growled the powder. So that today. We are a people scattered and peeled.

[9 : 59] Marginalized. Driven against the wall. Plotted out. And the great bulk of our society. Doesn't care tuppence for what we stand for. And I say what we need today.

Is fighters. Men who will fight for Christ. And put on the armor of God. So let's look at it.

Under three brief heads. First of all. The enemy. Second. The armor. Thirdly. The victory.

They're all here. The enemy. The armor. And the victory. Now the enemy we're told. Here is this.

Verse 10. Be strong in the Lord. And in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God. That he may be able to stand against the wiles.

[10 : 58] Of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. But against principalities. Against powers. Against the rulers of the darkness of this world.

Against spiritual wickedness. In high places. So we're told here. First of all. We are not fighting against men.

That's the first great doctrine. And that's a tremendous relief. To know that. Because very often. You and I imagine. That we're fighting against men.

But this helps us to realize. That it's not the case. You know. We would get very angry. Wouldn't we as Christians. We'd get extremely angry. With men.

If we didn't have the information. Here in this section. I mean. Don't you feel as I do sometimes. I smoke with indignation.

[11 : 58] I burn with indignation. Of the world. In which leaders in our nation. Are living. Children. And schools. And the whole of the youth of our land.

Is perused. Now I would go mad. And so would you. If we didn't remember. These poor men. Who pass laws.

And bring in clinics. And bring in their. Programs and schemes. For educating the young. In wickedness. If we didn't remember. That they are simply.

The stooges of the devil. Poor things. They're simply. The accomplices. Of the powers of hell. They're simply doing. The devil's wicked works for him.

So that takes the sting out of it. We cease to be. So indignant against them. We realize. That they are. But secondary.

[12 : 56] Secondary. Pinnets. Secondary figures. And little. Marionettes. The strings are being pulled. Not by men. But by the devil.

Principalities. Powers. Rulers of the darkness. Of this world. Spiritual wickednesses. In high places. They are the architects.

They are the architects. Of our permissive society. They are the ones who enter the conclaves of cardinals and bishops. And ruin the church. By bringing in tradition and superstition of many kinds.

And darkening worship. And darkening worship. And blackening the gospel. And polluting the streams. That make glad the city of our God. God. God. So.

It helps us to know that. We are not fighting against our own indwelling sins only. We are not our own worst enemies as some people say. No, no. The devil is our worst enemy.

[13 : 55] Let me say a few things about him and his fellow demons. Beloved friends. I must remind you. The devil is tremendously strong.

He is invisible. Full of power. Full of craft. Full of malice. Did you think of it this way? The devil is 100% wicked.

Now that's not true of human beings in this life. There is no human being in this life who is 100% wicked. Even the worst of men have some spark or other.

Of humanity and long suffering and pity. But not the devil. My friends. The one against whom we are to fight.

Is 100% spiteful. Jealous. Evil. Murderous. Lying. Deceitful. He desires to destroy your soul.

[15 : 02] With himself. In hell fire. Forever. He schemes night and day. To really your wife. Your child. Your home.

This church. My ministry. Every ministry. Every ministry. Every ministry. The prime minister. The queen. Her family. The government. The institutions of all.

All nations. The devil is against it all. But especially. Against the church. Because it is the bride of Christ. And his hatred is primarily against Christ.

And woe be. To the church. That fails to know. That the devil. Is just only a few inches. Outside every pulpit.

And outside every door. And open the door. And he'll be in. Give him opportunity. And he'll come in. And he will wreak havoc. Amongst the people of God. And scatter the people of God.

[16 : 01] Because that is his terrible work. It is a vast empire. Of wickedness. And how does it work? It works like this.

His fiery darts. Are to try to destroy. Men's faith. In the truths of God.

That is his work. If he can get us to doubt the Bible. Then his work is complete. That's all it requires. As soon as men doubt the Bible.

He has accomplished. Everything. He needs to accomplish. That is his great snare. The lie. You know how.

When you're trying to catch an animal. You lay a snare for it. Or you have a trap. Perhaps for rabbits. Or game of some kind. You have a trap. And the animal comes running along.

[17 : 03] But then you have a sort of a wire noose. And the animal doesn't notice it. And as it's bounding along. He puts one of his paws into the noose. Unsuspecting.

And then. The wire catches. And it may pull as hard as it wishes. But it will never get free. Now the noose. Upon which the devil depends.

To destroy men. Is the single simple noose. Of unbelief. He tried it with our first parent. Adam and Eve. Yea.

Hath God said. And that's what he's doing today. He's doing it everywhere. He's making people doubt. The word of God. Oh my dear friends.

Do you recognize this? To doubt the word of God. God. Is to play at once. Into the hands of Satan. So now the second thing.

[18 : 01] Is the armor. How are we to resist? With the armor of God. He says. Put on the whole.

Armor of God. It's called armor of God. Because. God himself. Has provided this. For his people. God himself. Has made this provision.

For his people. It is divinely. Ordained. Armor. For the people of God. It's an illustration. Drawn from.

The Roman. Soldier. As Paul went about his work. He would notice. The Roman soldiers. Going about their duties. With the army. Indeed he himself. Has chained.

Sometimes. The Roman soldiers. And could very well. Have been chained to them. When he wrote these words. In his prison at Rome. Or somewhere. And so he is comparing now. The armor. With the armor of the Roman soldier.

[18 : 58] And I think it would be right. To say. That there are. Seven. Pieces. Of armor. Which the Christian. Is to put on. Let's look at them briefly.

Verse 14. The first one. Stand. Therefore. Having your loins. Girt with truth. So the first one is.

The truth. What does that refer to? Well it's a poetical way of saying. Or an illustrative way of saying. We need. To know. The doctrine.

We need to know. The theology. Of the word of God. Dear parents. Oh please. Catechize your children. Dear parents.

I beg you. If you love your children's souls. Teach them. The doctrines. Of the word of God. Dear Christians. Teach yourselves. The doctrines.

[19 : 57] Of the word of God. Know this book. And. Know the best books. Of theology. You don't need to be an academic theologian. But. You must know. The doctrines.

Of the word of God. Why? Well because he tells us. We have to have our loins. Girt about with the truth. This is the belt. That goes round the body.

We must have it. If we don't know the doctrines. We can't resist the devil. If we don't know our theology. We cannot be effective.

In this warfare. against the powers of darkness. We cannot. It is impossible. He tells us that. And that you know.

Is where we've gone wrong. In so many places. People have been very scornful of doctrine. But there's no way. That you and I can survive in the battle.

[20 : 53] We must know the Westminster. Confession of faith. And the catechisms. Catechisms. And Burkhoof. And a little bit of Calvin. And especially those of you.

Who are more academic. And more gifted. And young men. Who may be called to the work. Of the preaching. Of the ministry. And the church. Oh study the word of God.

And the doctrine. That is the way. To be strong in the Lord. God. The devil. Is afraid of the truth. The truth. Is what exposes the devil.

It is the light. That shows the devil. Up to be what he is. So if you have friends. Who are students. If you have children.

Who are students. Feed them with the truth. Give them the best books. Think of those books. Which would help them most. And be most appealing to them. A little biography perhaps. And yet suitably.

[21 : 51] Accommodated to their needs. Because of the truth within it. And then second. We must have the breastplate. Of righteousness. What is that? Now this is.

Justification. By faith. We've got to know. This doctrine. We have to understand. The way of justification. We have to know. The difference between.

Justification. And sanctification. Justification. Is God's. Reckoning as righteous. Sanctification. Is God making as righteous. And we must know.

These things. And understand these things. Whenever the church. Has become. Weak and unsound. It is always. Connected with the loss. Of the doctrine. Of justification. That's why.

Martin Luther. Of the reformation. Said that this doctrine. Of justification. Is the article. Of a standing. Or falling church. And that's why. The church is falling. In the country today.

[22 : 47] It's because. We've lost. The doctrine. Of justification. That sinners. Are justified. Freely. By his grace. Through the redemption. It is in Christ Jesus.

Then we have. Thirdly. The gospel of peace. Our feet. Shod with the gospel. Of peace. Now. Isn't it interesting. He compares. The gospel of peace. To our shoes. We are to have.

These are. Like the sandals. Of the Roman soldier. Our shoes. Are the gospel of peace. Why is that? Well I think. It's for this reason. That it means. The gospel. If you like.

Has such an effect. Upon those who believe it. It makes them travel. Everybody who is affected. By the gospel. Becomes. A sort of traveler. If you like. They either become.

Missionaries. Or else. They become. Visitors to the hospital. And visitors to the sick. And visitors to the poor. And visitors to the. Whenever you come across. People who are affected. By the gospel. Immediately.

[23 : 44] They start to travel. And move about. They go to their neighbors. And say. Have a cup of coffee with me. And let's. Talk about the gospel. Shall we? Or they give a tract.

To somebody next door. Or down the street. Or they pass on an invitation. To come to church. The gospel of peace. Is with them. What motivates them. We should all of us. Be affected in that way.

Let's put on these. Gospel shoes. My dear friends. Let's be those. That travel around. And tell the world. We've got a message in here. We've got something to say to them in here. Which can change their destinies.

As well as their lives in this world. And then fourthly. We have the gospel. We have the shield of faith. The shield of faith.

Now. This is comparable to the Roman shield. That the soldier had. I want to tell you something about the Roman shield. Because there are all sorts of shields. In the ancient world. Some were little round shields.

[24 : 39] But that's not the kind. The Greeks used to have a little round shield. Which they used to use on their left arm. That's not the kind. That's not the idea. The Roman soldier's shield.

Was four feet high. And two and a half feet broad. And he carried it on his left arm. And he would place it on the ground. And he would kneel behind it.

When the enemy was throwing javelins. And firing arrows or something at him. He was like a veritable door. Which he carried wherever he went. And the Roman soldier could use this.

Wherever he was. And all the Romans used to. The soldiers used to lock their shields. One against another. So it made like a whole row of shields. And sometimes if they were besieging a wall.

They would lock their shields. Right across the whole territory. Where they were standing. On top of their heads. A whole row of shields. Right across the whole army. And as people threw things down from above.

[25 : 39] Their shields took all the force. And that is how we are to be. My dear friends. We are to have faith. In the truth of God.

And in the power of God. We are never to doubt his word. And if you and I hold fast our belief in Christ. And in his glorious gospel.

The devil can never disturb us. Even though he throws at us these fiery darts. Of doubt and unbelief and temptation. They cannot kindle upon us.

Because the shield. Will bring safety and deliverance. Then fifthly there is the helmet. The helmet he speaks about here.

Is referred to in verse 6.17. Take the helmet of salvation. Now what is that? Well. The helmet refers to the protection. Round a man's mind.

[26 : 37] His brain. And the brain. Is very important to the Christian. Because this is the thinking part. And you know.

We must never as Christians imagine. We don't need to think. There is another great sin. Among Christians today. Generally. Or church going people. They are not thinking.

They are just accepting. Tradition. Without thinking. About the scriptures. And applying the scriptures. Now you and I must be thinking people.

And the devil would love to strike us. In our intellect. And in our mind. He would like to prejudice us. Away from clear thinking. About the truth of God.

But you and I know better. We must have on the helmet. Whereby we shall be clear in our thinking. Clear in the way we judge of every man. We must know.

[27 : 33] Who we are dealing with. We must read the characters of people. We must understand that some people can be trusted. And some cannot. Some people are full of love.

And some are deceitful. We must realize that. Through the mind. We are to discern all men. And discern all things. And we are to go wisely about the work of Christ.

Because we must use the mind. And six. And six. And the sword of the spirit. The Bible. Here is the only offensive weapon. All the rest are defensive.

And you will notice. There are no armor plates for the back. For the obvious reason. We are not to turn our back on the enemy. All our armor is on the front.

The Roman soldier didn't have armor on the back. Roman soldiers never turned their back. The famous story is told about Pyrrhus.

[28 : 31] King of Epirus in Greece. Who had elephants if you please. As a part of his army. And he drove his elements through. The Romans. And he beat them once or twice.

But it was such a dreadful battle. That when Pyrrhus got home. He said my victory was so slight. It was hardly worth winning at all. And then when he went to the battlefield.

This is the touching thing he saw. Pyrrhus saw that all the Romans. Who had been killed. Every one of them. They had their faces. That way. Not one of them had turned their back.

Pyrrhus admired them. Though they were dead. Oh these Romans he said. With an army like that. I could conquer the world. Let Christ have an army like that.

That dear friends. And he will conquer the world. No turning the back. But wielding the sword of the spirit. You know how Jesus did this.

[29 : 31] When the devil came. The devil said. If you're the son of God. Do this and this and this and this. Now Jesus could have said. Well Satan. Let's have a discussion about this. Maybe you've got a point.

Maybe we can come to terms. That wasn't the way Jesus dealt with the devil. He took out his sword and he said. It is written. It is written.

Again it is written. My friend. One Christian who knows his Bible. Is more than a conqueror against all the skeptics in the world.

If you know your Bible. Young man. At university or college. If you know your Bible. You have nothing to fear from clever professors. And free thinkers and skeptics and atheists.

You have nothing to fear young lady. If you know the Bible. Because here is the sword of the spirit. And the devil himself cannot stand up. Before the sharp point of this truth.

[30 : 30] Still less can feeble men. And then the seventh weapon is prayer. Praying with all prayer and supplication in the spirit. So then.

Let us pray for more of this. Gospel spirit. And the putting on of gospel armor. Dear friends. No man ever got to heaven.

No man ever got to heaven. Unless he put on this gospel armor. We must have assurance. We must have boldness. Let's not make a virtue out of being.

Weak in knowledge. Weak in faith. Weak in assurance. Weak in confidence. We are called upon to be bold. And to be brave. And to be courageous.

Men and women of God. We are called upon to be authoritative. In our own families. And to insist. That our children do as we say. For the gospel sake.

[31 : 33] If we say no. It means not. If we say yes. It means yes. There are no things to do. We are authority figures. In the name of God. In our own homes.

And wherever God gives us authority. On the Sabbath. This is not done. And that is not done. And you can say what you like. But it will not be done. And that music will not be played.

And that program will not be put on. We are servants of God. And the cause has gone down the sink in our country. Because men and women. Who should be bold.

And brave. Are bending the rules. And twisting the standards of God. But it won't do. Be strong in the Lord.

And in the power of his might. So that is the armor. Now further to victory. You will notice at verse 11.

[32 : 34] He uses the word stand. Stand against the wiles of the devil. Stand against the wiles of the devil. Stand against the wiles of the devil. You will notice at verse 14.

He uses the word stand again. Stand therefore. You will notice at verse 13. He says. That you may be able.

To withstand in the evil day. And having done all. To stand. So he uses stand. Stand three times. And withstand once.

Very interesting. Let me explain. What these words mean. When he says in verse 11. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil. He means we are to resist.

When in verse 14. He says we are to stand. Having our loins go to battle with truth. Again he means we are to resist. But when in verse 13.

[33 : 36] He says. That you may be able to withstand. In the evil day. And having done all to stand. The stand in verse 13. Means.

In the day of judgment. In the day of victory. So you see these three stands. Summarize it all. If you and I stand against the devil.

Now. We will stand victorious. In the day of judgment. Then. That is the teaching of this passage. Putting it another way.

We are to stand now. In grace. So that in the end. We may stand. In glory. Or another way. The church militant.

And the Christian militant. When it stands now. Will eventually be the church. And the Christian triumphant. The church militant. The church militant. Some of you remember the words of Churchill.

[34 : 33] In the second world war. When Britain was fighting. Against untold odds. From Nazi Germany. And Churchill's voice was heard.

Over the crackling radio. To say this. What can I offer you in Britain. I offer you in Britain. I offer you in Britain. Blood. Blood. Sweat. And tears. It is our darkest hour.

We must fight them in the streets. We will fight them in the trenches. We will fight them in the beaches. And we will overcome. Now that wasn't just rhetoric.

It was something he meant. And it was done. It was done. It came to pass. Christ's cause. Is weak today.

For want of fighters. For want of ministers. Who will say to their. General assemblies. I must preach the word of God.

[35 : 33] Whatever you say. It's for want of bishops. Who will put their foot down. And say. Within my diocese. Christ will be preached.

And nothing else. For want of archbishops. Who will say to queens. And prime ministers. Within my archdiocese. I will have ministers.

Who adhere to the gospel. And to the bible. But oh my friends. The day of victory is near. And all those.

Who put on the gospel armor. And fight the good fight of faith. Will come at last. To their eternal reward. Let me end.

With famous words. Of a writer. Whose name was George Duffield. You will recognize them. Stand up. Stand up for Jesus.

[36 : 29] Stand in his strength alone. The arm of flesh. Will fail you. You dare not trust your own. Put on the gospel armor.

Each piece. Put on. With prayer. Where duty calls. Or danger. Be never wanting. There. Stand up.

Stand up for Jesus. The strife. The strife will not belong. This day the noise of battle. The next. The victor's song.

To him that overcometh. A crown of life shall be. He with the king of glory. Shall reign. Eternally.

Let us pray. Give us eyes to see. The need for battle.

[37 : 26] O God. May we gird upon us. The whole armor of God. And buckle to us. A shield. And draw upon our feet. The shoes.

And put upon our head. That gospel. Helmet of salvation. And put upon us. All these. Pieces of armor.

And in our hand. Let there be a sharp. Two edged sword. To execute the vengeance. Due upon the wicked. And make deserved punishment. Fall. Upon the enemies of God.

And do thou Lord. Fight with us. And fight for us. And may we see. The tide of battle. Turned in our time. And the armies of the living God.

Sweeping to new. Plateaus of victory. And occupying the enemy's territory. And planting there. The standard of Christ's.

[38 : 23] Glorious. Banner. And unfurling the gospel standard. That all the earth may know. That thou. Art the God of battles.

And the God. Of the armies of Israel. And so hear us. And receive our thanks. In Jesus name. Amen.