

# Message 24:

## Christ's Weapons for the Church.

5.21.23

Ephesians Series

Ephesians 6:10–20 (CSB)

### CHRISTIAN WARFARE

<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. <sup>13</sup>For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, <sup>15</sup>and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. <sup>19</sup>Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. <sup>20</sup>For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

Introduction: [War, not peace.](#)

A. The nature of this world does not permit peace.

1. As soon as sin entered humanity, we were put at enmity, or hostility, with God.

2. This hostility is our default condition:

**Ephesians 2:1–3 (CSB)**

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. <sup>3</sup>We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also.*

**James 4:4b–5** (CSB)

*<sup>4</sup>You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility (enmity) toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes the enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely?*

B. The writers of the New Testament often viewed their world in an “Us Vs. Them” mindset.

1. Church versus the World.
2. Christ vs. Satan.
3. Righteousness against Sin.
4. **When people accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, the Ruler of this world fights against them.**

C. This is clearly evident each time we take a step of faith and devotion.

1. Try to spend time in prayer, the phone always rings.
2. Set time to worship, and the dishes suddenly call out to be washed or you have an irresistible drive to clean out the garage.
3. Start leading your family, a child rebels.
4. Start loving you spouse like Christ loves them, your spouse is all of a sudden meaner and angrier than ever.

D. These small skirmishes are actually representative of a far larger battle raging in the spiritual.

1. And it's not in the background, out of sight, but in the forefront for all to see if they will pay attention.
2. To be honest, if we had a play-by-play announcer reading the Book of Revelation aloud, we might pay better attention.
  - a. We think we would notice the Beast or the AntiChrist.
  - b. But what if I told you that the spiritual warfare happening now is just as real as what we read about what happens at the end of it all?
  - c. The Apostle Paul wasn't preparing the Churches for a future fight but for a present one.

1. First, we have to be convinced there is a real, spiritual enemy.

A. Just like in everything, there are extremes even within the Church.

1. Some people do not believe there is anything spiritual.

a. We believe that there is a heaven and probably a hell.

b. But the reality of demons, spirits, or anything we can't see is not really on our radar.

2. Then there are those who see demons and spirits behind everything.

a. These people are the ones that when they run out of gas, they rebuke the devil instead of putting gas in the tank.

b. (Picture) They are kind of like the fictional character Don Quixote, chasing and fighting windmills because he thought they were dragons.

B. Scripture does not give detailed descriptions of principalities, powers, rulers, or authorities.

1. Scripture gives some examples, like the Prince of Persia mentioned in Daniel or Jesus' many confrontations with the demonic, along with Paul's encounters with persecution and worldly systems.

- a. We do not know all the intricate details.
- b. Unlike the pagan religions of Paul's day, there is not an elaborate cosmology in Christianity.

2. But **we do have all the information and power needed to stand against these authorities and to resist Satan's schemes.**

C. Allow me to provide some pastoral encouragement and exhortation:

**1. First, believe that a very real spiritual war is raging around us.**

- a. This war involves you and your family and every person, regardless if they are aware or not.
- b. **Just because we may choose to remain ignorant of this spiritual struggle, it does not negate its reality.**

**2. Second, spiritual warfare doesn't end until Jesus returns.**

- a. Every generation contends with Satan and his schemes.
- b. No one is exempt, and the struggle does not care about your age, ministry status, or if you are retired.

**3. Third, be clear where Scripture is clear and vague where Scripture is vague.**

- a. There is a lot of extra teaching on spiritual warfare available.
- b. Some are helpful, and some are speculation.
- c. Always interpret EVERYTHING through the clear teaching of Scripture.
- d. Human visions, teachings, and revelations do not have the weight of Scripture.
- e. Paul warned us in Galatians 1:8

Galatians 1:8 (CSB)

<sup>8</sup>But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, a curse be on him!

## 2. The Armor of God

### A. Paul mentions 6 pieces of armor.

1. Every person in the Roman Empire would have been very familiar with this armor.
2. It was the standardized kit for a Roman Legionary.
  - a. And the whole world knew what they looked like.
  - b. From Britain to Gaul, to Italy, to the Middle East, the world knew a Roman soldier when they saw them.
3. Furthermore, Paul was imprisoned in Rome under guard.
  - a. The Praetorian Guards were with Paul every moment of his stay.
  - b. Therefore, each day, Paul saw the physical, carnal pieces of these soldiers' protection.

### B. But these Roman soldiers are not what inspired Paul.

1. Paul is not using a human illustration.
  - a. We often, rightfully, take something human to help us grasp a reality.
  - b. But Paul's teaching was not a moment of brilliance but an expression of an, already divine truth.
2. The believers in Ephesus wouldn't have known Isaiah's vision, but Paul did. Isaiah in or around 700 B.C wrote:

#### **Isaiah 59:16–17 (CSB)**

<sup>16</sup>He (God of Israel) saw that there was no man—  
he was amazed that there was no one interceding;  
so his own arm brought salvation,

and his own righteousness supported him.

<sup>17</sup>He put on righteousness as body armor,  
and a helmet of salvation on his head;  
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,  
and he wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

3. Paul isn't being creative here.
4. He is saying what God had already said.
5. Now, he tells followers of Jesus to take advantage of the spiritual resources.

### 3. Complete protection.

A. The Roman soldier was protected from the top of his head to the sole of his feet.

1. He would have had a helmet, breastplate, sword, belt, shield, and sandals.
2. The key to Roman military success was not only their tools but also their tactics.
  - a. They fought grouped together, shoulder to shoulder.
  - b. When they remained together, they were a force to be reckoned with.
3. But if they became separated or fell, they were vulnerable.
  - a. This is likely what Paul had in view.
  - b. Individually, we are vulnerable.
  - c. If we do not stand strong, but fall, we will surely die.
  - d. Paul commands, after you have done everything, stand in the armor.
  - e. **If we do not resist the onslaught of the enemy, we give way to the enemy.**

1 Peter 5:8–9 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

James 4:7 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

B. The armor protects every part of us.

1. But our strength is only in Jesus.

2. Be strong in the Lord.

a. Too often we try to fight Satan in our own strength.

b. When we do, it's like bringing a squirt gun to a five-alarm fire.

c. Maybe you are stronger and more disciplined than most:

1. So instead of a Dollar General squirt gun you bought the biggest super-soaker money can buy.

2. But even then, it is NOT enough.

3. The attacks and power of the enemy is real.

a. Outside of Christ, you will not survive.

b. If you brought your own armor, you won't make it.

c. Trusting in your own power is like buying your weaponry and armor from Wish.com.

d. It's cheap for a reason.

4. Christ provides the armor, we put it on.

A. None of these elements belong to us or originate with us:

1. Who's truth? Christ's truth.
2. Who's righteousness? Christ's righteousness
3. Whose Gospel of Peace? Christ's
4. What faith? Faith in Christ alone.
5. Whose salvation? Christ's salvation through His blood.
6. Whose sword of the Spirit? Christ's, the word of God.

B. The Good News is that in Jesus, we do not have to fear falling or failing.

1. Notice, again, the words of Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:28–31 (CSB)

<sup>28</sup> Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the whole earth.

He never becomes faint or weary;

there is no limit to his understanding.

<sup>29</sup> **He gives strength to the faint  
and strengthens the powerless.**

<sup>30</sup> Youths may become faint and weary,

and young men stumble and fall,

<sup>31</sup> **but those who trust in the LORD  
will renew their strength;**

they will soar on wings like eagles;

they will run and not become weary,

they will walk and not faint.



2. The armor does not prevent attacks; it protects from attack.

- a. Does this mean that nothing bad will happen to me?
- b. No.
- c. It does mean that nothing the enemy of our soul tries can accomplish his purpose of separating us from Jesus.
- d. If you want to take the armor off, that's on you, but Satan cannot take it off of you.

C. Christ provides, but we put on.

1. I like this quote from Eugene Peterson:

The labeling of each of the six aspects of the practice of resurrection with an item of armor helps us realize that this life in Christ is not made up of passive qualities; rather, each one forms a field of participation in Christ's work of redemption. The words are not job descriptions from which we improvise a strategy and then implement the best we can. We are the weapons. Who we are takes precedence over what we do. (Peterson 3003-3006)

2. We are the weapons!

- a. Armor and weapons sitting in the corner are not effective.
- b. But when put on the body and in the hands of trained persons, they become mighty.
- c. Paul tells us to PUT ON THE ARMOR.

D. How do we put on?

- 1. Some people mentally picture themselves putting each piece on.
  - a. For some that may be a helpful.

b. How many of us have a checklist before leaving the house?

1. Keys, wallet, cell-phone, lunch, all the kids, makeup, brush teeth, deodorant.

2. You could also consider a checklist for yourself:

2. For myself, a filter metaphor works better for me.

a. Because all of these pieces, except Scripture and prayer, are defensive, it helps me to remind myself to "take captive every thought" and to filter them through.

b. When I'm tempted to believe my righteousness is what got Him here, I "take off" that piece of armor and look at the tag inside, which says "plate of righteousness, property of Jesus Christ."

c. When I'm struggling with truth or discerning what to believe, I check the "belt" I'm wearing to ensure it says, "truth, property of Jesus."

1. The belt is important because it was the piece that supported the weight of all the other pieces, tied those pieces together, and was worn even when the armor was not.

2. If we separate ourselves from God's truth as revealed in Jesus through Scripture, we fall apart.

### Apply: How do I stay in the fight?

A. Next weekend, my friend Ty Buckingham will be sharing more about the Holy Spirit.

1. The week after, we will examine Paul's direction to pray in the Spirit at all times.

2. We will be addressing several practical ways to implement this.

3. What do we do today?

B. Confess: I'm in a fight.

1. Wartime mentalities are different from peacetime mentalities.
2. We see, act, hear, and think differently in battle than at home.
3. That is why we must confess, "I'm in a fight!"

C. Tell your mind where your strength comes from:

- a. Even if your body is tired, the Spirit of God that lives in you isn't.
- b. Even if you have faltered lately, Jesus hasn't missed a step.
- c. Satan isn't scared of you, but Christ in you.

D. Plan on overcoming the attacks of the enemy.

- a. If you plan to lose, you lose.
- b. Time and again, the New Testament promises blessings to those who endure and overcome.
- c. This is only possible through Jesus, but you have a part to play.
- d. To stand, full in the armor of God, is your responsibility.

## A CLOSER LOOK

### Helmet

The iron helmet was forged from one piece of metal and lined with leather. Crests made of dyed horsehair indicated rank. Plates hung down along the cheeks and another plate protected the back of the neck and shoulders.

### Breastplate

The iron or bronze scaled armor was built in four sections to cover each shoulder and side of the chest. The plates were sewn to a stiff leather vest, which was put on like a jacket before the front plates were tied with leather straps.

### Sword

The sword was carried on the right side and hung from the belt or a leather strap over the shoulder.

### Belt

The leather belt was tied around a wool tunic. Connected bronze plates hung from the belt to protect the soldier's groin area.

### Shield

The curve was created using three bonded layers of thin wood strips. Covered by linen or leather, the shield was painted according to legion. A bronze rim covered the rounded edges as additional protection.

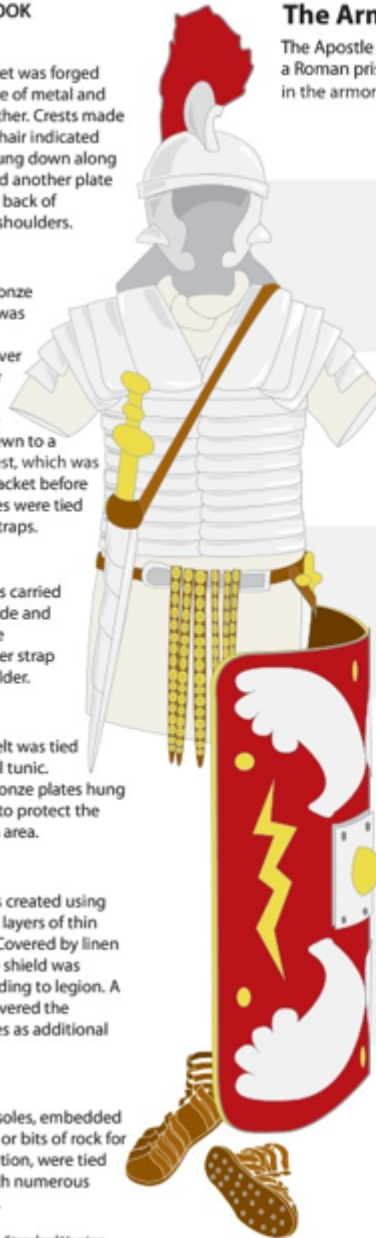
### Sandals

Thick leather soles, embedded with hobnails or bits of rock for increased traction, were tied to the feet with numerous leather straps.

Scripture: English Standard Version

## The Armor of God

The Apostle Paul, inspired by God, wrote a letter to the church of Ephesus from a Roman prison. As he wrote, Roman soldiers guarding the prison walked about in the armor of first century legionary.



### ARMOR OF LEGIONARY

#### Galea (Helmet)

Protected head and neck from enemy attacks

#### Lorica Segmentata (Breastplate)

Guarded vital organs

#### Gladus (Sword)

Powerful offensive weapon in the hand of a skilled soldier

Waving it served as a word of warning to the enemy

#### Cingulum (Girdle or Belt)

Supports sword, dagger and bronze apron  
Worn at all times, even without other armor pieces

#### Scutum (Shield)

Overlapping shields allowed soldiers to advance together

Shield was used to defend the entire body, including the back

#### Caligae (Sandals)

Fit for both marching and fighting

Became more comfortable with constant wear

### ARMOR OF GOD

#### Helmet of Salvation

"...and take on the helmet of salvation..." Ephesians 6:17a

#### Breastplate of Righteousness

"...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness..." Ephesians 6:14b

#### Sword of the Spirit, Word of God

"...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..." Ephesians 6:17b

#### Belt of Truth

"Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth..." Ephesians 6:14a

#### Shield of Faith

"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one..." Ephesians 6:16

#### Readiness/Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

"...and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace." Ephesians 6:15

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