

Putting On The Gospel Armor Of God

This young couple got married, and she was kind of nervous cooking her first dinner. She prepared a big pot roast and served her husband a big plateful. He ate awhile, and then she asked him how the food tasted.

"It's pretty good," he said, "but I believe that this pot roast is a little bit burnt."

"Well," she said, "That pot roast is not burnt!" She got mad and they had a big fight over whether or not that pot roast was burnt. They got so mad they didn't speak to each other for two weeks.

Finally, one day she came down and said, "I'm sorry for getting so mad. Let's make up."

He said, "You're right. It was silly of us to get so mad over a burnt pot roast." She said, "That pot roast was not burnt!"

Sometimes we can argue over the silliest things. Sometimes we will continue to argue even when we know we are being silly. So, I ask you, why do we argue?

Over the years I have discovered many reasons why we get into arguments. We argue because we have different perceptions. We argue because we have different expectations. We argue because we are wounded people and this makes it hard for us to hear what the other person is saying. A modern day explanation is that we get into arguments because of psychological differences.

Arguments aren't just between individual people. Entire nations can go at one another because of social and political differences. Just look at this week's news and you will see arguments turned bloody between Palestine and Israel. Israel assassinated a Hamas leader in revenge for a suicide bombing of Jerusalem citizens killing 20 people. The "hudna," that is, truce, which the world needs, is thwarted again. Next, there is the ongoing conflict in Iraq and the bomb blast that killed 24 United Nations workers, including the head of the U. N. mission in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. There is something deeply disturbing, and causing havoc between many nations in our world.

I must profess, through all the conflict the world struggles with, through all the conflict individuals face in life, and through all our attempted solutions at dealing with conflict, it is only the Bible that provides a bottom line cause. Our Bible tells us the reason for conflict and it tells us what to do when the conflict involves us. This is all found in Ephesians 6:10-20.

I am glad I discovered this passage. I discovered it in a fervent, passionate way more than six years ago while I was in a conflict where all the "good advice" and "human psychology failed. One night, after years of struggle, and immediately after reading Ephesians 6:10-20, I asked myself, could this problem I am facing be a spiritual attack? Is this the reason why I cannot make headway? Have I been on the wrong battlefield fighting the wrong enemy? As I came to see the significance of what was revealed to me in this passage the tide slowly changed. The victories were slow in coming at first, but finally things began to change for the better! I realized, at a deeper level, that the Bible is my stability, my strength, and guide for life. It taught me how to stand. The Bible worked when everything else proved ineffective! I needed to take heed of how valuable and indispensable this book was to me for facing conflict.

Allow me to ask you: is there brokenness that spans more than one generation in your family? Is there someone you cannot forgive or who cannot forgive you? Or, perhaps you are trapped in a secret, hated sin, which comes back time and time again? Perhaps you are a person whose spirit tends to be greedy, angry, lustful, gluttonous, or are you known as a person who complains, or procrastinates, or who is fearful, or depressed, who causes division or who suffers one illness after another? The world may be telling you your sin is not all that bad, but the devil has outsmarted them and he has a plan for you! Or, perhaps Jesus already dealt with one, or more than one secret sin and you don't want it passed on to your descendents. Do you take one step forward and then two steps backward? Do you feel you are always the tail and never the head? My friend, if any of these are true, there is an attack on you and it is spiritual in nature! If you recognize this you will be on the right battlefield. Then, if you put on the armor of Christ and go prayerfully in the grace of God, who promises to restore you when you fail, you will have victory, and one day you will be delivered and you will joyously give the credit to God.

We tend to think our battle is against people who are angry with us, or who hate us, but this is not the case. What do you gain if you become angry like your enemy? You gain the same spirit as your enemy? Ephesians, Chapter 6 tells us *"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. But ... against the powers of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms ... Put on the full armor of God, so that*

when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand ... " This Bible passage does not tell us to blame a human enemy but to get ourselves right for the spiritual battle being waged around us. It tells us to put on armor and the armor is the attributes of Christ. This means we are to put on the very things that made Jesus outstanding.

This Bible passage also reminds us to check our nature because the devil is intentionally attacking us, and our relationships, in a very spiritual way. His intention is to defeat you, your loved-ones, and your generations. He will do it locally, regionally, nationally. Martin Luther wrote, *"Our old evil foe, he seeks to work us woe. His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal "*

Ephesians, Chapter 6 tells us to put on armor and to put it on prayerfully! Don't delay! Let's put it on just as the text says! Remember you cannot defeat Satan or his helpers, so don't try. All you can willfully do is stand in Jesus, and allow Jesus to stand in you. That is why this text begins with. *"Be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His mighty power ... "* -- not your own. Only Jesus has been given authority over the evil one.

Now please take your belt of truth and put it around your waist. That's right ... put it around your waist. When you have God's truth around you, you have a truth, which is true today, and tomorrow. When you know the truth of God from His Holy Bible it will set you free from all the confusion in the world, and God will cause you to walk in truth. He will send the spirit of truth to counsel you!

Next take the Breastplate of Righteousness and put it over your chest. Fasten it tight. Make sure it is tight! It will protect your heart so you may have a righteous, tender heart. How do you get that breastplate of righteousness? By having God search your heart, and cleanse your heart by confessing your sins. It will drive your enemies crazy. I wouldn't want to be in a battle without Jesus' tender heart in me.

Put on the shoes of peace. The Roman soldier had heavy large boots for battle to help him stand strong. What helps you stand strong when you are in the heat of an angry battle? It is to stand in the shoes of peace? Jesus stood in peace.

Now pick up your shield of faith and hold it in front of you. What are you holding in front of you? It's faith! Now hold it up. Hang on to your faith that the promises of God in the Gospel are true. Not by knowledge, but only by faith can you understand the mysteries of God. When your enemy shoots flaming what if arrows; what if I can't do it ... what if they attack me again ... what if I fail ... then use your shield of faith to stop them. Do not drop your shield of faith. That's what people tend to let down first when in a battle and the flaming arrows singe the heart.

Pick up the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. God's word is sharper than a two-edged sword. This is your only offensive weapon and you can use it against every evil thought and every form of wickedness, by speaking the words of Jesus out of a righteous loving heart.

Place on your head the helmet of salvation. Take captive every thought and make it captive to Christ. Think like Jesus and ask WWJD: (what would Jesus do). Know that Jesus has saved you and you have eternal life. Then you will have a clean mind. Keep that helmet on tight. Check it one more time.

Lastly, pray, pray, pray!. That is how many times Paul mentions prayer as he closes his letter to the Ephesians. Praying will stop you from being too aggressive and taking matters into your own hands. Being on your knees before the Lord opens your heart to His orders.

The armor God has given us is really quite exquisite and more that sufficient to stand while others are falling around you. When we do this then we will be able to stand. Always remember to put on your Gospel armor every day. Amen.

Let Scripture Comment on Scripture

(2 Peter 1:3): His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

(Ephesians 6:10-13): Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

13 Therefore put on the full 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.

(Psalm 46:10): "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

(Ephesians 6:14a): Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist,

(John 17:17) Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

(Ephesians 6:14b): with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

(2 Corinthians 5:21): God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(Ephesians 6:15): with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

(Romans 1:16:) I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

(Romans 10:8-10): But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming:

9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

(Romans 10:13-15): for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

(Ephesians 6:16): In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

(Romans 1:17): For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

(Hebrews 1:6): And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

(Ephesians 6:17a): Take the helmet of salvation

(Psalm 37:39): The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD; he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

(Psalm 25:5): guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.

(Luke 1:77): to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

(Acts 4:12): Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

(Acts 13:47): For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

(1 Thessalonians 5:8): But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

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

(Hebrews 4:12): For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

(Ephesians 6:18): And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

(All verses are from the New International Version)