

The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Battles

- Ephesians 6:10-17

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

We're going to talk about yet another aspect of the work, the Person in the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and that's what we've been dealing with here on Sunday morning for the last several weeks. The Person in the work of the Holy Spirit. We're going to be dealing with something that the Lord gave me here.

It's funny how God works. I don't know if I'm going to do a series on the Holy Spirit anymore because it seems like as I do, He makes me rely on Him more. It's like, He's like, Paul, if you're going to talk about the Holy Spirit, if you're going to talk about My Spirit, then I'm going to make you rely on My Holy Spirit.

Now, I haven't really planned out these messages a whole lot in advance. I've just been waiting on the Lord. And there's some things I wanted to say and so forth. But, yesterday, I mean, all last week, I really thought I had a direction. And I mean, I had the basic concept and that's really all I need. And then I just sit down and just put my notes. And God's so gracious and faithful. He just, He gives them to me. And when I sit down and have my laptop open and He just, it just pours out and I start typing.

But yesterday, which is usually my study day, Saturday, I usually set the day aside to just study. I started off my notes and I got a couple of pages into it, and it was like. The Holy Spirit was just, I mean, I just had this feeling like that's not it. But I tried to resist a little bit. It's like, I'm just going to push through, (Pastor Paul makes a grunting noise) grunting, the thing out. And it's like, no, that's not it.

So I thought, finally, and we had things to do yesterday too. My son, they had their championship football game with champ, which they got second place, by the way, which was, I was very, congratulations. Yeah, that's one of the moms. (Pastor Paul points to the audience). Anyway, and then there was a birthday party for my youngest grandson. He turned 1. And so we were, they were living over in Meridian and we were going to go do that too. And so I had a lot of things going on, but I was, well, and I didn't... I wasn't actually able to make it to the birthday party because I still hadn't heard exactly what the Lord wanted.

I went home and I just sat before the Lord, and I read my Bible, and I just sat there. And I texted Sue a couple of times. Some things like, I'm in trouble, that was one of them, I said, and stuff like that. And finally, last night, I went to bed about 10:30. I normally stay up till about midnight on Saturday night cause that's about when I finish up. But 10:30, I got nothing, so I thought, you know what? I'm going to bed, but I had a piece about going to bed.

Last night, 10:30, I went to bed, fell asleep. This morning, I just, without any alarm. And I never have to set an alarm because God always wakes me up. But I woke up. I woke, I mean my just, my eyes popped open at 4:30 and the Lord spoke to my heart and said, this is what I want you to talk on.

And so I hauled out of bed and it was just as clear as crystal. And so I hopped out of bed and I went out and sat on the couch and opened up my laptop. And so between 4:30 and 6:00, I got what you're going to get here this morning. So we'll see how it goes, right? You can either do this or that when we're done.

And anyway it's all about the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to enable us to fight the spiritual battles that happen in our lives. And nobody likes to think about fighting. Nobody likes to think about battles. Nobody likes to think about conflict. Conflict is never a fun thing. I mean, I'm all for the like bumper sticker, make love not war sort of a mentality, but I know it's not always practical. Sometimes you got to fight.

Sometimes there are battles that have to be fought and I would love it if we lived in this world of just ultimate utopian peace, but we don't. And we know that from a biblical standpoint. We live in a fallen world. We have enemies. We have challenges. We have conflicts.

And so what we're going to do is we're going to look today at how God wants to work in and through you, so that you might stand in the battle. And as Paul says, having done everything to continue to stand. (Ephesians 6:13)

So many Christians are just getting the daylights beat out of them in every day circumstances and situations where they're just getting pummeled by the enemy, by circumstances, by situations. And they literally have very little resemblance of the victory of Christ in their lives. They are believers in the truest sense of the word, born again, but just not walking in victory.

And part of the reason Christians, why I think we don't walk in victory, like we should. Because we serve and worship He who is the victor, right? Is because we're just not paying attention sometimes to what God has given us in His Word

as it relates to the how to(s). Just like, if a, speaking of my son's football team, if they don't pay attention to their coach, about what he tells them to do. And if they don't listen to the training, and if they don't figure out the plays, and know how this thing is going to work and so forth, they're going to lose every time. And the same is true for you and I.

We've been given wonderful coaching principles in the Word of God to enable us to walk in the victory. But people, listen to me, this is very important. The victory is not automatic. Okay. I wish it were. I really do. Well, you're going to see here today, the fact, in this word that it is not automatic.

If you're in Ephesians chapter 6, skip down to verse 10, which is where we're going to begin this morning. And it says in verse 10, "*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*" (NIV) Now I want you to stop right there.

We're going to we're going to read through the whole passage. I promise you so you don't need to read ahead. We will cover what is being said in this passage, but I don't want to skip over anything here as we go along.

The very first thing people, when you are dealing with spiritual warfare, and spiritual warfare is a reality. We need to have discernment as to what's really a war. What's really a battle. That's where we lack sometimes too, by the way. But the thing that you and I need to remember at the outset is that God does not call us to be strong in and of ourselves.

Do you just do you come up against issues and problems and just feel so weak sometimes? I sure hope so, because I do. I mean, maybe this is all about Paul's personal confession, but I'm just telling you right now, I am a weak man. And I struggle going through difficulties and challenges.

And I love what this verse begins with because it says to me, it says, Paul, I want you to be strong, but I'm not looking for you to be strong in you. I'm looking for you to be strong in Me. I'm looking for you to be strong in My, mighty power.

The NIV says, "*mighty power.*" If you have a different translation this morning, your Bible may say, "*in the might of his power.*" There's actually two words that are used there; might and power. And might is buff, the thing that I would love to be able to do and impress, this can't. But might is just it's not anything expressed. It's just there and you see it, might, sort of a thing. Now power is the execution of that might. Okay.

When God talks about His mighty power, that's not a redundancy. It's not like saying His powerful power. It means literally, He is strong and He will use it and He will work it on your behalf. Right? So, "*be strong in the Lord.*"

When you come to someone who's going through a hard time, and maybe they ask for prayer, this is a great way to start off your exhortation to that person. Say, it does nothing to say to somebody, just be strong. They used to say that to me when I was a kid. They used to tell me to buck up. Oh, you guys heard me talk about that, some of you before. I hated when they said, buck up, just buck up, Paul. I wanted to hit him. You say that one more time, I'm going to slug you. Because that doesn't help.

When you're feeling weak, when you're feeling defeated, when you're feeling discouraged, when you're depressed, and somebody comes along and goes, buck up buster. You just, it's like, yeah, just get away from me.

But when you walk up to somebody with an encouragement, you say, hey, "*be strong in the Lord.*" See, that takes the pressure off what you're telling them to do in and of themselves. Be strong in God. That's... What that infers you guys is that strength is yours to be strong in. Okay. It's a declaration that there is strength in the Lord and you can have it. You can walk in it.

He says, "*be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*" Or the might of His power and so forth. Even if you're facing overwhelming odds. Don't ever forget Gideon. Don't ever forget Gideon. Here's a man who faced absolutely, astronomically, overwhelming odds. Is that enough adjectives for you? It was just, it was way more.

And yet God brought about a victory, but not by the strength of Gideon. And have you ever noticed how God sometimes will pare you down when you're facing a battle, just like He did to Gideon? I mean, Gideon put out the call to all the Israelites and they all came out for battle. But when God was finished paring them down, there were 300 guys left, from thousands. And God brought the battle about with 300 instead of thousands. And sometimes God will do that.

Just remember people, that's that sometimes is God's m.o. as He works in our lives to bring about His victory. But He'll pare you down. He'll, it's like peeling back the layers. And you're feeling at the end like you're exposed and what am I going to do now? I am so weak. I am so nothing.

And God says, yeah, it's exactly where I wanted to get you because now you see the battle truly is Mine and I can show Myself strong on your behalf. And I can

receive the glory and the honor for the victory that is about to be won because there's no way on God's green earth that my power or yours (Pastor Paul refers to himself here) is going to be able to bring about that victory. It's going to be God's. *“Be strong in the Lord.”* And remember what Paul said to the Philippians, I can do everything through Him, Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

And then he goes on in verse 11 and he says, *“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”*

There's two things about this verse that I want to call to your attention. First of all, there's an armor. You guys have heard teachings on the full armor before I know you haven't. But it's interesting. How many times, if you had really good recollection, and you could absolutely remember. How many times you've heard a teaching on the full armor of God? It'd be interesting to know, wouldn't it?

And how, in the number of years you've walked with the Lord, how many times have you heard a teaching on the full armor of God? Oh man, I've forgotten. I've forgotten how many times I've heard a teaching on this. It doesn't matter whether you've heard it once or a hundred times, the issue is whether you remember to do it when the day of battle comes, because you know what? As often as you're trained about the armor and how to put it on, if you don't put it on the day of battle, you're sunk.

God has made a way. God has made a way and He's given it to you and I. And this is the might of His power. And He wants you and I to use it, but we listen, we hear these teachings on the full armor of God, and then we just go into battles on our own. Or we just forget about it, or we wring our hands or, whatever our usual way of dealing with things is. And we don't get around to actually doing these things. So he says, *“Put on the full armor...”*

But notice he says, what you're to put on the full armor for. It's so that you can first of all take your stand. And a stand, obviously, is a defense, okay? But you're going to take your stand against what? Notice here he says, *“the devil schemes.”*

Make no mistake about it, people, we're talking about spiritual warfare, okay? People, and you need to understand something about spiritual warfare. You cannot fight spiritual warfare physically. It doesn't work. It's like punching the air. You can't battle in the physical realm what is in the spiritual realm. You have to use spiritual implements of warfare.

Some of you guys might remember me telling you about a number, a long time ago when I had really first given my heart to the Lord. I mean, seriously, given my heart to the Lord. Satan really played a number on me for quite a while. And I wasn't strong enough and instructed enough in the Word of God. And the enemy really took advantage of that ignorance and just did his light show.

If I had known what I know now, I wouldn't have been all that concerned because I just have much more confidence and faith in God today to keep me than I did back then.

When you're a new believer, you see spiritual, your spiritual life as a tug of war between God and Satan. And you're not really sure who's going to win. The more you get to know God, the more you have a confidence in God, the more you realize Satan doesn't stand a chance. But anyway, at that time in my life, Satan was exploiting the fact that I didn't understand and have a lot of faith. And he was really harassing me.

I mean we were living up in Montana and I mean, the enemy just harassed me. Harassed me about things in my mind. It was mind games. And I remember one time I was just, I was so mad. I mean, I got mad and I was afraid at the same time. And I was a younger man back then. I was in my early 20s and I remember I just started running. I just thought I'm going to outrun this. I mean, does that sound dumb? But I bolted out of the house and I ran down the street.

And if you could have seen me, 20 something young man, just, I mean. And I was sprinting for all I was worth and I got about 3 blocks down the road. And I was going, I'll send this... I was like, what am I doing? I'm trying to outrun something in the spiritual realm and I realized I couldn't do it.

Even though that sounds really strange, I don't think it is all that different. I think a lot of people approach spiritual battles with physical brawn or defense or whatever, thinking that's how we're going to actually get past this thing. We're just going to belly up to this thing and look at this problem right in the eye and we're just going to say, no, you can't. And we're just trying to tough it out. Doesn't work because these are spiritual attacks. Spiritual things.

He says take your you're going to be taking your stand against the devil's schemes here. Can I remind you on the screen here about something that Peter wrote to us in 1 Peter chapter 5, verses 8 and 9. Here's what he said,

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NIV)

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

All Christians are undergoing these kinds of difficulties and challenges. But the issue is that there is an enemy who wants to take you out. He doesn't just want to give you a hard time, he wants to take you out. And he's going to throw everything he can your way. And we are told to be self-controlled and alert.

Self-controlled in our actions and responses alert to his coming, knowing that spiritual battles and challenges are part and parcel of the Christian existence. And so we know that we have an enemy.

Let's look at another key verse in verse 12. Look with me there and this is so important. He's already alluded to it, but he says, now, *“For our struggle (your Bible may say battle) 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.”* Stop there.

People, let me just say something. Not only does Satan want to encourage you to try to battle against these things in the physical realm, he wants you to get fixated on people whose personalities particularly bug you. Because if he can do that, if he can get you fixated on people as the cause of your problems, then he can waylay you from really dealing with the real issue.

And the real issue is spiritual in nature and you and I are to deal with it. And sometimes we have to just ask God to open our spiritual eyes, to see the real battle that's in front of us, and stop looking right here, which is the physical realm.

Have you ever had somebody who hurt your feelings, or who made you mad, or who neglected you, or did something to just really just get under your skin? And you just think about that person and you're sitting there just focusing. And then, and pretty soon, your hurt turns into resentment. And resentment turns into anger and anger turns into bitterness. And pretty soon you're a mess. And there's

very little you can do about it at that point because you're a mess. You need to be un-messed before you can even deal with the actual root of the problem.

And you got to come before God and you got to start repenting of what you've gathered up now against this individual. And Lord, you got to come to God and God, just forgive me. I've just gotten my eyes off the real battle and I put it on this person. And I thought that he or she was the problem. Oh God, forgive me. Forgive me because I've allowed my hurt to well up into bitterness and it's poisoned me.

And that's what the Bible says, that a bitter root grows up to defile. (Hebrews 12:15) It actually has a defiling element in our lives. It defiles everything. And it's like, it makes everything go bad. It's like you left the milk, and the cheese, and the cottage cheese, all out on the counter for days. They all went bad. And that's what bitterness does to you and to your life, to your relationships. Because Satan is so effective at getting you and I to look at people. To zero in on people, say, yeah, that's my problem right there. You are my problem and so my battle is against you.

No, God says your battle is not against flesh and blood. Your battle is against. And notice what he says here. He says, rulers and authorities and powers. Literally, he's talking about principalities. Do you guys remember, do you guys remember Daniel, in the Book of Daniel? I was going to show you some verses, but I'm not going to, I'm just going to tell you.

Do you guys remember in Daniel, Daniel received incredible visions from the Lord about things having to do with the last days but they were so mysterious to him, that he would sit and pray endlessly. God just show me what this is about. Well, there was one particular last day's vision that God gave Daniel and Daniel was particularly troubled by it. And so he prayed, he started praying right away. God, what is this all about? What are You doing? I don't get this stuff. And that's the way the old Testament prophets were related to last day's prophecies. They couldn't figure it out.

He's praying and asking God, show me. And 3 weeks go by as he's praying about this, 3 weeks. Finally, he has another vision where this angel, who I believe is actually, perhaps even the pre incarnate Christ comes to him and says to him, Daniel, you who are highly favored, listen to me now.

He says, from the day you set your mind to pray and gain understanding, the answer began to come to you, right away from the day that you start. He says, I was resisted by the prince of the Persian kingdom for 21 days. And finally, he

says, Michael, your prince came and fought for me and we were able to get through.

What's going on there you guys? Spiritual warfare on a national level is what is happening in the Book of Daniel. It's really a fascinating chapter, which gives us great insights.

Now what's going on here is that, remember, Daniel is living in Persia at the time he's serving the king of Persia. And yet God is giving him visions and so forth about things that are going to be coming in the distant future. But the principalities, literally the demonic principalities that oversee the pagan run kingdom of Persia, don't want to let those angels in to come and respond to Daniel, so they resist them.

And this one angel tells Daniel, I was, the Prince of Persia kept me from coming for 21 days. We fought against the Prince of Persia. Isn't that crazy? I mean, it's stuff that movies are made out of. It sounds like, in fact, there was a movie called Prince of Persia, recently. In the last year or so but not that's biblical, but this is. So read through it in the Book of Daniel. It really is an amazing insight.

Now you may not have principalities of national importance. I don't know, maybe you do, that are warring against you, are involved in some of the issues that you're going through in your family, your home, your business, your life, whatever it may be. But understand that there are principalities and powers that are at work that you can't see.

And we are told here in chapter 12 that, that is fact. Paul is telling us by very specific way of fact, he says, your *"battle is not against flesh and blood,"* but rather against spiritual powers. So understand that, walk in that level of discernment so that you can fight the battle where it's really going on. Don't get distracted by people and all that stuff.

Verse 13 and then he says, *"Therefore..."* And you remember what the word, therefore is all about. It always points to a point we've just made previously. And so now it's going to come to a conclusion.

"Therefore (Therefore, or in other words, because you're dealing with spiritual battles and not physical ones, he says) put on the full armor of God,..." Now people, stop there for just a moment. You know this armor isn't physical, don't you? Because he's just made the point. First of all, these are the devil schemes and he said, our battle against is against spiritual principalities, powers, and so

forth. You know you're not physically putting a hat on, and these are elements that make up our lives in Christ.

He says, “*put on (in verse 13) the full armor of God so that when the day (look at what he calls it) of evil comes, ...*” And people, they come, don't they? Some of you have been alive long enough, you've seen several days of evil.

Some of you that might be new in the Lord, maybe you're just getting started. And I don't mean to give you any kind of a horrible feeling about the future, but it happens. The enemy attacks, there's issues, there's days of evil that come upon us.

And here's the point. God wants you to have these things so that you can stand. And that's what he says here in the end of the verse, so “*you may be able to stand your ground, and (then) after you have done everything, ...*” In other words, after you've fought the battle, you are still standing. See, that's the point of this whole thing, that you might stand in the Lord.

And that's, by the way, that's what standing is all about. It's standing in the Lord, not unmoved from the things of the Lord and your faith in Him. And so he begins to talk about some of the things that we need to do.

He says in verse 14, “*Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, ...*” This is all about putting on God's truth but let me tell you something.

Do you know why? Do you know why he starts off with the truth? It's because it directly opposes the way Satan attacks. Do you know Satan's number one attack is deception? Lies. Do you remember what Jesus said about the devil in the last part of verse 44 of John chapter 8? Let's put that up on the screen so that people can see it. John 8, the last part of verse 44, goes like this. He says,

John 8:44b (NIV)

[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

[The devil] was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, (in fact, he says) he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. And that means he is the originator of all lies.

Isn't that amazing. So when Satan, you've got to know this. If you're going to go up against spiritual principalities and powers, you better be dealing in truth because you know for certain Satan is going to be dealing in lies and he's got an abundance of them. And not only does he, and he doesn't just deal in outlandish lies, he deals in a little half-truth type lies that get under your skin because there's maybe a little iota of truth in it, and that hooks you. And then the rest of it, see, is easy just to begin to spread into your veins.

Satan just doesn't come along and say something stupid that you're just going to look at him and go, oh yeah, right. He's not going to do that. He's way too cunning for that. He's got a little bit of truth so that he can get in there and just get you but it's going to be ultimately a lie. And the purpose of it is to get you to believe a lie. And once you have fallen to a lie, what are you going to do? Then you start running after that. You start literally thinking that's the battle and you know what? You're fighting a lie or it just gets your eyes completely off the goal.

The first thing that we need to do when it comes to dealing with spiritual battles is we need to be girded. And that's what this belt is. In the old translation, it was literally girdle. It was a girdle. I mean, this was the first thing that the soldier would put on. He would gird himself with this and then all of his other implements would hang on it. And so he needs to be girded in truth just. Oh and that is so important. And we can always come to God.

When you're going through a hard time. They talk about the chaos of battle. I've never actually been a soldier. I've never been in a battle type situation, but I've heard them talk about in a battle, in a heated battle situation, it's very difficult to figure what's what, who's what. And what's up and what's down.

And it is no less true in spiritual battles, and you and I have to be connected to the source of truth who is Jesus Christ, when we are in a battle? And if you're going through a hard time right now, if you're going through a battle scenario right now, you've got to be coming before the Lord saying, God, show me what's true and what's not. Because what's not true, I want to just, I want to jettison that because that's just going to waste my time and my strength.

And I don't want to be going around battling things that aren't part of the real battle. You know what I mean? You've got to keep saying, Lord, open my eyes to truth. Open my eyes to truth. All right. So you stand firm with that.

And notice the next thing in verse 14 is the breastplate of righteousness. Make sure he says that is in place people. This is not earned righteousness. This is

righteousness that is imputed by God through Jesus Christ. And I talk in Christian-ease. Let me put it this way. If you are a Christian, if you are in Christ today, and what I mean by that is you've made Him your Lord and Savior. You are righteous before God. Okay. You stand righteous before God. Not because of your own good deeds, or anything you've done. Just because of Him you are righteous. Now put that on and let it guard your heart.

Here's why. Satan's going to challenge it at every turn. And here's why. He is the accuser. He is the accuser of the brethren and he's going to accuse you to yourself. Let alone accusing you before God. He will accuse you to other people and other people to you and so forth.

And if you don't have an understanding and a confidence that you are righteous in the eyes of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, then you have no protection for your vital organs, your vital spiritual organs.

And it is of the utmost importance that you remember, I am not accepted by God on the basis of good works, good deeds, good attitudes, or anything. God sees me as I am. I confess it and He accepts me through the blood of the Lamb. And I stand righteous through the blood of the eternal Lamb. People, that is the breastplate of righteousness. And if that isn't on when the day of evil comes, Satan, he's gotcha. He's got you like that.

I can't tell you how many people have come to me after a time of great difficulty in battle who are just absolutely wasted by the work of the enemy because they have not maintained the breastplate of righteousness. And they are absolutely ripped to shreds in Satan's mechanism of accusations. And it really is a sad thing because they have not maintained the breastplate and so forth.

He goes on in verse 15 and he says, “*and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*” People, this isn't readiness to preach the Gospel. It really doesn't have anything to do with it. Instead, it refers to a believer's stability or sure footedness. And that was always a key element in battle. If you're going to be victorious over your enemy, you've got to be sure footed.

No matter what kind of a ground he engages you on, whether it's rocky, or flat, or mountainous, or whatever it may be, you've got to be sure footed, and you've got to know where you're going.

And there's a confidence and a stability in our lives “*that comes from the gospel of peace.*” You'll notice what he calls it, and it gives us peace in the midst of the battle so that we can stand against the work of the enemy. And continue to fight that battle knowing that God's love for us is certain. I am confident. Are you confident that God's love for you is certain? Or can the enemy shake you on that easily? Does the enemy come along and just rattle you at the cellular level sometimes about your confidence that He loves you or do you stand strong? Sure footed.

Verse 16, he says, “*In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*” Now this is easy because he told us what it is. He told us what it does. I mean, there's no whole lot of comment that needs to go along with this. But it is a shield and it is made up of your faith. Your faith in God, your trust in Him.

And it becomes that ability to literally deflect those fiery poison darts of the enemy that he longs to get in. Once again, these are these flaming darts are the things that the enemy wants to do and get you. Because if he can find flesh, and if he can pierce flesh with those darts, there's a venom in them that begins to course through us, that just causes disappointment, discouragement, upset, fear, panic, whatever he's trying to do in you.

Whatever the enemy is trying to elicit out of you in terms of an emotional response, that's going to happen when you allow yourself to be exposed at some point. And that's why God has given you a shield, but understand it is a shield of faith.

By the way, did you notice at the very beginning of all this? It said, put on, it says, “*Put on the full armor.*” Put on this, put on the belt, put on... Did you know in the Greek? I just learned this was I was studying this. It means there is an emphatic element of emphasis that goes along with those two simple words that means that there is a responsibility on your part. To do it, to put it on.

Now, the battle armament is His, right? He's the one that created it. He's given it to you. There it sits on the floor. God says, now put it on, take that shield, take it up. Get the sword out, raise it. So many people have the armor and it's just sitting there. It's on the floor. It's all neat. They shine it even once in a while, but they don't put it on. And so, there's an emphatic element to, to the Greek in that says, do this.

Verse 17 says, “*Take the helmet of salvation...*” And this is so important because protecting your mind from the onslaught of the enemy protects against

what he wants to accomplish most in your mind. Satan loves playing mind games. And he loves it... And make no mistake about it, his purpose is to discourage you.

If you're feeling discouraged about a situation or some, the very chances are very good that you have not put on the helmet. That you have been subject to an attack of the enemy that has left you exposed to his discouragement and his mind games and so forth. And so this is something that you've got to do.

It is, guys, the helmet of salvation is the assurance, the absolute quiet assurance in our hearts that God is going to triumph. And people, do you know that one of Satan's most powerful weapons is discouragement.

If he can get you discouraged, once you feel discouraged, you just go limp. You stop being in any a defensive posture or resisting posture. You just basically lay down and say, yeah, okay, whatever. It's going to be what it's going to be. You stop fighting. And more importantly, you stop standing. You stop standing.

So don't let discouragement happen. Take up the helmet of salvation. Take up that assurance. You are a child of God and He's not going to abandon you, okay. You're His child. He can't. People, listen, He cannot abandon you. Even if He tried, He can't. You're His child. Can't do it.

And then finally he says here and well, not necessarily finally. He says, "*and* (in verse 17 also) *the sword of the Spirit, ...*" Take up also "*the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.*" And it tells us what that is. It's "*the word of God.*" It is a sword. Notice he refers to it as, "*the sword of the Spirit.*" Remember, we're talking about what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives, how He works in our lives, and so forth. But he says, take it up. Take it up.

My son Aaron who led worship this morning has in their office, in their house these huge swords; life size, real weight swords. He, and they're all replicas of the swords that are in Lord of the Rings. I mean, he's got everybody's sword. He's got Frodo's sword. He's got, the king's sword. He's got, he's still waiting to get Gimli's ax. But he's got all the, and they're all mounted on the wall and you can pull them off.

And we were doing it the other night, we were working on his computer. And so he pulled this one sword off the wall and he handed it to me. And I was looking at this thing and it was like, if I got into a battle with this thing, I mean, they'd cut me to shreds so quickly, that I probably wouldn't even see it coming. I mean, here's the reason why I'm not used to using it and I've never practiced.

Same thing with the Word of God. Are you used to using the Word of God and have you practiced? There's no substitute for practicing practice. Get to know the Word of God. Get to know your Bible. Read it.

One of the things I'm haranguing our kids in our senior high and college group, bring your Bible to refuge. And I have some extra Bibles there that they can read along, but you know what? It's never as good. And we make Bibles available and I don't want to make anybody feel bad. I know some of you might've just needed a Bible this morning cause you forgot yours. That's fine. And that's what they're there for.

But you know what? There's something about getting used to the way this thing feels. (Pastor Paul holds up his Bible) There's something about knowing where to find that verse There's something about underlining it, and putting the date next to it, and why that was important to you, and being able to find it again. There's something about just this being your Bible that you have hold of and you know how to wield it. This is my sword.

Do you think a battle, you think a warrior back in those days went into battle with a brand new sword he'd never touched before the battle began? No, he's going to get that sword, he's going to get used to it, he's going to know the weight of it, how to use it, how to wield it, how to do it, because his life depends on it! And so does yours. Your life depends on it.

Don't treat this sword like this is something you can just pick up off the shelf after years of disuse and just pick it up and go, okay, here we go now, battle of the Lord. You better have these things tucked in your heart. You better know how this is used. You better know how to swing it. And when and where to strike. Vitaly important.

And then finally, he says in verse 18, *“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”* Spirit directed, Spirit moved, Spirit inspired prayer. Lord. When you're in a battle situation, you got to pray and hit the mark.

And so you're going to come before the Lord at that time and stop thinking, you know how to pray. Stop thinking, you know exactly what to hone in on in a battle situation, because the chaos of battle might just have distracted you away from the real purpose of the battle. So you come and you say, Father, God, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, enable me to pray about what really is going on here.

And if you are so beaten down and you are so bloodied and so discouraged from the battle, do you know what? There's still hope. The Bible has this beautiful reminder for us in Romans 8. Let me put this up on the screen for you. It's from Romans 8, verses 26 and 27. It says,

Romans 8:26-27 (NIV)

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. (he says, sometimes) We do not (didn't even) know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Isn't that good to know, that even if you're just beat up, and you don't even know how to pray. It's like, I don't even know what to say anymore. It's like I stopped to pray and I just go, I don't know. Just know this.

God loves you so much that the Holy spirit even prays for you. Isn't that amazing. And He knows exactly how to pray.

Have you ever invited Him to do that? Have you ever been so just beaten down? It's happened to me dozens of times. I've just had to come before the Lord and say, God, I don't even know where to start. Would You just pray? Lord, would You pray? Would You just pray? I'm just going to sit here. I was going to let you pray. And just to know that He knows exactly how to pray.

What a wonderful, glorious God we serve. So keep on praying. Make prayer a vital important part of that whole battle process.

Let's stand together.