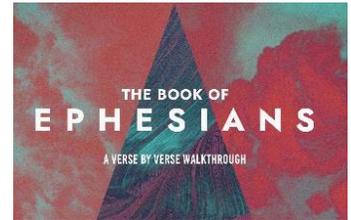


Title: Ephesians, Week 14, Armor of God

Speaker: Kevin Norcross

Passage: Ephesians 6.10-23

Big idea: You can honour God in your relationships by understanding your priorities.



This is the final week of the Ephesians series and next week we start the book of Philippians. Today, we are going to be reading Ephesians 6:10-23. Paul finishes off his letter with a challenge to the people about putting on Spiritual armor for battle. There is a difference between physical equipment and spiritual equipment.

Physical equipment

You put on Physical equipment to do physical activities. You must put on Spiritual equipment to do Spiritual things.

- Physical equipment
 - Football, hockey, swimming
 - Imagine going swimming with football equipment on
 - Imagine playing ice hockey in a bathing suit
 - Imagine trying to play football with ice skates on
 - Bad things happen when you do not wear the right equipment. I remember when the kids were younger, I played back catcher. I think Kaden was pitching and Mekhi was batting. I was not wearing a face mask. Nah it's okay ... I'll be fine. Foul ball. Ice. Pain. Won't do that again.
 - Wearing the right equipment is very important.

That sets the stage for the scripture today.

Let's read Ephesians 6:10-23

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. Therefore, put on the full armor 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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 Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. ²¹Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. ²³Peace to the brothers and sisters,^[a] and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Equipment

- You are in a war, but it is not with guns and bombs.
- It is a spiritual war.
- It is a battle that Christ has already won, and the victory is secure, but we fight in the battle.

BIG IDEA

You need to put on the right equipment for battle each day

There are spiritual weapons that the Devil has pointed straight at you. God wants what is best for your life. He wants you to do great things with your life. He wants to know you. He wants to have a relationship with you. He wants you to be free. He wants you to plug into Him.

Devil wants the worst for your life. He wants you to hate yourself and others. He wants to rob, kill and destroy you.

We are not Roman soldiers who dress for battle each day, this can be hard to relate to. One thing that I find easier to relate to is the game of dodgeball. I have played many games of dodgeball in my years of youth ministry.

When I think of youth ministry, there is a common staple of a successful youth ministry – dodgeball. Some of you have been considering serving in our youth ministry – perhaps this will push you over the edge (that you get to throw dodgeballs at them).

In this game of dodgeball, the objective is to ... rules. You think that dodgeballs are scary being thrown at your head ... how about flaming arrows?

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.”

The devil will attack you in this life/game of dodgeball daily. That is the kind of spiritual battle that we are engaged in every day!

Every day you go out on the court, and you are faced with hurtful things. Lies, hurtful words, and temptations are whizzing by your head. Sometimes you get nailed with a ball. You may give into a temptation and sin against God. You may be affected by the sins of others (ie. family). You may face persecution for standing up for God.

Teammates: You need to look out for your team. When you see hurt and pain coming their way, you need to block for them. You have a way better chance of winning if you work together.

Training: The better prepared and equipped you are for the game, the better you are going to do. Imagine playing dodge ball in a sumo wrestling suit. Imagine playing dodge ball if you thought the objective was to get hit.

You need to prepare yourself before you go out onto the court every day.

- Get in the Word
 - “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” Psalm 119:105
- Worship God
 - “For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise.” 1 Chronicles 16:25
- Put on your spiritual equipment
 - “Therefore, put on the whole armor of God so that you can stand against the devil’s schemes.” Eph 6:11

The better you train, the better you will handle the attacks of the enemy. The better equipment you have, the better you will do in battle.

In this battle that we face every day, it is much deeper and intense obviously than a game of dodgeball But is used this example for various reasons

- As a reminder of what kind of atmosphere, you are walking into every day.
 - Don't just show up on the court and pretend there is not a game going on – you will get hit.
 - Don't show up on the court oblivious to the fact that there is not a game going on – you will get hit.
 - Prepare for what you are going to face.
 - Understand the rules of the game and be prepared.
 - Know which team you are on!

It is important to stand up for what is right in your life and engage in battle for the things that are important to you.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

The word “stand” in the Greek is (stete) which is a military term for “holding on to a position”. Before you can make any offensive attack, you must be strong and hold your ground, and stand firm, and hold your position.

I am saying that there are ...

- Things that God has called you to do, and He wants you to stand up and do them.
- Things that scripture is clear about, and we need to stand up and obey him no matter the cost.
- Areas in your life that you might be compromising, and God wants to take a stand against those areas of sin and compromise and get back on track.
- People that God has put in your life that need to so stand up for them and stand in the gap for them.
- There are things in your life that are worth standing up for and fighting for.
- We have been talking about Christian Relationships over the past couple of weeks and God's plan and design and these things are worth fighting for.
 - Your **relationship** with God,
 - your **husband, wife**, and pour into them, pray for them, love them - or future marriage relationship, and your personal purity and pursuit of relationship with God.
 - Your **children** who desperately need you to stand up and live for Jesus and stand in the gap for them.
 - Your **family** and friends who need you to stand up and support them be there for them.
 - Your **church** and the ministry of the gospel and the good work that God has called you to love and serve and do this Christian life with.
 - Your **community** who are far from God need you to stand up and pray for them and share truth in love and tact and passion.

Perhaps you are not standing and engaging on these areas, but you are passively sitting back ... It is time to stand. Don't forget ... this is a spiritual battle.

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.

It is important to remember that this is a battle against supernatural forces. The spiritual battle that is going on around us is something that we cannot see, but it is real. We get glimpses and small fragments of understanding to what is going on around us.

People are involved in this battle when you stand up for God and for truth ... You will get push back, ridicule, pressure, accusation from people. I have talked to multiple youth in the past few months who have faced significant bullying, persecution, and blatant in your face attacks by simply standing up for simple Biblical truths.

Please pray for our youth. It is crazy right now in society. As Pastor Charles says “in this topsy turvy, upside down world we live in”. It is getting worse and worse. Remember that when people come at you, to look beyond the person and see that something much deeper is going on. Even though you can't totally understand the spiritual warfare, it is real, it is happening, and you will see that attack come from people when you stand up and speak truth.

Recognize the evil behind what is happening. Love people, pray for people, and stand firm in your faith. The important thing is to be aware of what scripture says and trust that God's word is true and prepare for this spiritual battle with spiritual preparation.

So ...

- How do you fight this battle?
- How do you stay in the game?
- How do you be successful?

Put on your spiritual equipment.

Big Idea: You need to put on the right equipment for battle each day.

Again, back to verse 11:

¹¹Therefore, put on the whole armor of God so that you can stand against the devil's schemes.

The picture here is of a soldier armed and ready for battle. They are suited up from head to toe.

Let's look at each of these items that we are to put on in preparation for this spiritual battle:

1. Belt of truth

¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, Ever been "pantsed?" I remember that happening in grade 5 when I was wearing sweatpants – I tied them up after that. Belt is so your pants won't fall down.

Putting on the belt signifies preparation and getting ready for battle; tied tightly around the waist. It helped keep the breastplate in place. Other things were hung from the belt. It was essential.

The belt of truth. This is interpreted as the truth of the gospel. The truth that you are saved. It holds everything together so that you are ready for battle.

2. Breastplate of Righteousness

Have you ever played paintball? Paintball is fun, but it hurt sometimes. When I went with my kids awhile back, we wore many layers of sweaters. We got very sweaty, but it was worth it because the layers protected us from the pain of the paintball.

Breastplate protects your heart. Righteousness stands for uprightness and integrity of character. You can guard your heart by being integral, honest, righteous. By focusing on growing in these areas, you are protecting your heart.

People can misunderstand you, misjudge you, attack you, gossip about you but you know that your heart is right, and you can be secure before God about that because of what Christ did for you on the cross, your heart is protected.

3. Shoes of the gospel

¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Last year, we got some concrete done in our front yard by the driveway. It is not very smooth. Sometimes I hurt my feet when I am lazy and walk on my driveway with no shoes. Like being in a rush or being lazy I just run outside with no shoes on. There is instant regret, but of course I keep doing it.

Shoes protect your feet and give you grip. You don't know what you are going to face throughout the day. What kind of terrain you are going to have to walk through? What kind of obstacles you are going to have to climb over? What kind of maneuvers you are going to have to perform?

Don't go out into battle in bare feet! Knowing that you are saved gives you a good grip on life. Knowing that you are saved and being ready to share that good news when the opportunity comes. People are watching and they need to see us proclaiming the gospel with our words and actions.

4. Shield of faith

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

At home we have a Great Dane, and his name is Wallace. He is very large, and he slobbers a lot. Occasionally, he shakes his head and slobber goes flying through the air. Now, everyone in the room goes on the defensive and covers their face with their hands and makes a shield with whatever they can. Sometimes he still gets you and it is gross.

This piece of armor is used to protect. Shield protects you from arrows. These shields were crafted and designed to protect the soldier from the arrows that would come at them. Not only stop the arrows but extinguish the flames so they would not spread.

These attacks come at you all the time. Your faith in God will protect you from flaming arrows of doubt thrown at you from the Devil.

5. Helmet of salvation

¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

"Take" means that the helmet is received or accepted. The other items were put out before the soldier, but the helmet would have been handed to them by an armorbearer. This reminds us that we do not earn our salvation by good works, but it is freely given to us by God. The helmet protects your head.

Know that you are saved, and that God will protect you and watch over you. Sometimes the battle is in your mind and the enemy will lie to you. Fill your mind with truth and know that God will protect you.

6. Sword of the Spirit

¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Offensive weapon – Bible. Double edged sword - When the enemy lies to you and tries to destroy you, just speak truth of the Bible to yourself.

Be full of the word of God. Be full of the bread of life that will give you strength in battle. Be full of the truth of scripture so that it counters the lies of the enemy that come at you all day long.

Know the Bible ... know truth.

I know I only touched briefly on these different pieces of armor. You could take some time to go deeper in study on these. The point is that you need to be ready for battle.

Let's do a quick review of what we are focusing on today.

- Big Idea: You need to put on the right equipment for battle each day.
- You are in a war, but it is not with guns and bombs or dodgeballs.
- It is a spiritual war.
- It is a battle that Christ has already won, and the victory is secure, but we fight in the battle.
- There are Spiritual weapons that the Devil has pointed straight at you.
- God wants what is best for your life.
- Devil wants the worst for your life.
- Each day prepare for the battle so that you can fight for what matters.
- Pray.