

God's Armor

1. Introduction – Several lenses

- a. (Slide 4) The lens of summary Radetsky March
 - i. Conclusion to the Letter (rather than the introduction of new material) - Paul brings the letter to a rousing and inspiring conclusion with a call to action that highlights the main themes he has been discussing. Truth, Righteousness, Peace, the Faith, Hope of Salvation, The Word of God (The Gospel)
- b. The lens of Gospel - All aspects of the armor are references to the Gospel
- c. The lens of relationship - Some of the armor items will also have a behavioral component that needs to be practiced.
- d. The lens of New Creation Identity - Their new creation identity as the true temple of God in the city of Ephesus against a pagan backdrop. Who they are individually and corporately...

2. (Slide 5) Background

- a. Armor of God is the armor that God Himself wears - Isa. 11:4-5, 21:5, 49:2, 52:7, 59:17
 - i. Belt, breastplate, feet, shield, helmet and sword
 - ii. Some of the armor pieces are named differently for God (Belt – Righteousness and faithfulness)
- b. Roman Soldiers – Paul probably chained to one
- c. Day of evil, fiery darts, and schemes of the devil
 - i. The devil, principalities, powers, etc. have been with us throughout the book. Specifically mentioned in all chapters but chapter 5.
 - ii. Three “days of evil” mentioned or implied in Ephesians
 1. Tom mentioned - Tom mentioned several of these last week (1. Deceive, mislead, lie to us; 2. Harass us through phenomena, trials and sickness; 3. To tempt us to sin and mistrust God).
 2. Some of the ways these showed up for the Ephesians were
 3. Attack on the gospel - (Eph. 4:14, 4:22, 5:6),
 - a. The attack of false teaching meant to divide and destroy the church. Legalism and Licentiousness
 - i. The gospel teaches that we have been saved by grace through faith, not by works. AND that since we are saved, we are to put off unrighteousness and put on righteousness. Neither legalism nor licentiousness.
 4. Attack on their relationships (4:31)
 - a. Eph. 4:31 - Get rid of all bitterness (don't give the devil an opportunity)
 - b. Hence the teaching on household relationships
 5. The attack of temptation to sin (chapters 4-5)
 - iii. We are to stand against personal disunity rooted in unforgiveness, sinful behavior towards one another, and legalism.

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3. Armor Items

a. (Slide 6) Truth

- i. Eph. 1:13 (message of truth, gospel of your salvation); Eph. 4:15 (speaking the truth in love - contrasted with winds of doctrine), Eph. 4:21 (taught in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus - the Gospel -), Eph. 4:24 (righteousness and holiness of the truth), Eph. 4:25 (put off falsehood and speak truthfully), Eph. 5:9 (fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)
- ii. Two aspects
 1. Contrasted with the winds of doctrine
 - a. Legalism, licentiousness, all roads lead to God
 - b. Cults, other religions
 2. Honesty in their speaking and relationships
- iii. Difficult to get to truth in our day on almost any topic. So many opinions and viewpoints
 1. Mom and dad, yogurt shop, coconut oil
 2. This happens on almost every topic
- iv. We need truth we can count on. Stand on the gospel truth

b. (Slide 7) Righteousness

- i. Eph. 4:24 (created to be like God in righteousness), Eph. 5:9 (the fruit of the light... consists... In all righteousness) All references in Ephesians are to right behavior
 1. Paul spends much of chapter 4, 5 and 6 discussing the righteous behavior that is expected of believers
- ii. From Romans we know that the righteousness of God is by faith. Rom. 3:21-24
- iii. Stand firm in the righteousness we have received from the Gospel, and in the truth that through the Gospel we are called to live Holy and Righteous lives
- iv. Because of God's gift we look like God. Now we need to think and act like God.
- v. The old testament word for righteousness basically means to make something straight.
 1. Tangled apron strings – since God has detangled the apron strings, learn to wash them in such a way that they don't get tangled again.

c. (Slide 8) Preparation of the gospel of peace, sure foundation of the gospel of peace

- i. Gospel - Eph. 1:13 (gospel of your salvation), Eph. 3:6 (through the Gospel the gentiles are heirs together, members together of one body, sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus, 3:7 (servant of this Gospel), Eph. 6:19 (fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel)
- ii. Peace (Eph. 1:2 - grace and peace), Eph. 2:14 He himself is our peace who has made the two groups one), 2:15 (One new humanity out of the two, thus making peace), 2:17 (preached peace to far and near), 4:3 (unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace), Eph. 6:23 (peace to the brothers and sisters)
- iii. The Gospel of peace is the message that people from all different backgrounds are all reconciled to the Father through Jesus Christ, and because we are reconciled to the Father, In Christ, we are also reconciled to each other.
 1. This is the "main gospel" Paul has been preaching throughout this letter.

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2. In Christ, Together, they are the one people of God.
 - iv. Ready with the Gospel of peace
 1. Preaching/sharing the gospel with those that need to hear (probably emphasized more by the sword of the Spirit)
 2. Ready to extend peace, forgiveness and reconciliation to those we are offended at.
 3. Standing firm in their relationships with one another regardless of their backgrounds (men and women, young and old, slave and free, different ethnic groups).
 - v. Illustration of the cross: Peace vertically and peace horizontally
- d. (Slide 9) Faith –
- i. Eph. 1:1 (the faithful in Christ Jesus), 1:15 (since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus), 2:8 (saved through faith), 3:12 (through faith in Him we may approach God with freedom and confidence), 3:17 (so Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith), Eph. 4:5 (one Lord, one Faith, one baptism), Eph. 4:13 (reach unity in the faith), 6:21 (Tychicus faithful servant), Eph. 6:23 (peace to the brothers and sisters and love with faith from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ)
 - ii. The Faith – the trust in Jesus and the central truths about who He is and what He has done for us that secure our salvation.
 1. Saving faith, saved by grace through faith
 - iii. Faith can also be the means by which we come before God to ask for help in times of difficulty (3:12)
 - iv. Our faith in Jesus, for salvation, protects us from the attacks on the gospel.
 - v. Our faith in Jesus gives us access to the Father which secures our help in time of need.
 1. Overlaps nicely with “all kinds of prayers and requests”
 - vi. The shields were made to link together so that the group could stand together against attack.
 - vii. So, taking up the shield of faith is to stand firm together in the gospel and to trust God in faith (through prayer) for all kinds of requests.
- e. (Slide 10) Salvation
- i. 1:13 (gospel of your salvation), 2:5,8 (by grace you have been saved – 2x), It is a gift, they “receive’ the helmet of salvation.
 - ii. Salvation is also associated with hope (1 Thes. 5:8)
 - iii. Salvation is about being rescued from something and rescued to something. (Ps. 18)
 1. Sinking in a pit but you brought me out to a spacious place.
 2. Burning building – rescued from the fire and brought to a safe place
 3. We are rescued from sin, death, judgment and the wrath of God.
 4. We are rescued to resurrection from the dead, new bodies, eternal life, a perfect world, fellowship with God and ruling and reigning with Him.

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- a. Example: Noah's Ark... sin is not making the journey through the ark this time

- f. (Slide 11) Word of God
 - i. Word of God – rhema Probably refers to the spoken word of God - Gospel
 - 1. When you heard the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation – Eph. 1:13, He came and preached peace to far and near... Eph. 2:17, Preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ 3:7, Speaking the truth in love – 4:15, Washing with water through the word (rhema) – 5:26, Eph. 6:19 (fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel)
 - ii. Sword of the Spirit
 - 1. Sword wielded by the Spirit, Or sword given by the Spirit
 - 2. They wield the Gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - iii. Stand firm ready to share the Gospel and ready to speak the truth of the gospel in love. Depend on the Holy Spirit to inspire and anoint your words.
 - 1. Although the context of the passage is defensive, Paul's request for prayer for the advance of the Gospel probably implies that they would not just withstand an assault from the enemy but also would be able to advance to Gospel. (Phil 1:7,12, 16)

- g. (Slide 12) Prayer
 - i. 1:16-18 (Spirit of wisdom and revelation, eyes enlightened), 3:16-20 (strengthened with power through Holy Spirit, rooted and grounded in love, more than we can ask or imagine)
 - ii. We need the Holy Spirit in order to pray and we need Spirit inspired and Spirit anointed praying.
 - 1. Spirit inspired and Spirit anointed praying
 - 2. Might include a reference to tongues.
 - 3. All kinds of prayers and requests
 - a. Keep alert to the schemes of the enemy in other people's lives and pray for them
 - 4. Pray for Paul to be able to advance the gospel - Boldness 2x
 - a. A further clue that the context of the armor is gospel oriented
 - iii. Paul's prayer for them
 - 1. We need the Holy Spirit to receive the revelation and knowledge about the things God wants us to know (including Himself)
 - 2. We need the Holy Spirit so that Christ can be at home in us and we can know, be filled with and overflow with His love.
 - 3. We need the Holy Spirit so that we can stand firm against the enemy and advance the Gospel.
 - 4. We need Spirit inspired prayer (for one another) of all kinds so that we can find the grace and mercy we need to stand against the enemy's deception, harassment and temptation.

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4. (Slide 13) Summary
 - a. What does the armor of God do for us?
 - i. Protects us from the wrath of God and preserves us unto eternal life (the armor is the Gospel).
 - ii. Preserves our witness in a fallen world. Our faithfulness to the Gospel allows to reveal God's message of salvation to the people of this world.
 - iii. Protects our relationships and enables us to live now as the future people of God in the current world – already but not yet
 - iv. Protection from sin, harassment and deception
 - b. How do we stand firm in the Gospel & the Word of God
 - i. Read, study and meditate on the whole Gospel
 1. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John...
 - ii. Stay together
 1. Forgive, make peace, love and submit to one another, pray for one another, encourage one another
 2. Phil 1:27 - Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ... that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...
 - iii. Be continually filled with the Spirit
 - iv. Pray
 1. For God's people and all the various things we need prayer for
 2. For the advance of the Gospel... In Chico, California, and around the world