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“Put on the Whole Armour of God” - Ephesians 6: 1-24

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² “Honour your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

⁵ Slaves,^[a] obey your earthly masters^[b] with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants^[c] of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master^[d] and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

²¹ So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. ²² I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brothers,^[e] and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

In this final chapter of his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul is drawing to a close the guidance he, under instruction from the Lord, is seeking to lay down as right and proper, respectful relationships within families and churches.

In chapter 5 verse one he commences with (NIV) "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Wow!! What a challenge, what a high target to aim for. Something, left to our own resources we could never attain to. Nevertheless, with Gods help and encouragement, we can strive to gain the victory.

In verse four of our passage today the responsibility for nurturing children in the faith is fixed squarely on the shoulders of Christian (father's) parents. Obviously, mothers will have much to do with the nurture and training children as we read in Proverbs Ch 1 v 8 & 9. However, fathers who relinquish this duty entirely to their wives do so in clear violation of New Testament teaching. "Training" is the Greek word, "paideia", which denotes a combination of instruction, discipline, and personal guidance. Fathers are also warned against engendering anger and frustration in their children, since this will negate much of their positive teaching.

Personal justice is not the goal of discipleship. My task is not to make sure I get justice. I must be more concerned that I act justly and fight for justice for others. Paul called on slaves to accept their un-just status and serve their masters in love and loyalty. Whatever our social or employment status, we know our ultimate supervisor is God. Every action we take, every job we do, we do to please Him. Earthly managers pay only earthly wages. When we face our true Master, He will reward us for faithfulness to Him. Earthly status and position will play no role. All are slaves of God. (Check these out. Matt 25 v 34-46. 2 Peter 1 v 10 & 11).

The aspect of judgement that applies to believers is that of the determination of rewards. Good will be rewarded regardless of earthly status. We should be just in our dealing with people we supervise and work with because we expect God to deal justly with us. We will ultimately face a just God.

Disciples must struggle with superhuman forms of evil, including Satan. God's spiritual armour will help the disciple in the struggles (See 1 Peter 5 v 8 & 9). The enemy causing the evil we face is not a human force, we have a chance to defeat in our own power. The enemy is an evil spiritual force led by Satan. The enemy includes rulers and authorities, angelic forces created by God through Christ (See Colossians 1 v 16) who have rebelled against God and exercise temporary power in our universe.

Powers may be pagan gods connected with sun worship who cannot bring light to the evil darkness we must endure. Spiritual forces represent Satan's followers who oppose God on His heavenly territory. Will God or Satan exercise ultimate control of the universe? The Bible assures us God's victory is guaranteed. (See Ephesians Chapter 1 verses 3, 10, 14, 20-22 & Chapter 2 verse 6 & Chapter 3 verse 10 & Chapter 4 verses 10). We can participate in God's victory by identifying with Him and living according to His will.

God's history of salvation does not mean history progressively becomes better. God's people still face evil and must look forward to even greater struggles before final salvation comes.

Unless we are slaves to righteousness, we will be slaves to Satan and sin (See Romans 6 v 15-22). Righteousness is also visible witness to those around us that life in God does not avoid the spiritual perils of this world but rather engages them and defeats them.

Paul's metaphor of Christians as soldiers includes only one offensive weapon: the Word of God the Spirit gives to God's people. The Word of God is the Gospel message about Jesus Christ proclaimed by Christians (See Philippians 1 v 14, Colossians 1 v 25 and 1 Thessalonians 2 v 13).

It is called the Spirit's sword for three reasons. 1). The spirit always works to remind Christians about Jesus; 2). The Spirit guides and empowers the church as it proclaims the word of God about Jesus; and 3). The Spirit uses the truth of the Word of God to protect Christians. The message about Jesus is found not only in oral but in written form, that is, as Scripture. Therefore, the Bible is also the word of God and the Sword of the Spirit (2 Timothy chapter 3 v 14-17).

The Spirit guides the Church in its prayers (Romans chapter 8 v 25-27). The church is to continue praying, and the Spirit will assist the church through it all. Paul went from general to specific. He first urged all kinds of prayer for all saints. Then he asked prayer for his special circumstances. He was in prison and needed fearlessness. Intercession should make specific requests which lead to the spread of the gospel.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the Whole Armour of God so that you can take your stand against the Devil's schemes. Paul's words, not mine.

In this country in more recent times, a knight would have not considered riding out to face an opposing army with only half his armour on. So why, so often, do we go down to the high-street shops without the Sword of the Spirit, or the Shield of Faith to ward off the flaming arrows of Satan.

Let me encourage you to “Be Prepared” as we are reminded when we go down to Poole Quay.

Take with you a tract or a Testament that you can put in the hand of a stranger, possibly in trouble that day. Who knows what one of the new B.B.C. invitation cards could lead to in the life of someone too distressed to talk there and then. Given with a caring word and a smile it too could save a life and not just on a temporary basis but on an eternal one.

Transcript of the presentation given by Deacon Rodney Burge and discussed at the church-based, morning home group on Tuesday 25th February 2025. Scripture references are from the ESV and NIV Translations.

