

Let's Get Armored

11-29-09

Ephesians 6:14-17

Former pro football lineman John Nyland

Once said that there were only two types of sports

The easy sports which anyone could play

And the contact sports in which men over 200 pounds took part

Thinking of the imagery Paul uses for the Christian's warfare

It would be appropriate to call Christianity a contact sport

The Christian life is no genteel engagement – it is no exercise class

Christianity is warfare – warfare of the most serious kind

If we are to resist the spiritual and sometimes physical onslaughts of Satan

It is critical for the Christian warrior to wear adequate protection

John Nyland is over 6'5" and weighs more than 300 pounds

I wouldn't want to go up against him wearing steel armor

But we face an even more formidable foe than the largest smartest human

Compared to the power of the demons – mankind is weak

I would rather take John Nyland on without armor

Than take on demons without armor

And we battle against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places every day

And it is not a game – it is not sport

Satan is after our destruction so we must fight to win

You cannot stay out of the battle

Because if you feel you are not in the battle then you have already lost

The battle that takes place every day is Satan and his demonic forces

Against God and the children of God

When you became a child of God

You became a target for satanic activity

God's enemy is now your enemy

Because our struggle is not against flesh and blood

We cannot fight the battle without supernatural weapons

The game of football has specific armor its players wear

But even though they are as protected as they can be

An awful lot of football players still get injured

When we fight against the spiritual forces of wickedness

It is God's battle and it can only be fought by God's power in God's armor

But when we are dressed in God's armor standing in God's power

We will never be injured

Now the devil opposes God's children in many ways

John Macarthur lists ten ways Satan will attack the children of God

First of all just like he did with Adam and Eve

Satan attacks God's character and credibility

Because your greatest strength is to trust God

Satan will want you to distrust God

Let me give you some of his lies

If you don't do what God says He won't love you anymore

God said it but He didn't mean it – today is different

God has said that because He doesn't want you to have any fun

The devil's supreme desire is to cause you to believe that God is untrustworthy or unfair

Satan is the father of lies and he wants you to believe that God is the liar

If you doubt God's love goodness grace and mercy or your salvation

You join Satan in impugning God's truthfulness

If you become anxious depressed and feel hopeless

You join Satan in impugning God's trustworthiness

When troubles arise or bad things happen to good people

When the evil in this world seems completely out of control

The devil will attempt to place the blame on God

We've all heard – how could a loving God let this happen

Second Satan tries to undermine victory

By generating trouble that makes life difficult

His most extreme tactic is persecution

Throughout history believers have had to pay for their faith

They have lost their reputation their jobs their families and even their lives

In this country

The devil's most common persecution of believers is through peer pressure

Fear of rejection and the desire to be accepted by friends

Leads believers to compromise with the world

Every day you face a choice

God's Word or the world's way – what choices are you making

Third Satan attacks believers through doctrinal confusion and falsehood

Christians who lack discernment fall easy prey to wrong ideas about the things of God

The believer who is confused about God's Word is rarely effective in God's work

Fourth Satan attacks believers by hindering their service to God

He opposes every faithful life and every effective ministry

If your ministry is causing others to love God more

You are a target

Fifth Satan attacks believers by causing divisions among them

That is why Jesus prayed so fervently for the unity of believers

Several of Paul's letters include a plea for unity

The enemy knows that God cannot work effectively in a body of believers

Who will not work lovingly with each other

Sixth - Satan attacks believers by persuading them to do the Lord's work out of their own resources

To do God's work in your own power is to not do the Lord's work at all

It is easy to rely on your knowledge of God's Word

Rather than God's Spirit

Your talent instead of God's power

No matter how gifted you are

Regardless of how orthodox your theology is

If you do not rely day by day on God's leading and provision

Living in constant faith and dependent prayer

You are an unprepared soldier of Christ

And you are vulnerable to our spiritual adversaries

Knowing God's Word while not being obedient to His Spirit

Has caused the downfall of many believers

The person who trusts in his own understanding instead of the Lord Himself

Plays into Satan's hands

Seventh Satan attacks believers by leading them into hypocrisy

One of his greatest successes is stocking churches with believers

Who lead disobedient lives - and keep silent about it

A Christian with a continual guilty conscience is a weak Christian

If you are more concerned about your reputation than your inner spirituality

You are doing the devil's work not the Lord's

Eighth Satan attacks believers by leading them into worldliness

He entices us to let the world shape us into its own mold

He does this with materialism self satisfaction self indulgence

And contentedness with the things of the world

1John 2 - Do not love the world, nor the things of the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life is not from the Father

Ninth Satan attacks believers by having them focus on minor things instead of the primary mission

An example might be those who are more concerned with the color of the sanctuary than what happens within it

Or more concerned that the service follows the right order

Than whether it is Spirit led

Tenth in a way this encompasses all the others

Satan leads God's people astray by having them disobey the Word of God

Because God wants you to live faithfully

The enemy encourages you to live unfaithfully

Because God wants you to live morally - the enemy solicits you to sin

Because God wants you to love - the devil tempts you to put yourself first

Now your defense against satanic attacks is not your knowledge of them

You can have all the knowledge in the world and still fall prey to the devil

It is not your knowledge that gives you victory - it is God's provision

Therefore take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm

We do not know where when or how we will be attacked

We do know that we will be attacked

We need to have on all of God's armor all of the time

If you become overly concerned about spiritual warfare

You will see satanic activity in every situation

And it's like I said before

The devil is happy if you don't believe in him

And he is just as happy if all your focus is on him

It is not necessary to know what scheme the devil is working

All you need do is to have your armor on

Paul mentions six pieces of armor

Today we are going to look at the first three

The belt of truth the breastplate of righteousness and the Gospel shoes

And although I mentioned last week that Paul's model was not a soldier

But God Himself

We will of necessity be considering a soldier's use of the armor

The first piece of armor Paul mentions is the belt of truth

Stand firm having girded your loins with truth

The Roman soldier's belt was made of leather

It held his clothing in place and it held his sword

When tightened it gave him a feeling of confidence and strength

The Christian's belt is truth

When blasted by enemy lies

Having truth gives us confidence and strength

And of course a belt surrounds you just as truth is to surround you

Now this is subtle but it is significant

As God prepared the children of Israel to leave Egypt He instituted Passover

His instructions to Moses were

Eat it in this manner, with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste

God wanted them to eat the Passover meal

Ready to walk out the door and head to the promised land

Concerning His second coming

In Luke 12 Jesus tells us to “**be dressed in readiness**”

Which if translated literally would read – have your loins girded

Jesus wants us to be prepared for His return

Peter used the same expression when he wrote – gird up the loins of your minds for action – literal translation

Girding up the loins is a sign of preparedness – of readiness

The soldier who was serious about fighting was sure to secure his belt

The Christian who is serious about his relationship to God

Surrounds himself with truth and is ready

Being prepared with God’s truth is absolutely essential in the battle against demonic forces

Satan will tell you, you are not even saved – truth tells you that you are

Satan will tell you that one little sin won’t hurt you – truth says it will

Satan will tell you that God will never forgive you – truth says He will

For every one of God’s truths Satan has an equivalent lie

No matter what lie Satan gives you – the truth in Jesus contradicts it

Without knowing the truth you are helpless against the devil’s lies

Surround yourself with the truth of Scripture

How does that song go

The voice of truth tells me a different story

I will listen and believe the voice of truth

Being girded with truth is also being renewed in your mind

In order that you may know that which is good and acceptable and perfect

When the mind is renewed in God’s truth there is power for living

I want to finish this section with something obvious
Every one of us here has heard Satan lie to us
Some of us have bought into the lie – some have countered it with truth
The more familiar you are with Scripture – the more truth you know
The more truth you know – the stronger the armor you are wearing
So get into the word and gird your loins with the belt of truth

Surround yourself with truth

And then put on the breastplate of righteousness

In ancient times no soldier would go into battle without his breastplate
It protects the heart and other vital organs from attack
The Jews believed the heart represented the mind and the will
And the bowels were considered the seat of emotions

The mind and the emotions are the two areas

Where Satan most fiercely attacks believers

That is why in Phil 4 – Paul tells us that believing prayer
Will cause the believer's heart and mind to be guarded
The devil has created a world system by which he tempts us
To think wrong thoughts and feel wrong emotions
To counter this world system which so strongly influences us
We need righteousness

And not self righteousness which is just a clever form of sin
God's righteousness is to be wrapped around our whole being
Now God's imputed righteousness saves you from hell
But it does not protect you from this world

To protect your thoughts and emotions you need practical righteousness

Practical righteousness is a life lived in obedience to God's Word

When you live like that you will not give the devil an opportunity
Now don't think that I believe you can achieve righteousness
If you could Christ would not have had to die in your place
But having been declared righteous by God – work it out – live it out

Paul gloried in his imputed righteousness – he wrote

Not having a righteousness of my own, but that which comes through faith in Christ. The righteousness that comes from God.

The only righteousness there is in the world is the righteousness of God

And God has declared those who come to Him in faith as righteous

That is imputed righteousness

God's imputed righteousness and the Holy Spirit's power

Make it possible for you to live a life pleasing to and glorifying God

Imputed righteousness makes practical righteousness possible

If you believe it doesn't matter how you live

For all your sins past present and future are covered by the blood of Jesus

You are an easy target for the enemy

To put on the breastplate of righteousness is to live day by day

In obedience to your heavenly Father

Final thoughts here – failure to live for God will cost you your joy

John's first Letter gives warnings and commands to believers

They are given that **“your joy may be made complete”**

The only joyful Christian is an obedient Christian

In other words – **lack of obedience brings lack of joy**

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband

He had no peace – he lost his joy

That is why he writes in Ps 51 – Restore to me the joy of Your salvation

Unholy living doesn't rob us of our salvation but it robs us of salvation's joy

Then failure to be armed with practical righteousness

Or - Unholy living will cost you your fruitfulness

God cannot use you when you walk the way of the world

If you are disobedient you will be unproductive – end of story

Then unholy living brings loss of reward

Whatever the worldly fleshly Christian does has no eternal value

It will never receive heavenly praise

And when he stands before the judgment seat of Christ

His work will be burned and his reward forfeited

Finally unholy living will bring reproach on God's glory

I think the greatest evil of living disobedient lives

Is its reflection on our Heavenly Father

Paul writes – **The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put of the armor of light. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh**

Putting on the breastplate of righteousness means that you

Live your life in such a way that it exalts Jesus Christ and glorifies God

Put on truth then put on the breastplate of righteousness and then

Shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace

When I grew up I had two pair of shoes –

A leather pair that I wore until I outgrew them

If I wore them out they were resoled

And a pair of gym shoes

Today we have shoes for every type of activity

Our closet floors are littered with shoes worn only once or twice a year

Every sport has its own footwear running shoes walking shoes

Tennis golf football baseball soccer – the list just goes on and on

To compete effectively an athlete must wear the right shoes

Well a soldier's shoes are more important than an athlete's

His very life could depend upon them

And in your warfare against the devil

Your spiritual footwear is just as important as a soldier's

The Greek word translated preparation is also translated as readiness

In Titus Paul uses it when he encourages believers –

To be ready for every good deed

When Paul mentioned footwear I believe he was thinking of Isaiah 52

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news

As many of you know – the Greek word translated “good news” is Gospel

Paul writes in Romans – I am not ashamed of the Gospel

I am not ashamed of the Good News, for it is the power of God for salvation

This could easily be translated

Put on your shoes and be ready to bring the Good News of peace

So what does Paul mean when he writes that we should be ready with the Gospel of peace – the Good News of peace

John MacArthur says it means

To stand firm knowing that you are at peace with God

I thought about that and then I remembered that Nancy Sinatra song

These boots are made for walking - and that's just what they'll do

You put on shoes in preparation of walking

And I believe that Gospel shoes are made for walking

And I have come to that conclusion – not based on Nancy Sinatra

But based on Paul's phrase – put on the shoes and be ready – be prepared

I believe Paul could only mean one thing

Know the Gospel know how to present it

And be ready to take it to others

Paul had just told us a few verses earlier – we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

The Gospel of peace is the incredible truth that

Those who have placed their faith in Christ now have peace with God

And now that you and I have that peace

We can stand in it **When you stand in the Lord's power**

You need not fear the enemy

Our heavenly Father offers you His full resources

To be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might

We who were once God's enemies are now God's children

And our Father offers us His full resources to defeat our only enemy

In his letter to the Romans Paul put it this way

In all these things, we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us

Not with Him – not even because of Him – but through Him

Christ is the power – the resource – the strength - the wisdom of God for us

And God wants each one of us to pass it on

What do you have on today

Some of you are wearing your Sunday best – some are dressed casually

Some are wearing your best shoes – some casual shoes some sport shoes

But what I really mean is

Are you wearing your armor

Do you have on the belt of truth

Are you wearing the breastplate of righteousness

Do you have your Gospel shoes on

Are you wearing your armor

Ten Ways Satan Will Attack The Children Of God

- By John Macarthur

One: Just like Adam and Eve, Satan attacks God's character and credibility

- The devil's supreme desire is to cause you to believe that God is untrustworthy

Two: Satan tries to undermine present victory by generating trouble that makes life difficult

- Fear of rejection and the desire to be accepted by friends leads believers to compromise with the world

Three: Satan attacks believers through doctrinal confusion and falsehood

- The believer who is confused about God's Word is rarely effective in God's work

Four: Satan attacks believers by hindering their service to God

Five: Satan attacks believers by causing divisions among them

Six: Satan attacks believers by persuading them to do the Lord's work out of their own resources

- Knowing God's Word and not obedient to His Spirit has caused the downfall of many believers

Seven: Satan attacks believers by leading them into hypocrisy

- A Christian with a continual guilty conscience is a weak Christian

Eight: Satan attacks believers by leading them into worldliness

Nine: Satan attacks believers by having them focus on minor things instead of the primary mission

Ten: Satan leads God's people astray by having them disobey the Word of God

- Because God wants us to live faithfully, the enemy encourages us to live unfaithfully
- Because God wants us to live morally the enemy solicits us to sin
- Because God wants us to love the devil tempts us to put ourselves first