

Christians in Spiritual Warfare

Course: The Armour of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)

Lesson One

Lesson Title: Put on the complete armour

Text: Ephesians 6:10-11 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.'

Theme: It is essential to put on the complete armour of God.



Details concerning the Roman armour:

1. Scripture puts the armour into two groups.
 - The first group is fixed to the body;
 - the second group is moveable.
2. The fixed pieces are
 - The Belt,
 - The Breastplate and
 - The Shoes.
3. The moveable pieces are
 - The Shield,
 - The Helmet and
 - The Sword.
4. The Roman soldier had more armour than Paul mentioned,
 - *The Pilum* was a long throwing spear.
 - The soldier also had a dagger.
5. The armour Paul mentioned was necessary in close combat fighting with the enemy.
 - We cannot keep our distance in spiritual warfare.
 - We cannot rely on the skill of others

- We must be ready to wrestle against the enemy ourselves.
6. An army fights together, but
- a soldier who cannot use the armour will soon be defeated in the battle.

Introduction: Personal fight - needs all the armour for close combat.

- Put on the 'whole armour'. Paul uses the Greek word '*panoplia*' meaning complete armour. It comes from two Greek words 'pas' meaning 'all' and '*hoplon*' meaning 'weapon'. (literally 'all the weaponry'). It is necessary to put on the whole armour of God. A weak area gives opportunity for the enemy.
- No mention of the javelin or the dagger. We fight as an army but the kind of armour we must have is for close combat fighting. The javelin not mentioned. This is used in long distance fighting. The armour does not mention the dagger, which a Roman soldier had attached to his belt. This was for stabbing deceitfully in the back. The armour of God does not use deceit, craftiness, or cunning. This is carnality.
- In the 1st century, Jewish Zealots called the Sicarii used to fight the Romans by using a dagger to stab in the back in big crowds. They were usually able to flee because of the panic that followed the stabbing. The historian Josephus hated them and considered that their actions were the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- Only weapon of attack that is mentioned is the sword. This needed to be used skilfully.

Introductory Story: The Maori Hauhau warriors

- Not only must the Christian soldier put the armour on, he or she must be certain to wear the right armour. Having faith in the wrong armour will not protect us.
- A soldier is in great danger when not protected against the enemy even if the soldier shows great courage through faith in their own protection.

During the New Zealand Maori Wars of the 1860's, a Maori by the name of Te Ua Haumene claimed that the angel Gabriel had visited him in 1862, and that it had been revealed to him by the angel that bullets could not harm a warrior who shouted the words "Pai Marire, hau, hau!" (or "hapa, hapa!").

Those who followed Te Ua Haumene were known as the Hauhau warriors (1864-65). They believed that God had chosen them as His special people and because of this He had provided a way for them to be supernaturally protected from the enemy.

The Hauhau warriors had great courage and were incredibly daring because they had no fear of the enemy's weapons. But their belief was wrong and despite their sincerity and bravery they were any easy enemy to defeat.

The error of Haumene's teaching was seen on May 14, 1864 when 120 Hau Hau warriors moved without fear towards the enemy guns on Moutoa Island. Within minutes 80 of them lay dead or injured and the rest ran away.

The teaching of Te Ua Haumene deceived the Hauhau warriors because it provided them with a false hope. Their armour was only the words "Pai Marire, hau, hau!" but the words had no power (1 Corinthians 4:20).

We must wear the right armour in order to stand against the attacks of the enemy. If we do not wear the right armour then we can be very sincere in our beliefs but we will still be defeated.

Main Points:

1. The armour of God requires a close relationship with Christ.

Putting on the whole armour (panoply) of God means putting on Christ, Romans 13:14 ‘But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.’

Every piece of armour reveals Christ.

The fixed parts of the armour:

- a) The belt of truth.
 - The doctrine (teaching) of Christ. 2 John 1:9, ‘Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.’
 - The word of Christ, Colossians 3:16, ‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.’
- b) The breastplate of righteousness.
 - The righteousness of Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:21.
- c) The shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace
 - Christ is our peace, Ephesians 2:14.

The believer must stand firm on Christ with the fixed pieces of armour. They must never be taken off.

But then there are the moveable parts of the armour. The believer does not have these on all the time, but he or she must always be ready to use them.

- Taking up Faith as a Shield - The shield protects the soldier from attacks that come from the outside. Nothing can stop the believer who holds the shield of faith, Hebrews 11.
- Taking up Salvation as a Helmet - to cover our minds. The attacks from inside. The helmet protects the believer from attacks that are upon the mind. We must know who we are in Christ.
- Taking up the word of God as a sword. The sword of the Spirit to attack and defend. The sword is taken from the belt. The believer must use the word of God with skill in order to overcome the words of the enemy, Revelation 12:15.

People who are in ministry must be careful to put on Christ

If a person does not keep the armour on then the devil has an opportunity to destroy the persons life and ministry. No armour leads to tragic consequences.

Personal Story: Leader in Church who was building many up in Christ. Appeared to be a strong Christian, with a good Christian wife who was his helper in the ministry, and one teenage daughter.

Suddenly heard from his wife that he had left her to live with a 24 year old woman.

Family destroyed, ministry destroyed, testimony destroyed.

He did not have the armour of God on.

Some who confess to be Christians have never put the armour on.

- They have no armour because they have never received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Paul told the Philippian jailor that he must 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ', Acts 16:31. On the road to Damascus Paul's first question after meeting with Jesus was 'Lord what would you have me to do?' Acts 9:6.
- They have no armour because they have never known conversion and repentance. Conversion means 'to turn around'. Receiving Christ is a 180 degree turn. We cannot put on the armour if we still love the world. There must be repentance. What does repentance mean? Repentance does not mean being sorry; it means having a complete change of thinking. It is a new mind. A person who is born again thinks differently from an unsaved person.
- They have no armour because they are more concerned with the affairs of life than following Christ. It isn't always bad things that separate us from Christ. (Luke 17: 26-33) where Jesus said '...as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.' (Luke 17:26). Jesus didn't mention immorality. 'Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;...' (Luke 17:28). What is wrong with 'eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building'? Nothing, but it is living for these things that is wrong. This is idolatry. Christ must be everything. Love not the world.

2. The armour of God requires watchfulness at all times. Being prepared for the warfare means always keeping the armour on.

Story: Police woman in London who was killed on October 24, 1997. She took off her body armour but when she broke down the door of a flat she was stabbed in the chest. Full time - armour must be on all the time.

- The enemy will strike when we least expect. The time we are at ease is the time of greatest danger. David was led into sin one evening when he arose from bed and walked on the roof of his palace. 2 Samuel 11:2. He was not prepared - the sin happened quickly. The consequences were disastrous.

Story: The danger of not being properly prepared.

The Battle of the Bulge (December 1944) Allies were not ready when the German army tried to break through the allied forces in order to gain a negotiated settlement. The enemy was eventually defeated but the allies suffered 80,000 casualties. Many of these casualties could have been prevented if the allies had been prepared for the attack of the enemy, Amos 6:1. 'Woe to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!'

- Great danger can come through the words of other believers. Matthew 16:22-23 Peter suggested that Jesus should take an easier road than the cross. The Lord recognised the voice of the devil. We must 'prove all things' 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Always check. **Bible Story:** 1 Kings 13. The prophet withheld the anger of the king but he was deceived by a person who said he was also a prophet.

3. The armour of God requires discipleship. The believer to be skilful in using the armour.

- Every believer is called to discipleship. A disciple is a learner. We are learning to be like Jesus. It takes skill to stand against the devil. Look at Jesus when he was tempted. He skilfully handled the scriptures to defeat the devil. Matthew 4:1-11. When the religious leaders came against Jesus to deny the resurrection, He skilfully used the word of God to defeat them. Matthew 22:29-33.
- The devil works with craftiness. It takes skill to defeat him. Those who do not have the armour become an easy prey for the devil. We are to be sober and vigilant in resisting the devil. 1 Peter 5:8 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.'
- Every believer has the power to overcome temptation. God's word says that He will not allow the believer to be tempted beyond that which he or she is able to resist. 1 Corinthians 10:13, 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' We have the armour of God to make us victorious in all things.

4. The armour of God must be put on with courage, Revelation 12:11.

- The battlefield is not a place for those who are weak in heart. People march for peace because they do not want to see their young people being killed. They have no heart for the fight and consider the war not worth the loss of life. It can be the same in the church. When a Christian is active he or she will become a target. Those who have no heart for the fight will turn away from facing difficulties and trials.

When we serve the Lord, we will encounter the enemy. Those who do not preach the Gospel will not face the same conflict. If we do not have a heart for the fight then we will preach a watered down gospel. Paul told Timothy,

'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.' (2 Timothy 4:2)

'Preach the Word'

- When we have a heart for Christian warfare then we can rejoice in trials and persecution. Things may appear to go wrong when we make our stand for Christ. The boldness of Stephen before the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin, caused problems for the whole Church (Acts 7). The church was scattered, Acts 8. But we do not read of anyone complaining. Instead they went everywhere talking about Jesus.
- When we are filled with the Holy Spirit then we will be filled with boldness (Acts 4:31), great joy (Acts 13:52) and with courage (Acts 4:8). The filling of the Spirit is associated with being filled with the word of God, and rejoicing in the Lord, (Ephesians 5:18-20).

Summary:

It is necessary to

1. ...put on the complete armour.

2. ...be ready with the complete armour.
3. ...learn to be skilful in wearing the armour.
4. ...be courageous in order to stand against the enemy.