

SERIES: DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

PART 16C: I AM VICTORIOUS

Good morning, CVCHURCH family. Today we conclude this life-changing and transforming series through the book of Ephesians on who Jesus says you are. So, according to the book of Ephesians and chapter 6:10-20, I want to finish what we began last week on **HOW TO PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD** that He has provided for us, and it is essential to learn to put it on and how to use it so you can fulfill His purpose for you to stand in the middle of the spiritual conflicts you will experience in your life.

So, let's look at **THE WHY AND THE HOW TO PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD**. Would you please follow along as I read Ephesians 6:10-20, “¹⁰**A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ¹¹Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹²For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. ¹⁵For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the**

Word of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. ¹⁹And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. ²⁰I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for Him, as I should.” Ephesians 6:10-20

II. Identify your armor and keep it on at all times

**A. Stand your ground by putting on the belt of truth
“Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth.”**

B. Stand and put on the breastplate of righteousness

Refers to the practical righteousness of a life lived in obedience to God’s Word. It is righteous behavior that is in line with the new self in Ephesians 4:24-27: “Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. ²⁵So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶And ‘don’t sin by letting anger control you.’ Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷for anger gives a foothold to the devil.” No Roman soldier would go into battle without his breastplate—a tough, sleeveless piece of armor that covered his full torso. It was made of leather or heavy linen, onto which were sewn overlapping slices of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body.

The purpose of that piece of armor is obvious—to protect the heart, lungs, intestines, and other vital organs.

To the Jews, the heart represented the mind and the will, and the bowels were considered the seat of emotions and feelings. The mind and the emotions are two key areas where satan and his demon hordes attack the most fiercely. Our culture, which is motivated by satan, tempts us to think wrong thoughts, to have impure motives and to feel negative emotions. He tries to seduce us with wrong thoughts about God, His Word and His Kingdom purposes for our lives. He is motivated to snatch God's Word from our minds and replace it with self-centered and perverse ideas. He seeks to undermine pure living and replace it with immorality, greed, envy, hate, and every other vice. God's protective device against satan's pernicious attacks is the breastplate of righteousness. Righteousness is meant to be wrapped around our whole being just like the ancient soldiers covered themselves with the breastplate of righteousness. Paul is not thinking about self-righteousness or even Christ's righteousness that He applies on our behalf. The breastplate of righteousness Paul is talking about is the righteousness that we put on as spiritual armor against our adversary; it is the practical righteousness of a life lived in obedience to God's word. It is putting on the righteous behavior in line with the "new self" in Ephesians 4:24-27 Paul says takes away the foothold the devil tries to gain in your life. You put on the breastplate of righteousness by living daily, moment-by-moment in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word. God Himself gives us His applied righteousness, but we must put on our practical righteousness. Colossians 3:12-15 practically tells us how to protect our heart from the attack of satan. **"Since God chose you**

to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful."

C. Be prepared by putting on the shoes of peace that comes from the Good News

Ephesians 6:15, **"For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared."** Today, we have shoes for any kind of activity that can be imagined. A soldier's shoes are more important even than an athlete's, because his very life could depend on them. As he marches on rough, hot roads, climbs over jagged rocks, tramples over thorns, and wades through streambeds of jagged stones, his feet need much protection. A soldier whose feet are blistered, cut, or swollen cannot fight well and often is not even able to stand up—a perilous situation in battle. He cannot handle his sword or shield and cannot advance rapidly or even retreat.

The word for "fully prepared" basically means to be ready at all times. In Titus 3:1 he exhorts, **"...be ready for every good deed."** A good pair of boots allows the soldier to be ready to march, climb, fight, or do whatever else is necessary. Jesus Christ demands the same kind of readiness from each one of us who have surrendered

our lives to His Lordship. In this passage, the Good News states that believers are at peace with God. The unsaved person is not at peace with God. They are His antagonists because they refuse to receive the Good News that Jesus gave His life for their sins, and they still think that their own self-righteousness is good enough. The Christian, Paul says in Romans 5:6-11, has been reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ His Son. **“⁶When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷Now most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God’s condemnation. ¹⁰For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. ¹¹So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.”** Romans 5:1 says, **“Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”** The Good News of peace is that freeing peace that in Jesus we are now at peace with God and are one with Him. When your feet, loved ones, have the shoes of God’s peace on so that you are prepared, you can stand in the confidence of God’s love for you, in His union with you and His commitment to fight for you and with you. As you put on God’s armor and you take your stance in Jesus and His peace and power, you do not need to fear any enemy, even satan himself. As Paul writes in Romans 8:31, **“What shall we say about such**

wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us.?” The answer, no one of any consequences. But you must be strong in the Lord and in His power, and you must put on the full armor of God so you can stand against the strategies, tricks and methods satan throws at you. Colossians 1:21-22 says, **“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were His enemies separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions.²² Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.”**

D. Take up the shield of faith

Ephesians 6:16, **“In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.”** In addition, Paul introduces the last three pieces of armor. The first three—the girdle of truth, breastplate and the shoes were for long range preparation and protection and were never taken off on the battlefield. The shield, helmet and sword, on the other hand, were always kept close by in readiness for use when actual fighting began, thus the verbs hold up, put on and take. The Roman soldiers would use several shields, but two were the most common. The first was a small round shield, perhaps two feet in diameter, that was secured to the arm by two leather straps. It was rather light and was used to deflect the blows of their opponent in hand-to-hand combat. The 2nd was the thureos. This is what Paul is referring to. It stood two and half feet wide and four and half feet high. It was designed to protect the soldier’s entire body. The shield was made of a solid piece of wood and was covered with metal or heavily oiled leather.

The spiritual flaming missiles from which we need protection are basically the thousands of temptations that this invisible army uses against us. Temptations to immorality, hatred, envy, anger, covetousness, pride, doubt, fear, despair, distrust, and every other sin. Satan's initial temptation to Adam and Eve, our first human parents, was to entice them to doubt God and instead to put their trust in his lies. That, loved ones, was the first of his flaming missiles, from which all the others have lit their flames. Please hear me, CVCHURCH: every fiery arrow directly or indirectly is the temptation to doubt and distrust God. The purpose of all of Satan's missiles is to cause believers to betray their trust in God, to drive a wedge between their Lord and Savior just like he did Adam and Eve. Satan even tempted God's own Son to distrust and betray Him in the wilderness and in the garden just before His crucifixion. Christ-centered faith will never fail because Jesus cannot fail. When John Paton was translating the Bible for a South Seas island tribe, he discovered that they had no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary's house, flopped himself in a large chair and said, "It's good to rest my whole weight on this chair." "That's it," said Paton. "I'll translate faith as 'resting one's whole weight on God.'" The only way to extinguish Satan's fiery arrows of temptations to doubt God is to believe God, taking up the shield of faith. **"Every word of God is tested;"** the writer of Proverbs tells us. Proverbs 30:5-6 says, **"Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who comes to Him for protection. 'Do not add to His words, or He may rebuke you and expose you as a liar.'"** 1st John 5:4 tells us **"For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith."** Hebrews 11:1-2 says, **"Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it**

gives us assurance about things we cannot see. ²Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation.” The only way you can learn to use your shield of faith effectively is to be a woman and man of God’s Word. Please, I encourage each one of you to use our Bible bookmark and get into God’s word with us every day. If you use the bookmark you will go through the entire Bible once and the N.T. twice. The key to learning how to use your weaponry that God has provided for you is to become intimately acquainted with God’s Word for yourself. Small group leaders, please make sure as you work through these parts of the armor of God, that you have people in your group look up all the Scriptures, I have provided for you. There is so much here, I cannot make it through all of them in service.

E. Put on the helmet of salvation

“Put on salvation as your helmet.” A soldier would never go to battle without their helmet. Some of the helmets were made of thick leather covered with metal plates, and others were of heavy molded or beaten metal. They usually had cheek pieces to protect the face. The purpose of the helmet was to protect the head from injury, particularly from the dangerous broadsword commonly used in the warfare of that day. This was a large two-handed, double-edged sword that measured three to four feet in length. It was often carried by cavalrymen, who would swing at the heads of the enemy soldiers to split their skulls or decapitate them. The fact that the helmet is related to salvation is a sign that satan’s blows are directed at your security and assurance of your salvation in Jesus Christ. MacArthur writes, **“The two dangerous edges of satan’s spiritual broadsword are discouragement and doubt.**

To discourage us he points to our failures, our sins, our unresolved problems, our poor health, or to whatever else seems negative in our lives in order to make us lose confidence in the love, mercy, care and protection of our heavenly Father.” When a coal truck delivered a ton of coal on the sidewalk in front of her house, a little London girl took her small shovel and began carrying the coal into the basement. When a neighbor man who was watching told her, “You’ll never be able to get it all in,” she replied, “Oh, I will sir, if I work long enough.” Hear me, church—the test of a person’s character is what it takes to stop her, to stop him. Some people retreat as soon as the first shot is fired, while others fight through battle after battle with no thought of giving up. Satan will try every means to discourage and deter us, reminding us of defeats and dangers and setting every possible object in our way to destroy our assurance in Christ. God allowed satan to strip Job of every good thing he possessed except his life; that man of God declared, **“God might kill me, but I have hope in Him.”** Job 13:15. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 says, **“But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.”**

F. Take up the sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17b says, **“And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”** The sword which Paul refers to is the machaira, which varied in length from six to eighteen inches. It was the common sword that the foot soldier would use in hand-to-hand combat. They carried it in a sheath or scabbard attached to their belts, it was always at hand and ready for use. It was the

sword carried by the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus in the Garden in Matthew 26:47, it was wielded by Peter when he cut off the ear of the high priest's slave in vs. 51, and it was used by Herod's executioners to put James to death (Acts 12:2). The word for word here is not the usual word logos, but the word rhema, which refers to individual words or particular statements. Paul is not talking about general knowledge of Scripture, but he is emphasizing the precision that comes by knowledge and understanding specific truths. The best example we have is of Jesus when He used specific texts to combat the satanic falsehood from satan in Matthew 4:3-11. Satan tempted Jesus to provide bread from stones, and Jesus took the sword of the Spirit and quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, **"No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"** He shut the mouth of the devil as He stuck the knife into the liar. In vv. 5-7, satan tempted Jesus to commit suicide by quoting scripture from Psalm 91:11-12: **"He will order His angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands, so you won't even hurt your feet on a stone."** What's amazing, church, is Jesus didn't disagree with what satan said but how he interpreted the Scripture. Vs. 7 Jesus responded, **"The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'"** In vs. 8 satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the world and said, **"⁹'I will give it all to You,' he said, 'if you will kneel down and worship me.'"** This is amazing, friends. Jesus created all that He was seeing. Why would He kneel to a created being? In vs. 10 Jesus uses the sword of the Spirit a third time and says, **"¹⁰'Get out of here, satan,' Jesus told him, 'For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.'"** Vs. 11 says, **"Then the devil went away,**

and angels came and took care of Jesus.” This is so awesome. Jesus uses the Scripture both defensively and in an offensive fashion. Loved ones, the Word of God is powerful; it transforms men and women from the realm of error to that of truth, for the realm of darkness to that of light, and from the realm of sin and death to that of righteousness and life. It changes sadness into joy, despair into hope, stagnation into growth, childishness into maturity, and failure into success. Church, as we each learn to put on God’s armor that He has supplied to us, we will find ourselves being more successful in standing against the strategies, wiles and plans of the devil and we will see God’s Kingdom having its effects in our lives, families, our church life and our community and our culture. This is who we are in Jesus Christ. We are victorious together.

Let’s pray.