“Get Dressed and Get Ready!”

Ephesians 6:10-20        February 22, 2015

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Uniform Series: “Clothed and Ready”

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Introduction:

Being caught unawares; is there anything worse? Can we stand against opposition when opposition seems to have all the fighting power? How can we successfully be soldiers in the army of the Lord with no weapons? Are we going to be ready, if and when the occasion arises, to fight? Are we openly prepared to enter this battle?

Know that what you want to accomplish will not easily be handed over to you, and while you are contending for it you will need some backup. There is no mistaken, we are in very serious times. More and more we find ourselves knowingly facing the oppressor of this world. Are we, in ourselves, ready for the challenge? Are we armed and ready for this fight?

The time has come to put up or shut up, so to speak. In serving God, there are going to be times of fighting and contentions and to enter into any fight, one needs weapons. God has made provisions that we should have everything we need to fight; and win.

Adversity will raise its head to fight. What do we have in store to counteract the attack?
Today’s lesson takes a look at Ephesians 6:10-20, a very familiar portion of Scripture. Here, the Apostle Paul tells of what we can expect to be contending with and then he releases valuable information of all the powerful weapons we can adorn ourselves with in order to have a victorious outcome.

Note: Don’t let the familiarity of these verses cause you to pass by on a great learning opportunity to gain more insight to this fight we are in. The power of these verses goes beyond declaring a battle cry during a joy night service. In this lesson are powerful truths that are to be applied in our lives and the spiritual battles we face.

Learning how to stand in and fight for our faith is a part of worship; it is a way of life that is to govern our daily Christian walk.

**Ephesians 6:10-12**

10) “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12) For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Zechariah 4:6 tells us, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts.” With the many resources afforded to us in our modern day world it is easy to get caught up with the attitude of self-sufficiency. The Bible tells us, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God,” (2 Cor. 3:5, KJV).

In a poem titled “Relying on God” that I wrote it says:

“*Not by my own strength,*

*It’s failing, it’s fleeting.*
Relying on myself,
My life takes a beating.

It’s against the wind I fight,
Expending all my fleshly might.
It’s only by His Spirit I can win,
Supplied by God, the power within.

Many are searching
For the prosperous way,
Forcing themselves
With striving each day.

The plans of man
Are but weak and futile,
Relying on God will carry you
To the very last mile” (©Word For Life Says/Relying on God)

Right off the bat, in dealing with this portion of Scripture, Paul wanted the church at Ephesus to know that God is not looking for them to do this Christian life or any Christian battle in their own strength. They are to be dependent upon Him and the “power of his might.”
With that Paul encourages his readers to “put on the whole armour of God.” We spend so much time speaking of the armour itself (and we will address each of the pieces later in this lesson) that we forget about the word “whole.”

“Whole” speaks of completeness; not lacking in anything of what is needed. My mother, when we were growing up, used to always get on us about doing a half-way job. In this Christian life and dealing with the strivings of this Christian journey we cannot be “half-way” Christians for that leaves areas of exposure for the enemy to prod his way into our circumstances.

God has supplied a complete outfit for our defense and the ability fight for our faith. Nothing was left unprotected. To be successful in our campaigns we are to be garbed in all the Christian armament that He supplies.

It is only by being fully dressed; fully prepared that we will be able to “to stand against the wiles of the devil.” God has plans for your life (Jeremiah 29:11). The devil’s main goal is to interrupt what God is trying to do; to try to stop you from reaching any positive future here and for eternity to come that He has stored up for you.

1 Peter 5:8 admonishes us, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” The word vigilant screams at us to be on guard!

Be on guard because the enemy is crafty; he has many tricks up his sleeve. Paul warned the Corinthian church, “I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ,” (2 Corinthians 11:3). “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy . . .” (John 10:10a); and he does so by working his “wiles.”

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” One of the most effective tricks the enemy uses against the people of God is to divert their attention from his trickery and cause them to focus on each other; “against flesh and blood.” This will effectively bring
contentions and disunity where there is supposed to be peace and a spirit of brotherhood.

The only way to stop a thief is to proactively protect what is rightfully yours. Sometimes we think of how much better my life would be if it weren’t for these things, people and circumstances. A lot of the time that part is not going to change but how we respond to each makes all the difference in the world. Be on guard to recognize which is which.

Those things, people and circumstances are often the tools he uses to steal from us. How diligent are we to stand against the evil influences behind the scene and not the people who are poised in front? Paul lets us know that our fight is not with each other.

Yes, they may hurt you, hate you, talk about you, criticize you and yes, even despitefully use you. While those things may hurt us and bother us on a daily basis, there is a more important struggle pressing before us; those forces of evil which threaten our very being and our faith. The behind the scene predators: the “principalities . . . powers . . . the rulers of the darkness of this world . . . spiritual wickedness in high places.” These have planned attacks and have meticulously plotted to rip away our very portion of the greater prize and reward in God.

Ephesians 6:13-18

13) “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16) Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

Knowing where our true source of contentions lie, Paul once again admonishes the church to “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” When properly dressed and ready; when properly prepared and protected, God’s people will be able to “to stand” even in the “evil day.”

We are in the midst of a very really spiritual warfare. It’s nothing to be taken lightly. Where are our weapons? What do we have to fight with? In the following verses Paul begins to list and lay out all the pieces of the armor of God that we will ever need.

In order to be proficient in this fight against sin and this whole army of enemies we have to “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”

What weapon that is formed against us can penetrate the defenses of “truth” and “righteousness?” Can any snare that an enemy has set for you be effective when Jesus said, “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,” (John 8:32)? Deception is one of the most powerful weapons the enemy employs against God’s people. It has worked from the time of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) causing people to lose out on the paradise that God offers.

Therefore, the first line of protection is “truth.” “Truth” encompasses so much of our Christian walk. It tells us who we are in Christ, it guides us on the right path to walk if we will but follow it and it guards against the lies of the enemy. This belt of “truth” supports our lives and support all the other pieces of armament we are afforded. Perhaps this is why Proverbs encourages us, “Buy the truth, and sell it not . . .” (23:23). “Truth” will hold you up if you hold on to it! Don’t let it go and don’t try to fight without it!
Then, Paul tells us to have a “breastplate of righteousness.” The breastplate guards the heart in battle while “righteousness” should govern the heart for life. “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law . . .” (Isaiah 51:7). Righteousness is a heart thing.

This right way of living is an inner commitment to have God and His ways as a priority in all that we do. Only a heart that is truly devoted to God; a heart that encourages one to be shielded in His holiness will lead you down the path to receive God’s blessings. Anything not in his will, will lead to destruction, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness . . .” (1 Timothy 6:11).

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” As odd as it may sound, make sure your feet are covered and prepared as well. People tend to think of the feet as really being insignificant in battle (beside the basic fact of needing them for walking). All other care for them seems to be obsolete.

Not true. If an enemy attacks you and takes your feet out from under you then he takes away your established standing, causing you to lose your footing in the battle. The Roman soldiers had something similar to spikes on the bottoms of their sandals to keep their footing sure and secure. As part of our armament we are to adorn the readiness of the “gospel of peace” that will keep us founded in His truth and confident as we march forward.

“The gospel of peace” is the Good News. When you are suited with the gospel of peace, covering your standing is the defense of everything that Jesus Christ has come to live, die and now reign for. Keeping your feet grounded in this truth will help the Christian to avoid all those slippery, hidden devices that the enemy throws at you to try to keep you from progressing toward your long awaited victory.

With that readiness of protection is also the readiness to carry the message forth, even during times of battle. Isaiah 52:7 says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that
bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

No matter how you see: keeping your feet covered with the gospel of peace can be for protection and mission purposes. For protection it serves to keep us in our foundation of faith when the fighting starts. For mission it gives us purpose, that even during the fight, we carry forth the message of all that Jesus has done. The gospel is part of your equipment, but it also serves as your marching orders as well. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” (Mark 16:15).

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” “Above all;” most importantly - the most vital thing over top of everything else Paul says, “I want you to grab hold of your shield of faith.” Mount it up on your arm and make sure the fit is proper (we don’t want it slipping when you need it the most) so that you will be capable of going out into action. You will be capable of blocking attacks of the enemy.

Everything that the enemy can even imagine to attack you with can be blocked by the “shield of faith.” Why? When you are under the protection of faith you are not relying on the strength or wisdom from any man. You are dependent upon the power of God (see 1 Corinthians 2:5). With that being said, who can possible come against the power of God and succeed?

With my shield mounted I am going to step boldly on the battlefield, knowing with God on my side, “There shall not man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon . . .” (Deuteronomy 11:25).

I am under the shield of faith. I am believing and hoping in the power of God during this fight. What dart can penetrate this shield? With assurance resting on my side I’m going to continue forth in battle; moving forward and not backward. I am going to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12); I have a destination of eternal life to march forward to. I am going to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” (Philippians 3:14).
With my shield of faith I have the power, through Christ, to quench and put out every one of those attacks by adversaries and deflect their advancement. Just as Jesus told the Centurion, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee,” (Matthew 8:13). The same still applies today. Believe it; have faith and it shall be “done unto thee.”

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Along with all the other equipment, Paul said I want you to make sure you have something to cover your head: “the helmet of salvation.”

This is the only helmet whose materials are not fashioned by the hands of man. This helmet was made by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ; the one who came to die for our sins. For without this helmet we will lose our spiritual battle. “For there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” (Acts 4:12).

It is only through the redemption that Jesus Christ has secured; through His name that sins can be removed. Make sure you are covered. Make sure you are under the saving grace of Jesus Christ before you even attempt to step out onto the battlefield.

Let the salvation that Christ secured for you guard your mind for this is where the real battle is fought. If you are saved then you belong to God and that’s a truth check that you can take to the bank! Here are some verses to help you that you are now His (emphasis mine):

- “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God,” (Romans 5:1-2).
- “But we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,” (Romans 5:11).
- “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” (Romans 8:1).
• “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,” (Galatians 2:20).

• “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,” (Ephesians 1:7; also see Colossians 1:14).

And, I could really go on and on.

“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” All the armor discussed so far was given for our protection. They will be there to help you walk through your troubled times. But, now that you are well protected, there is one final weapon given that will allow you to effectively fight back: “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” This is the same weapon Jesus used when countering the attack of the enemy (see Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

The Bible tells us, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” (Hebrews 4:12).

God’s Word is here to be put into action for you from the minute you open it up. Wrapped in such a small package of 66 books it stands as the only weapon that will effectively penetrate all the forces of darkness.

Everything you need to help keep you strong in the battle is found in the Word of God. Take up the Word of God in your heart and use it to fight. God’s Word is a daily message to our heart that we don’t grow faint during the battle. His Word is our assurance for the future. In His Word we can find all the promises laid up for those who continue to fight on the right side of this battle.

It doesn’t matter what anybody else says, WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD SAY?

• Depressed/broken heart? – “He healeth the broken heart, and bindeth up their wounds,” (Psalm 174:3).
• Bound in troubles? – “The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him,” (Nahum 1:7).
• Heavy laden with financial burdens? – “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it,” (Proverbs 10:22).
• Lonely and seeking comfort when it seems none can be found? – Jesus said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you,” (John 14:18).

That’s just a small portion of how the Word of God can fight for you. If you will just walk in His Word and carry it in your heart, it will fight for you. Can you take Him at His Word?

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” We have dealt with the subject of prayer extensively in previous lessons and I won’t spend a lot of time here. But note this, we are to be a people of prayer. It is written over and over again in the Bible and it is consistently taught throughout. We cannot be strong warriors without a strong prayer life. We are called to pray “always . . . in the Spirit.”

We are instructed that our prayers are not just for us; rather, “for all saints.” Brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to continually lift one another up in prayer. If we don’t, who will? We are all trying to reach the same eternal destination and we need the power of one another praying us through.

Prayer is powerful! Prayer is authoritative! And, prayer works!

Ephesians 6:19-20

19) “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.

20) For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”
Paul, chained in prison, admitted his need for prayer also. While you are praying for the saints he said, “And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.”

As an “ambassador” who was not free; rather, he abode in “bonds,” he needed to still be able to speak freely and “boldly” for He whom he represents. There are many causes for when one is in “bonds” to keep the mouth shut; yet, Paul wanted his voice and His message to still be heard.

This was a request for those in Acts who also wanted to remain faithful to the message that needed to be preached. They prayed, “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,” (Acts 4:29).

If anything, during the battle the message of God’s saving grace still has to go forth unhindered. Sometimes, the ground on which we walk will not be favorable; rather, contentious. Lord, grant us boldness to keep the truth of your message going.

**Conclusion:**

Are you dressed and ready?