

Christian Warfare

Lesson 11: The Armor of God, Part 3

- I. The Belt of Truth, Eph 6.14. Here the apostle tells us that we're to be armed against Satan's lies by a strict and faithful adherence to the *truth*. How well we do this, will make us strong or weak Christians, Eph 4.11-16. Paul's charge, then, is that we fasten the *truth of doctrine* to the mind, Rom 12.2, and the *truth of sincerity* to the heart, 1Pet 1.13-15.
 - A. The faith we profess and live by must be grounded upon the truth of God's holy Word, Acts 17.11-12. This is necessary to defend ourselves against false teachers and false teaching, because Satan comes as a *serpent* to deceive, 1Jn 4.1-6. —See DeYoung's Foreword to Butterfield's *Five Lies*.
 - B. We must hold the true faith truly, with upright and sincere hearts. This is necessary to defend against threats of persecution because Satan comes as a *lion* to devour, 1Pet 5.8-9.
- II. We must be armed in our spiritual warfare against Satan by a *sincere and true heart before God*, Josh 24.14; 2Cor 2.17; Heb 10.22.
 - A. What is truth of sincerity or truth of heart?
 1. It's the opposite of hypocrisy. It's when the inward frame of the heart agrees with the profession and behaviour of the outward man, 2Cor 1.12; 2.17; cp. Gal 4.17.
 - B. Why is sincerity compared to a soldier's belt?
 1. The belt covers the joints in the armor where the covering for the lower parts of the body is joined to the covering for the upper parts. There are unavoidable gaps at these joints that make a man vulnerable. The belt covers these weak spots for a man's protection.
 - a) Likewise, as there are unavoidable infirmities and defects in a Christian's graces (Gal 5.17; Rom 7.21), sincerity covers them so that though all his works are imperfect yet because they're done in the truth of sincerity, God is pleased with them.
 2. The belt gives strength to the soldier by acting in much the same way as a weightlifter's belt. By protecting your lower back muscles and giving your abs a wall to safely push against, you can safely reach for the stars in your powerlifting.
 - a) Likewise, sincerity gives strength to your graces. Gurnall, "It's the strength of every grace." *Hypocrisy* in any grace weakens it because a false heart will only do and suffer so much before the pain outweighs the gain. But *sincerity* in any grace strengthens it because there's a heart behind the exercise of it that's true, sincere, and "all-in".
 - C. There is a moral sincerity that's found in the hearts of unbelievers, which pleases men. But this is not the true sincerity that pleases God. It doesn't grow from a renewed heart and it falls short of the chief end indispensably necessary to make sincerity pleasing to God, namely, that it aims at the glory of God, cf. Gen 20.6; 2Sam 12.26-29; 1Cor 10.31; Col 3.22-23.
 1. Just as the praise of Naaman in 2Kgs 5.1 is abruptly marred by the final words, "but he was a leper," so all moral men are marred by their sinful estate. Whatever praise may be given to their good deeds, honesty, and sincerity, it's all abruptly marred by God's final words about such a man, namely, "but he's a Christless man," 1Sam 16.7.
 - D. The sincerity which pleases God is not that morality seen among men but is that godly sincerity which is the gift of Christ and the fruit of faith, 2Cor 1.12.
 1. Godly sincerity pleases God because it's *of God*. He gives it to us as part of the new creation which His Spirit works in our hearts, Ezk 36.25-27; 2Cor 5.17.
 2. Godly sincerity pleases God because it aims at God and ends in God, Ps 51.6; Acts 13.22; 1Sam 13.14; Col 3.22-23.
- III. How does the grace of sincerity cover a believer's imperfections?
 - A. Not in this way:

1. It doesn't take away our sin nature. Believer's sins are still sins in the sight of God, 2Sam 11.27. A weed will be a weed still, no matter what garden it grows in.
2. It doesn't give any allowance for our sins. God still forbids us to sin, 1Jn 2.1.
3. It doesn't so cover them that God doesn't see them, Ps 139.23-24.
4. It doesn't so cover them that we don't need to confess them, be humbled for them, or have them forgiven, Job 42.6.

B. But in this way:

1. Sincerity covers a believer's imperfections in that it's the grace to which God's forgiveness is attached, Ps 32.1-2. A sincere confession and repentance before God will bring down showers of mercy but a hypocritical and false heart will find the door of mercy shut.
2. Sincerity covers a believer's imperfections in that God approves of the sincere soul as a holy and righteous person, despite the sins that cling to him, 2Pet 2.7. In fact, notice how the grace of sincerity impacts God's view of us and our view of ourselves:
 - a) God knew that Job's sins were attended with sincerity and therefore judged him to be blameless, Job 1.8; 42.7.
 - b) But as Job saw that his sincerity was attended with many sad sins, he confessed his sins with shame and gloried in God's mercy and grace, Job 42.5-6; cf. 2Cor 1.12; Lk 15.17-19 compared with Lk 15.22-24.
 - c) Notice then how sincerity of heart made all the difference before God between Asa and Amaziah, 1Kgs 15.14; 2Chr 25.1-4; 2Kgs 14.3; cf. Jer 3.10. Sincerity is the life of all our graces and puts life into all our duties.
3. Sincerity covers a believer's imperfections in that it keeps open the soul's way to the throne of grace so that none of his sins bar his welcome with God, Ps 66.18; Heb 10.19-22.
 - a) We can't go to God in prayer without sin, Rom 7.18; Gal 5.17, but by the grace of sincerity, we can go to God without a love for any known sin, without hiding any known sin, and instead with a true desire to walk in all His ways, Ps 119.4-8; 37.4; Js 5.17. Gurnall, "A weak hand with a sincere heart is able to turn the key in prayer."
4. Sincerity will steel a believer against Satan's threats and persecutions because a heart true to the Lord won't be put off by threat of danger or harm, 1Pet 5.8-9; Ruth 1.15-18; Esth 4.12-16.

IV. How to be armed in your spiritual warfare against Satan by fastening on *a sincere and true heart before God*.

- A. Walk in the view of God, Job 31.1-4; Gen 39.9; 17.1; Heb 11.27. Walk in the view of God's omniscience, Ps 119.168; Heb 4.13. Walk in the view of God's providence and care over you, 2Chr 16.9; Ps 121.4.
- B. Do all things out of a love for God and not out of fear, Jn 14.15.
- C. Think much of God's sincere, whole-hearted love toward you, Jer 32.40-41; Dt 32.3-4.