

Message: Christ, Our Sufficient Provision for Spiritual Warfare, Part 6

Text: Ephesians 6:10-17

Introduction

A. We are in a life-long battle with the devil, with the world under his power, and with the sin which so easily entangles us, the sin with which he tempts us. Just as our own country has become war weary, so the church can easily become war weary. Left on our own, the devil would dominate and destroy us.

1 Peter 5:8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

B. But those who have been born again by God's indwelling Holy Spirit unto a sincere faith in God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, have a Savior who provides us 24/7 with His protection. What He gives us by His Spirit for our preservation is His very own likeness, the moral character qualities of Jesus, which protect us like armor protects a warrior in battle, and enable us to triumph by His power over our adversary.

C. To date we have looked a several Christlike virtues which protect us like armor, ...

1. 6:14a truth - truthfulness, sincerity, wholeheartedness
2. 6:14b righteousness - moral goodness, uprightness
3. 6:15 peace - peaceableness, peacemaking
4. 6:16 faith - a wholehearted entrustment of our lives to all that Christ is.

D. These are all virtues of Christ that the Lord commands us to put on by His Spirit's grace, that we not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). Today we focus on the command of 6:17a ... by which Christ enables His church to keep fighting and not grow weary, lose heart, give up.

Ephesians 6:17 And take/receive THE HELMET OF SALVATION ...

E. Outline

1. What is the helmet of salvation?
2. Why is it necessary in our war against the devil?
3. How do we take/receive it?

I. 6:17a What is the helmet of salvation?

A. By its sound it would seem like an easy question for Christians to answer. But giving it some thought, we might appreciate why several commentators are either vague or miss the point when defining this.

1. Paul is not calling unbelievers to be converted, to be saved (though we could appeal to unbelievers using this verse), but commanding those who have been saved, justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to put on the helmet of salvation.

Ephesians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

Ephesians 2:4 **But God**, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith;** and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

2. Further evidence that this is not a call to conversion is the fact that this is God's armor, something the Lord Himself puts on.

Ephesians 6:11 **Put on the full armor of God**, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ...¹⁷ And **take THE HELMET OF SALVATION**....

- B. In Isaiah 59:17 when the Lord put on salvation like a helmet, He resolved to intercede/work/fight for the defeat of His and His people's enemies, bringing salvation to His people who were helpless before the power of evil. And He resolved to fight until the war is won, until He brings complete victory to Himself, the defeat of His enemies and deliverance, salvation for His people. He will not become disheartened, dispirited, war weary, and quit.

Isaiah 59:16 And He saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede; Then **His own arm brought salvation to Him**, and His righteousness upheld Him.¹⁷ **He put on** righteousness like a breastplate, and **a helmet of salvation on His head**; And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.¹⁸ According to their deeds, so He will repay, **wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies**; To the coastlands He will make recompense.

Isaiah 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; **He will bring forth justice to the nations**. ...⁴ **He will not be disheartened or crushed until He has established justice in the earth**; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

- C. So when Christians, those who have been saved by grace through faith in Christ, are commanded to be strong in the Lord, to put on His salvation like an armored helmet, Christ is telling us not to grow weary and lose heart, but to press on in the fight until the war is won, until Jesus returns and completes His victory of Satan, sin, and the last enemy - death.

1. God's Word teaches us that our salvation is past, present, and future. Notice the references to our past and present salvation:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you **have been saved** through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who **are being saved** it is the power of God.

Ephesians 1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with **the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession,** to the praise of His glory.

2. Notice that when Paul speaks about putting on the armor of Christ, he refers to our hope in future salvation when Christ returns to bring an end to the war.

Romans 13:11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; **for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.**¹² The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and **put on the armor of light.**¹³ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.¹⁴ But **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and **as a helmet, the hope of salvation.** 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for **obtaining salvation** through our Lord Jesus Christ,

3. Notice how Paul tells Timothy to persevere, to fight on to ensure both the salvation of him and those who hear him (the church in Ephesus which he is pastoring). I.e., put on the helmet of salvation and keep fighting until the war is won, until the church receives from her returning Lord her final salvation in His eternal glory.

1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.¹⁴ **Do not neglect** the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.¹⁵ **Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them**, so that your progress will be evident to all.¹⁶ Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; **persevere in these things**, for as you do this **you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you**.

1 Timothy 6:12 **Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called**, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 Timothy 2:10 For this reason **I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation** which is in Christ Jesus *and* **with it eternal glory**.

II. Why is the helmet of salvation necessary in our war against the devil?

A. Because without it we will grow faint, weary, fearful, disheartened, impatient, bitter, discouraged, and give up. Notice how Paul said if it were not for the hope of future salvation - the resurrection at Christ's return, the defeat of the last enemy - death, there would be no point in his fighting on.

1 Corinthians 15:30 **Why are we also in danger every hour?**³¹ I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**.³² If from human motives **I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE**.

B. If we only look at the everyday battles in front of our eyes, and don't lift up our eyes to the end of the war, to the final triumph Christ is resolved and righteous and ready to bring about, we will lose heart, grow war weary, tired, disillusioned, and quit - quit following Jesus as Lord, quit serving the welfare of His church, quit being His witness to the world.

1. Jeremiah was tired of continually fighting the evil in Israel. The Lord told him it would get worse. He needed to put on the helmet of salvation in order to persevere.

a. Jeremiah's perplexity, complaint - "How long?"

Jeremiah 12:1 Righteous are You, O LORD, that I would plead my case with You; Indeed I would discuss matters of justice with You: **Why has the way of the wicked prospered? Why are all those who deal in treachery at ease?**² You have planted them, they have also taken root; They grow, they have even produced fruit. You are near to their lips but far from their mind.³ But You know me, O LORD; You see me; and You examine my heart's attitude toward You. Drag them off like sheep for the slaughter and set them apart for a day of carnage!⁴ **How long is the land to mourn** and the vegetation of the countryside to wither? For the wickedness of those who dwell in it, animals and birds have been snatched away, because men have said, "He will not see our latter ending."

b. God's response - your situation will get worse. If you are worn out running with the footmen, how will you run with the horses?

Jeremiah 12:5 **"If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with horses?** If you fall down in a land of peace, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?⁶ "For even your brothers and the household of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you, Even they have cried aloud after you. Do not believe them, although they may say nice things to you."⁷ "I have forsaken My house, I have abandoned My inheritance; I have given the beloved of My soul Into the hand of her enemies."

c. God gave Jeremiah a promise of future salvation.

Jeremiah 33:14 'Behold, **days are coming**,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah.¹⁵ **In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth**.¹⁶ 'In those days **Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety**; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.'

d. So Jeremiah could put on the helmet of salvation and wait for the Lord's deliverance. After the destruction of Jerusalem's temple and city by the Babylonians, Jeremiah wrote:

Lamentations 3:21 This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.²² The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.²³ *They* are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.²⁴ "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."²⁵ The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.²⁶ **It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the LORD.**

2. It is because in the weakness of our flesh we are susceptible to losing heart and growing weary and giving up, that the Lord continually commands us through His Word ...

Galatians 6:9 **Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.**

2 Thessalonians 3:13 But as for you, brethren, **do not grow weary of doing good.**

III. How do we take/receive and put on God's helmet of salvation?

A. We fix our eyes on Jesus, the object of our faith and hope.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,² fixing our eyes on Jesus,** the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross,** despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

B. We pray that God will enlighten the eyes of our hearts so that we will know the hope of our salvation.

Ephesians 1:18 **I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling,** what are **the riches of the glory** of His inheritance in the saints,

Ephesians 3:13 Therefore **I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.**¹⁴ For this reason **I bow my knees before the Father,** ... that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;

C. We fix our hope completely on our final salvation at Christ's triumphal return.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober *in spirit*, **fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

D. We follow Christ in fighting evil with His weapons of righteousness, but wait for the Lord to bring us the victory over Satan, sin, and death. In doing so, we put on His helmet of salvation.

Psalms 37:34 **Wait for the LORD and keep His way,** and He will exalt you to inherit the land/earth; **When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.**

Isaiah 25:6 The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.⁷ And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations.⁸ **He will swallow up death for all time,** and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.⁹ And it will be said in that day, "Behold, **this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited;** Let us rejoice and be glad in **His salvation.**"

Conclusion

- A. In December 1941, 9 hours after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, they bombed a strategic airfield in the Philippines, and then began invading the island nation. General Douglas MacArthur was ordered by President Roosevelt to escape the island to Australia and leave the American and Filipino troops under his command behind, but made a promise which gave resistance forces hope, "I shall return." While masses of troops eventually surrendered to the overwhelming Japanese forces, some American soldiers escaped to the hills to join with Philippine resistance fighters. I read the transcript of an interview of 2 American and 1 Filipino resistance fighters who persevered under long and harsh conditions because they believed MacArthur and maintained their hope that he would return and save them.

Interviewer: Did you think MacArthur was coming back?

Ingles: That was our only hope during the time.

Interviewer: What was your only hope?

Ingles: That the Americans are coming back, as promised by MacArthur.

Ramsey: We were in a constant state of hoping. We were receiving what information we had by submarine, mostly. And the intelligence units that were being sent in from MacArthur, with radios and so on, were coming up by submarine. ... As soon as we got our radios, this was like a life line, we know that then, it was only a matter of a relatively short time before they would come back in. And, this was a godsend as far as morale was concerned. They also sent in with us chocolate bars, and on the outside was the American and Filipino flags crossed, and it says, "I shall return - MacArthur." And that was the greatest boon to morale

Interviewer: Did you have a sense that MacArthur was going to come back?

Beck: Oh, we always thought so. It was only a question of time. We knew that we would overwhelm the Japanese some day. I didn't think it was going to ever take that long, but I never lost hope. If I had, I'd probably surrendered, like all the rest of them.

- B. We are in a life-long battle with the devil, with the world under his power, and with the sin which so easily entangles us, the sin with which he tempts us. Just as our own country has become war weary, so the church can easily become war weary. But Christ, a far greater warrior than Douglas MacArthur, has promised to return and bring a greater salvation to all His elect in all the nations of the earth. So do not grow weary, but put on Christ's helmet of salvation and fight on in the certain hope of His return.

Matthew 24:29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.³⁰ "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see **the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory**.³¹ "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.