

The Armour of God Waist girded with truth

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

The Armour of God worn in victory

Today, we start a new series of talks on The Armour of God. Our subject is "The waist girded with truth." Paul describes The Armour of God in the final chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians 6:10-20. Before instructing Christians to put on the Armour of God and detailing its components, he writes in verse 10,

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Paul makes it perfectly clear from the outset that our strength and power to live for our Saviour have their source in Him. It has been said that "Great armies require great generals." Jesus is the captain of our salvation (Hebrews 2:10), the great victor and the conqueror of sin and death. Paul assures us of the security we have through the power of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord in Romans 8:37-39):

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The apostle establishes that we are already victorious in Christ. This victory is fully entered when we go into Christ's presence through death and completely experienced when we are transformed at His coming, as described in 1 Corinthians 15:50-54, Philippians 4:20-21 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18. But until the Day of Christ, whilst we remain on earth, we are in a spiritual war for which we need spiritual armour, the armour of God (Ephesians 6:11-13):

Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The battle we are in

Paul explains "the armour of God" provides essential protection for the spiritual war between light and darkness. He impresses on us the need for this armour before outlining the conflict we face. This conflict is a battle against spiritual forces, not against "flesh and blood." These invisible forces are described as principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of

wickedness in the heavenly places. It is important to consider these forces, understand their aims and strategies, and recognise the battle we are in. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 the description of principalities and powers applies to both the hierarchy of holy, heavenly angelic beings in the perpetual service of God and to fallen angels under the leadership of Satan, who is described as “the god of this world” whereas today’s passage gives us only their evil aspect. In Ephesians 3:10, the emphasis is on holy angels.

The manifold wisdom of God [being] made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

But then in Romans 8:38-39, “angels, principalities and powers” is a reference to unholy angelic beings opposing the manifestation of the love of God in Christ.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Christ’s victory over such powers is explained in Colossians 2:15

Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Our risen and glorified Saviour’s complete supremacy over all angelic beings is made clear In Ephesians 1:20-21,

He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

And in Colossians 2:10

You are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

The judgment of “fallen” angels is described in Jude 6,

[And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.](#)

The complete victory of Christ’s life, death, resurrection and ascension as the glorious Man into heaven is repeatedly presented in the Scriptures. But the outcomes of this victory have yet to be displayed universally. Until that happens, the battle between light and darkness still rages, and we bear testimony to Christ’s victory by honouring Him in our lives through faith as living sacrifices. We follow in His steps and seek to reflect His character and fruitfulness in an embattled world. For this battle, we need the armour of God.

Paul knew the battle he was in and was used to fighting on the front line and at close quarters. He knew the importance of putting on “the whole armour of God.” He describes each piece of this armour and presents it as one unified defence. The armour’s purpose is to enable us to “withstand” and “stand” victorious in battle. Paul vividly depicts a soldier facing a dangerous enemy without thought of retreat; the armour is front-facing.

The enemy is not straightforward but uses schemes of deceit. In Revelation 12:9, Satan is called the one “who deceives the whole world.” Paul had already warned the Ephesian Christians of “deceitful schemes” which took the form of false teaching (Ephesians 4:14, ESV). There is order and planning to the work of Satan and his spiritual forces. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul reminded his readers that they “once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” Their enemy was known to them. They had been under his control, and so had Paul himself, but now they were equipped to stand against him.

Wearing the Armour of God and its purpose

The apostle’s phrases “put on” and “take up” are metaphors urging us to make God’s spiritual resources our own, equipping ourselves personally. By wearing the armour of God, we can stand firm and resist in times of trial and temptation. The act of “standing” symbolises bearing witness and remaining steadfast, particularly in periods of intense challenge. To “withstand” means to actively resist evil when it confronts us, pushing it back. The example of Shammah, in the Old Testament, who defended a field and achieved victory, illustrates this stance: holding ground and relying on God to bring “a great victory” (2 Samuel 23:12).

We are called to stand firm. Today, the Christian faith’s rich legacies are under assault, and God’s patterns for human well-being are being rejected and abandoned. Yet we are not to be discouraged:

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Our life is hidden with Christ in God. We have eternal life and are held securely by the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit indwelling our hearts. God’s Word sustains and guides us. In Ephesians, Paul first outlines God’s will, work, and wisdom, then describes the Christian’s walk, witness, and warfare. God has made us worshippers, workers, and warriors to stand and testify to Him in our generation. We fight in a war Christ has already won and await the day His victory is universally revealed (Philippians 2:9-11).

Girding

Paul was used to Roman soldiers. They often guarded him and protected him more than once when His life was in danger (Acts 27:42-43). So, he knew their armour well, and he skilfully uses the different pieces of this armour to portray the features of God’s spiritual armour. He begins:

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth (Ephesians 6:14).

The English Standard Version translates the first part of verse 14,

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth.

The first mention of a belt in the Bible is in Exodus 12:11, in connection with the Passover.

And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover.

The Children of Israel were to eat the Passover in a state of readiness to travel. The belt characterises this readiness. I wear a belt every day. I never think too much about this ancient piece of clothing, but I would not feel dressed without it around my waist. I understand that when we are standing, our centre of gravity is in front of the sacrum bone, just below the waist. We naturally support ourselves just above this area. The first mention in the Bible of being girded is in

Exodus 29:5, when Moses places the garments of the High Priest on Aaron, his brother. We read about Aaron having an “intricately woven band of the ephod.” This beautifully woven sash demonstrated that the High Priest was equipped for the service of God. Aaron’s sons are also described as being girded with sashes (Leviticus 8:13). These sashes were a feature of priestly service, whether in entering into God’s presence on behalf of the people or coming out of God’s presence to minister to the people. The sashes were decorative belts that represented the priests’ calling to serve God obediently, faithfully, and in humility. The belt and sash represent the same thought: the Word of God is at the centre of my life in Christ, powerfully surrounding and supporting the Christian to stand faithfully for the Saviour in a hostile world.

For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

The Word of God is our guide and light on the journey of faith (Psalm 119:105).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Word of God sanctifies our lives (John 17:17).

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

The embroidered sash worn by the High Priest reminds me of the wonder of the manifold wisdom of God unfolded in His word (Psalm 119:17-19).

Deal bountifully with Your servant, that I may live and keep Your word.
Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law

So, let’s look at the first piece of armour. In Paul’s description, we can imagine a soldier preparing to put on his armour. He stands upright as he would in battle, and before doing anything else, he takes his belt and wraps it around his waist and fastens it. The action is one of fundamental preparation, defining his stance. It illustrates the truth of the Word of God and its application personally.

Girding refers to both dressing generally and also to adjusting your dress for action (Acts 12:8). It is used metaphorically by Peter to express “preparing your minds for action (1 Peter 1:13 ESV) and of a state of readiness in Luke 12:35, “Stay dressed for action” (ESV). And, as we have seen, it applied to the Israelites as they ate the Passover, ready to travel out of slavery and on to the Promised Land. The direction of travel was into liberty and blessing (John 8:31-33).

If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The Saviour gives us a beautiful example of the action of girding when He performs the lowliest service in John 13:3-5, washing the disciples’ feet.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it round his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped round him.

Girding is about preparing for unhindered service (Luke 12:35). Paul highlights that we are to gird ourselves with truth at the waist. The wearer is responsible for putting on the belt at the start of the day and after periods of rest. It was used to prevent clothing from interfering with the work in hand. When I was in India recently, I saw many agricultural and other manual workers girding their loose-fitting clothing around their waists to prevent it from hindering their work. Paul was conveying the balanced, unhindered stance of readiness that should characterise the Christian life. Too often we are caught out because we are not alert and prepared when confronted by spiritual, moral and even physical dangers. Paul used soldiers, athletes, and farmers as examples of alertness, readiness and fruitfulness in 2 Timothy 2:1-7.

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also, if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

The preparedness of the good soldier, disciplined athlete and hard-working farmer are all examples of those who were dressed and ready to please God, to be faithful to God and to be fruitful for God. This preparedness is founded on the belt of truth. Jesus said:

“I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

It was only by coming to Jesus as the way, receiving the truth of His word into our hearts, that we received life in Christ. The pattern should be consistently applied in our lives. Paul reminds us that the truth of God is the foundation of all we do. We need to take it in, understand it in our hearts and minds, make it our own, and live by it. God’s word and our faith in it are vital. The Lord Jesus demonstrates this at the outset of His ministry when, after His baptism, He goes into the wilderness to confront Satan. He defeats his power by the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit (v.17). The sword was drawn from its sheath which was on the waist. His example is vital. Just as we dress in the morning to be prepared for the responsibilities of the day, so we are to take up the Word of God. Through it we are taken into God’s presence to be prepared for the day ahead. We are ready to draw on the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, to address every situation.

Practical application

Let’s consider the practical application of Paul’s call to “Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth.”

Paul is describing a soldier standing in battle, ready for combat with all the equipment needed to be victorious. At the core of this equipment is the “belt of truth.” It is at the foundation of the armour and is the place where the sword is held in its sheath. In verse 17, Paul goes on to describe the “sword of the Spirit” as “the Word of God.” The components of the armour begin and end with the “Word of God.” The Word of God is presented first in its application to us, “having fastened on the belt of truth”, then as “the sword of the Spirit.” The subject of the “sword of the Spirit” will be dealt with in a later talk. Our concern today is the fastening on “the belt of truth” and what this means.

In John’s Gospel chapters 13-17, the Word of God is spoken of in relation to the Son of God, who is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). We discover this at our salvation, and, as I said earlier, these three themes remain constant throughout our life in Christ.

The Word of God is spoken of in relation to the Holy Spirit, who is called the “Spirit of Truth”, who guides us into all truth (John 16:13).

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

The Word of God is also spoken of in relation to the Father. The Son of God prayed to God the Father,

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

Expressing His desire that we should live holy lives. Peter writes of this in 1 Peter 1:14-16.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'

The whole of the Trinity is active in the application of the Word of God to our lives. So, we can see the importance of taking the “belt of truth” and embracing ourselves in its wonder and power.

This begins with understanding Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible is not simply a book. It is God's Book through which He reveals Himself to us above all in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. We are taught about the centrality of Christ in the Scriptures by the Lord Himself in Luke 24. On the road to Emmaus, the risen Saviour draws alongside two of His disciples who were supernaturally restrained from recognising Him. After listening to their conversation and asking them questions, they recount the life and death of Jesus and of the news of His resurrection. In Luke 24:25-27, Jesus rebukes them because of their unbelief and reveals Himself in the Old Testament Scriptures.

O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

In their home, Jesus reveals Himself to the disciples, then vanishes. The amazed disciples said to each other,

Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem (vv. 32-33).

This simple discussion reveals vital aspects of applying the Word of God to our hearts. Reading the Word of God assures us that God is with us and speaks directly to us and draws our hearts towards Jesus. “Did not our hearts burn within us?” This was a joyful and also energising experience, which led them into action: “So they arose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem”.

Jesus Christ is the key to all the Bible's contents. We read the Word of God to be brought into the presence of God to discover through the Spirit of God His love, grace, wisdom, power and purposes through His Son, our Saviour. When Jesus took Peter, James, and John up onto the Mount of Transfiguration to see His glory, they also saw Moses and Elijah, who spoke with Jesus.

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Shortly afterwards, God the Father speaks to say, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" (see Luke 9:28-35). The Mount of Transfiguration illustrates, through Moses and Elijah, as representing the Law and the Prophets, that the Old Testament looked forward to the coming of Christ. The New Testament presents, in the Gospels, the deity of Christ and His birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension in glory. In the Book of Acts, we discover the birth of the Church after the descent of the Holy Spirit and Christ fulfilling His promise, "I will build My Church" (Matthew 16:18). The writings of the Apostles present the whole counsel of God through time and into eternity. These writings are foundational and complete the fulfilling of the Saviour's promise:

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come (John 16:13).

The "belt of truth" is complete and foundational. It surrounds us, protecting and empowering us as we live for Christ. So it is essential for us to read and assimilate the Word of God, obeying its commands, resting on its promises, being guided by its light, growing in the "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18) and bearing the fruit of the Spirit to glorify our Father,

"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:8).

The Spirit of God is essential to this spiritual process.

The Holy Spirit dwells with us and is in us (John 14:17-18)

The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher (John 14:26-27)

He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

The Holy Spirit is our Helper (John 15:26-27)

But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

The Holy Spirit is our Guide (John 16:13-14)

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

The Holy Spirit fulfils this ministry in our personal communion with the Lord, in our spiritual fellowship with each other and through the formal teaching of the Word of God.

Whenever the Word of God is presented, we must receive and apply it, it should inflame our hearts and energise our lives to stand in Christ, our victorious Head. Let us make sure each day begins with us surrounding ourselves with the belt of truth.

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk on “The Armour of God: Girded waist with truth” T1457.

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