

The Lord's Message: Armor Up!

Date: August 1, 2021

Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: Ephesians 6:10-20

How many of you have been watching the Olympics? I am always amazed at the different equipment that the athletes use for their different sports. The bike riders are wearing aerodynamic dome hats and the swimmers are wearing skull caps. The gymnasts are wearing clothing that will not impede them while they are doing their acrobatics. All the equipment is designed for the athletes to be able to compete at their highest level. These athletes are prepared to do battle. Last Sunday, I confirmed to all of you that we are in a spiritual battle. First, we need to recognize that there is a spiritual battle going on for the souls of people. The devil and his demons are real. Look at what Paul says in **Ephesians 6:12**. Second, we need to recognize that Jesus is King of the Spiritual Realm. Third, Jesus has given us equipment not just to compete, but to win the spiritual battle.

Let us pray.

Now, before we dive into this, I want you, if you have not already done so, to invite every child that you know to attend Vacation Bible School today at 6:30pm. If you have to bring them here, I want you to do that. Please receive permission from their parents first! What we are going to be learning today, these children will be learning about at VBS. These children need to understand that they are in a spiritual battle, but Jesus, King of the Spiritual Realm, has equipped them to win the battle.

Let us look at the equipment.

We start out with the "Belt of Truth," in **Ephesians 6:14a**. Why do we wear a belt? To hold up our pants, of course. We would look pretty silly with our pants down around our feet. That would be a tripping hazard. Our Truth comes from the Lord. The Bible tells us that God loves us and will never leave us or forsake us (**Deuteronomy 31:6**). The opposite of truth is lies. God hates liars. One of the Ten Commandments says in **Exodus 20:16**. God hate liars, but the devil loves to lie and deceive people. In **John 8:44**, The devil has told so many lies to people, angels, and even God, that Jesus has given the devil the title of "father of lies." The devil lies to us and tell us that God does not love us. When we tell a lie, we are following the ways of the devil and not God. A person that knew how to lie effectively, Adolph Hitler, said this, "If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed." Where is Adolph Hitler now? He is dead. He committed suicide rather than pay the price for his lies. When we tell lies, our lies will be like our pants without a belt and trip us up.

The next piece of equipment is the “Breast Plate of Righteousness” in **Ephesians 6:14b**. If we were soldiers going into battle, the breast plate would protect our vital organs, heart, lungs, stomach, kidney, liver, etc.... We are soldiers and we need protection from the enemy. This breast plate of righteousness comes from God. It is not something that we can earn or deserve. It is freely given by God. Paul reminds us of this fact in **Ephesians 2:8**. The breast plate of righteousness is our decision to allow the Holy Spirit to live in us, so that the daily decisions we make will show God living in us. This breast plate has to be put on every day. We will all fail, when we do God is so loving and kind that if we will confess our failures then God will forgive us. That is called “Grace.” God’s Redemption At Christ’s Expense. We do not deserve this Grace. Jesus freely gave this Grace to us by giving His life on the cross.

The “Shoes of the Gospel of Peace” are next (**Ephesians 6:15**). The shoes are to protect the feet, but also for mobility. There should be in every Christian this burning desire, this movement, to tell and show people Christ living in us. So, that they can believe for themselves the Gospel and be saved. Before people who believed in Jesus as Lord and Savior were called Christians, they called themselves, “people of the way.” They were allowing the Holy Spirit to move them to bring others to Christ. In **Acts 11:26**, they were called Christians as a derogatory term. The shoes we put on should move us to tell people about Jesus. You can do this by telling them have a blessed day or may God bless you. Which could lead into a discussion about God. Even a wrong number could work. One day a lady called and asked for Peter. I told her that there was no one here by that name. She replied that she was sorry and had the wrong number. The Holy Spirit came upon me and I told her maybe not. I am a pastor and if I could be of help to her, I would be glad to talk with her. She paused and then told me of what was going on in her life. At the end of the conversation, I asked if I could pray for her. She told me yes. So, I did. I never heard from the lady again, but I know that God used me that day to show her His love. Every day is an opportunity to show God’s love to others.

Now we need the “Shield of Faith”. According to **Ephesians 6:16**, we are given the shield of faith to protect us from the devil’s flaming arrows. When evil thoughts or temptations come our way, we cannot rely on our strength to overcome them. We all need a higher power. Our faith in the Lord points to that higher power. When evil thoughts or temptation come my way, I pray to God give me the strength to resist the devil. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we say in the prayer to God, “and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” We can be assured that when we turn to God, God will give us the strength to protect us from the devil.

In **Ephesians 6:17a**, God provides us with the “Helmet of Salvation”. The helmet covers our head and the vital organ of our brain. By reading the Bible, we learn that we have been saved by Jesus. In **Galatians 2:20**, the Bible tells us that Jesus died for us and we now live by faith. Having this knowledge gives us the assurance that we are saved, are being saved, and one day in heaven will be completely saved. We need to cling to this knowledge every day.

The equipment that Jesus provides us is all defensive equipment. There is only one offensive weapon that we need. That weapon is the “Sword of the Spirit”. We learned about that weapon in **Ephesians 6:17b**. The sword of the Spirit is the Bible. Now, it might be awkward trying to carry around a Bible like this. The Gideons have a Bible like this one. This Bible fits into your pocket. With the technology of today, you can have a Bible app on your smart phone. We should also strive to memorize Bible verses. The more that we read the Bible, the easier it is to remember these verses. We need to have the Bible within easy reach to fight off the evil one.

Paul confirms to us that God give us the strength to defeat the devil every day (**Ephesians 6:10**). In **Ephesians 6:11**, we are told to armor up. As Christians we should put on the full armor that Jesus gives us. Let us armor up with the belt of truth, the breast plate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Finally, we all need prayer. We need prayer for ourselves and also for our fellow warriors. We should pray for each other as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 6:18**.

Each day we are engaged in a spiritual battle. Let’s armor up! Amen.