

(Ephesians) the Armor of God

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of putting on the armor of God, specifically the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, and preparation of the gospel of peace, in order to defeat the devil and live a victorious Christian life.

Duration: 58:32

Scripture: Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Gods Word", "Evangelism"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the power and importance of the word of God. He explains that the word of God is compelling, convicting, converting, and consoling. The speaker highlights how the word of God moves and stirs people like no other word can. He also encourages believers to learn and share God's word with others, as it can bring about opportunities for people to receive Christ. The sermon concludes with announcements about upcoming events and the availability of a new missions magazine.

Transcript

Lord, You are truly worthy. And Lord, it's just a privilege that we have to even be able to proclaim Your glory. Lord, we who are sinners, but yet because of Your grace, Lord, we know You and we've experienced You.

And Lord, we know that greatness of God in our lives. And we're so thankful, Lord. We're thankful to be here tonight and that You're going to instruct us further from Your word.

So do that this evening, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. All right, let's open our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6. And as we're doing that, you probably noticed when you drove in this evening, all the gear set up out on the field.

And we do have our final summer concert. We've been having a series all summer long and we've had some great people out and just some really good times. And so we're looking forward once again this evening after the service to the concert out there on the field.

Hot dogs will be served by the singles ministry. And so looking forward to another good time. We have our new missions, missions magazine, our new Calvary Chapel magazine used to be Calvary Chapel Missions Magazine.

Now it's just Calvary Chapel. But this is our new issue just came out this week. And so we put them around the church in various places.

They're free, of course. Take one on your way out. Some great articles.

This is Beauty from Ashes and Remembrance of September 11th. So there's a lot of follow up stuff here from what we did previously on the September 11th situation. And then there's some other really good articles in here as well.

So make sure you pick one up and take that with you as you leave this evening. All right. Ephesians chapter 6. Let me read to you from verse 10 through verse 17.

Finally, my brethren. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, put on the whole armor 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 host of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand, stand, therefore. Having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace above all, taking the shield of faith. With which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

And so we come tonight in our series, our series that stretched out much longer than I ever thought it was going to our series on spiritual warfare. We come tonight now really to the part in the series where we're going to look at how it is that we can be victorious in the conflict. We've kind of touched on that each and every time, but we've been looking primarily at things like the reality of the warfare that we are in.

We looked in quite a bit of detail about our enemy, the devil and the various strategies that he uses against us. We spoke on the wiles of the devil. We spoke on temptation, but we come now this evening to speaking on the subject of the armor of God.

And so we come to the place where we're going to receive instruction on how to have victory over the devil. And Paul tells us here that the way to victory is to put on the armor of God. Now, since Paul is writing about spiritual warfare and calling believers to stand against the wiles of the devil, he uses imagery from physical warfare to illustrate his points.

So he's using this metaphor of the soldier. And of course, to his original audience, they would have been considerably more familiar with this imagery than we are because they were obviously in contact with the military on a regular basis and they would see Roman soldiers and so forth. So as Paul would describe this, they would immediately, you know, connect with him on this level.

We're fairly familiar with those sorts of things. We've read enough history or seen enough television or movies to, you know, have a picture of what he's talking about here. But we're not going to really get bogged down in the details of the imagery.

What we really want to get into is what is Paul wanting to communicate to us and what is it that we are to do in order to be able to have victory over the devil? What does it mean practically today in 2002 to put on the armor of God? Well, Paul begins with the belt of truth, he says here in verse 14, stand, therefore,

having girded your waist with the truth. Now. As Christians, this is basically what he's communicating as a belt would encompass an individual as Christians.

Our whole lives are to be encompassed by the truth, we are to be people that are immersed in truth, truth is a vital thing to Christianity, we live in a world that just to a large degree rejects even the idea that there is truth. And, you know, it's it's a strange situation that we have that's developed today where relativism is more or less the philosophy of the day. Relativism states basically that there is no absolute truth.

Nothing is, you know, finally true, especially when it comes to the issues of spirituality, when it comes to the issues of morality. That's where we really want to, you know, get rid of absolute truth. But the Christian is a person whose life is to be immersed in the truth.

A while back, I was summoned to the courthouse for jury duty and. You know, I wanted with everything in me, just like everybody else in there, to get out of having to do that, but, you know, as I sat there, I knew I couldn't lie. I couldn't make up some story as to why I shouldn't be there.

And so, you know, as I was sitting there just thinking, Lord, get me out of this situation, I felt like the Lord was saying to me, just. Just stay here and just get over it, don't you know, don't be doing that, I want to do something here with you, and I finally OK, well, if that's the case, then I'll just let it go. And and just see what the Lord had.

So, you know, you've probably been if you haven't been, I'll give you just a brief synopsis of what you can anticipate. You get there, you check in, you go into this room and then, you know, they systematically begin to call people out and they are trying to select juries for various trials that are going to take place. And so they'll call you in with a with a large number of people, then they'll pick 12 or 16 people or so as possible jurors.

And then they'll start quizzing you, asking questions to see if you are a person that they want to have on the jury. And it's the attorneys. They're the ones who question you.

And so I got in one of those situations and it wasn't long before they rejected me. And I thought, oh, great. OK, I'm I'm on my way out the door.

I'll be home in a couple of hours and this will all be over. But it wasn't to be. I went into another one and they they were going through the process.

And so I got picked. But anyway, I'm telling you this long, drawn out story just to illustrate a point here as they were questioning us. And as the attorney came to question me, he, you know, sort of looked at me and said, now, Reverend, should I call you Reverend? Is that is that how I'm to address you? And I said, no, no, Brian Broderson will be fine.

And and then, you know, he says, what did he say? He said, you know, MDiv or Dr. Divinity or, you know, you know, just just Pastor Brian. That's you know, that's as far as it goes. And, you know, he was a real character.

This guy, he looked like he could have come out of a cartoon or something, you know, and he was funny, though. But anyway, he starts he starts asking me these questions and he goes into this whole thing about how he was at one time a theology student or something. And he sort of understood the minister's mindset.

And he knew that as a minister, I was probably a softie and I was really going to be sympathetic. And, you know, perhaps his concern was perhaps I would, you know, sort of buckle under emotionally to this particular person. And, you know, I could be swayed or influenced when I saw her pitiful condition or whatever else, you know.

So he says to me, he says, now, can we count on you to really, you know, give us an honest judgment here? Or are you going to be swayed because of what you might see or, you know, he goes on to this whole thing. And. You know, the idea was that.

You know, truth wasn't really so important. And. In my thinking, that that's what he was really getting at, and I just responded to him and I said, you know.

As a Christian minister. I just told him, I said. I'm primarily interested in the truth, so I'm going to sit here and I'm going to make an evaluation based on who I think is telling the truth and not on anything else.

But. You know, we're living in a. In a world where truth just isn't. Seen as all that important, we live in a world full of lies, it's hard to get at the truth today in a lot of things, do you actually believe everything you read in the newspaper? If you do.

Shame on you. But you would think once you I mean, you would expect the newspapers to be reputable, you would think that they're telling you the truth, that they're giving you a straight story, but they're not so often they have their biases, they have their prejudices and they come at a situation from that side and they slant things and sometimes they just downright lie. And we've seen that happen over and over again, that happens all over the place, it happens in the workplace, it happens in the classroom.

It happens in the home where we're a culture dominated by deceit and by lies. But as Christians, we are to be people of truth. We are to be of all people, people of integrity, people of absolute honesty.

There should be no guile, no deceit in us at all. It's tragic that that isn't the case among many Christians. It's very, very tragic.

It sends a very bad witness out to people. But Paul is saying here that our lives are to be encompassed by truth with truth. Now, Jesus, of course, said himself, he said, I am the truth.

So we're not talking about truth and just, you know, a general sense we're talking, although that would be the case as well, but we're talking more specifically about truth in the sense of God's truth. And so what Paul is telling us is if we are going to defeat the devil, if we're going to be successful in waging our warfare and if we're going to make it as Christians, we have got to encompass ourselves in truth. We've got to immerse ourselves in truth.

Now, the truth is found where it's found in the pages of Scripture, it's found in the Bible. And as God's people, he's given us his book and he really expects us to take it seriously. He really expects us to study it.

He expects us to commit it to memory. He expects us to saturate our lives in it to the extent that it just becomes a part of us. The only way I'm ever going to have a victory over the wiles of Satan is if I get firmly established in the truth, I've got to start there.

And so. On a really practical level, we've got to read our Bibles, we've got to study our Bibles, we've got to have our Bible as the primary thing. You know, I've made the mistake recently.

Of first thing in the morning. Reading the newspaper instead of the Bible, you know, it just sets me off on the wrong foot for the day. There's nothing that I read in the newspaper that's ever really pleasant.

I find that as I read the articles and all, I just am getting frustrated, I'm getting angry, I'm getting worried, I'm getting all of these things. And, you know, I'm thinking, why am I doing this to myself? The word of God is where we need to start the day, right in the pages of scripture, meeting the Lord there and letting him speak to our hearts and letting him minister to us and letting him found us more deeply in the truth that is in his word. So that's where we start, Paul says.

Having girded your waist with the truth and then he moves on, he says, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. Now, the breastplate, not to get too much into the imagery, but the breastplate, as you can imagine, the breastplate would cover the area of the chest and the abdomen, and it would therefore be the soldier's protection for his vital organs. A soldier going into battle without a breastplate could have easily been killed because, of course, if the vital organs were damaged, then that would probably mean loss of life.

And so Paul is telling us that we are to put on the breastplate of righteousness and, you know, righteous living protects us against the assault of the devil. If we're living righteously, if we're living a holy life, if we're living lives of integrity and godliness, that is our defense against the enemy's assault. So when he comes against us with temptations and things, I've got a righteous standard for my life.

I don't even go there. I don't even think about that. I'm not interested in that.

See, a lot of people leave off the breastplate of righteousness. They're not really thinking in terms of holiness. They're not thinking in terms of really living a life of biblical integrity.

And so they're basically sitting ducks. The devil's picking them off. They're falling into all kinds of sin, the breastplate of righteousness.

We need to be living right, living holy lives, looking at the scriptures and seeing the standard that God has set and by the grace of God and through the spirit of God. We're living according to his word. I think a lot of times today there's a lot of people excusing their bad behavior as Christians.

You know, they're saying, well, I'm not perfect. You know, nobody is or we're all sinners. What do you expect? Well, here's what God expects.

He expects us to live victoriously. He's given us the Holy Spirit. He's given us the power of the spirit in our lives.

Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil in our lives, not to let it just go on and on and on and on and on. Just to, you know, save us for heaven, but not really, you know, deliver us here on Earth from our sinful habits and things. But I think there are far too many people that think like that.

I've met people who have just pretty much consigned themselves in their thinking process to just a life of failure, a life of falling into sin over and over again is they look at Romans seven, look at Paul, that which I would I do do not and that which I would not that I do. And, oh, wretched man that I am. Oh, that's me.

I'm just that old wretched man. But thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ, I'm saved, still a wretched man, but I'm safe. Well, you know, that's a distortion.

Of what the scripture is teaching. Yes, if you want to get down to it in my humanity, I am still a sinful person and always will be, but. I've got the spirit of God, I've got a new nature, I've got a new life.

The old life is unredeemable. The old life can't be changed. The old nature is just as corrupt as it's ever been.

But guess what? I've got a new nature now. And I'm supposed to feed the new nature and cultivate the new nature so I can grow up and become a mature, godly person. That's what's supposed to be happening.

So that does happen as we take Paul's word seriously, we put on the breastplate of righteousness, we commit ourselves to living holy lives, realizing, of course, it's not my ability to do it, but it's my cooperation with the spirit of God that enables me to do it. Putting on the breastplate of righteousness, and then he said, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Now, this is probably the most difficult portion of this passage to really comprehend, you know, what what is the emphasis on here? And over the years, I've taught this passage several times, and I think, you know, I've probably taught it a bit different each time.

And as I was looking at it again today, you know, I think the simplest way to understand it, and I do think it's probably exactly what he's referring to, is that we are to have a readiness to share the gospel again, if we get all bogged down in the imagery, if we try to, you know, look real closely at the particular boots they wore, which I have done in the past myself, gone off on a on a tangent about the Roman boot and, you know, what it was made of and all of those kinds of things. Perhaps that's warranted to some extent, but again. It's not the imagery that's important, the important thing is what he's wanting to communicate and what he's wanting to communicate, I think clearly is that as God's people, we need to have a readiness to share the gospel.

We need to be ready to share the truth with people, but of course, I can't be ready to share the truth unless I myself am immersed in the truth, I won't really have opportunities to share the truth unless I've I've got a lifestyle that's attractive to somebody that they're going to be interested in what I have to say. So we see how everything sort of connects together, but. I think that's what he's talking about, a readiness to share the gospel just wherever we go.

As we're out and about our daily lives, you go to work, you go out into the community, you go over and visit your neighbors, you go off on vacation, wherever you go. We, as God's people, we need to be going as we go prepared to share the gospel with people, do we know the gospel, are we able to share it, can we communicate to people, you see how important it is to learn God's word, to learn God's word, not only for my own benefit, but to learn God's word for the benefit of others as well. So I could actually share with them from the scriptures what God has done for me and for them and help them to come to a place where they can receive Christ themselves.

You know, it's amazing. When we just commit ourselves to the Lord, how God will bring along great opportunities just to share his truth with people. And I like, you know, I was talking to John, of course, in a while back, and he was telling me sort of his approach to evangelism.

And I really I thought it was cool when he was telling me about it. And then I was with him a few days ago together and I and I saw it in action and it was really kind of a neat thing because he was telling me that what he's doing these days is, you know, not so much going up and handing somebody a tract sort of a

thing. But more just as he goes out into his daily activity, he was saying he's just sort of treating people like they're already Christians and he's just talking to him freely about the Lord and what the Lord's doing here and there.

And, you know, they're either they're either going back, you know, and and turning tail and running or they're thinking, wow, the Lord. Yeah, well, I want some of that, too, sort of a thing, you know. So we were somewhere recently together and we were standing there and this this guy commented on some advertisement and he was talking about how deceptive the advertisement was.

And John just turns and looks at me, goes, you know, that's what I love about the Lord. And I love about the Bible, the word of God. It's just straightforward.

It's just truth. You know, and I look over at the guy. He's got a big star of David on.

So, you know, realized he's Jewish, first of all, and he's looking at John and John, you know, talking about the Bible and Jesus and the word and all of this. And, you know, the guy sort of got a panicked look on his face and right. Yes, the Bible and the Lord.

And let me get my coffee and get out of here as quick as I can sort of a thing, you know. But yet, as I observe that, I like that, I thought, you know, that's great because what it does do is it brings about an opportunity. I mean, some people are going to think, oh, I just ran into a lunatic.

I better get out of here. But other people, God's already been working in their heart. And they're going to stop and say, well, you know, I want to talk about that wherever we go, whatever strategy God gives us.

We are, of course, all individuals, so we're not all going to have the same strategy. But we need to be ready. To share the gospel with people when we go out to let people know what God has done for us and to tell them how they can experience that in their own lives.

Now, moving on from the feet shod with the preparation, the gospel of peace, Paul goes on and he says, above all. Taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one now, we have talked pretty extensively in the past about the fiery darts of the wicked one, the wiles of the devil. But let's talk about.

Them just a bit more, it's always good to, I think, refresh ourselves on. The devil's activity, because we so easily get duped by him and we don't realize what's happening, we don't realize that he's behind the scenes and just, you know, messing with things. Satan has been studying human nature ever since man was created.

We need to remember that Satan helped forge fallen human nature. He is a master psychologist, one person he assails with the lust of the flesh. He has a whole arsenal of darts that can set the senses aflame.

Another person he assails with lust of the eye, someone else with the pride of life, the lust of appetite, the love of applause and the lure of ambition are among the host of darts Satan uses to kindle fierce fires in our souls. He knows our weaknesses. He knows our strengths, he sends his legions of evil spirits to titillate our senses, inflame our desires, corrupt our souls, weaken our wills, deceive our minds, deaden our consciences.

And distort God's truth, Satan has a thousand wives and never gives up. That's encouraging, isn't it? Never gives up if you successfully resist him now, he'll come back later. Perhaps he will tempt you with something you read in a book.

Something that. You watch on television. Perhaps a clever remark by a teacher, a professor, perhaps.

Maybe a friend's snub or sneer. Perhaps he will arouse a sleeping lust or put an utterly lewd or corrupt thought in your mind. Perhaps he will entice you with a brilliant and seemingly flawless philosophy.

We will never be out of range of Satan's fiery darts. But they can be quenched. By the shield of faith, as clever as he is, as vicious as he is.

As relentless as he is. We can still have the victory over him. Through faith.

That simple trust in God, trusting in God's word, believing God's word in the general sense, believing God's word in the specific sense, believing what God has spoken to us personally. Those are the things that we hold on to. Those are the things we cling to in order to to quench those fiery darts of the wicked one.

So when he comes and he assails us with these things, you see why it's so vitally important to have that strong, solid base in the word of God. Several months ago, I started getting some emails from a young guy who comes to the church and listens to the radio, and he had recently become a Christian. And as does often happen, it seemed that once he became a Christian, everything just, you know, came against him.

And everywhere he went, he seemed to be meeting people who had different views and people who opposed the Christian faith and people who were throwing these difficult questions at him and things. And, you know, he was just feeling like he was about to sink. And so we started just having a little communication back and forth with the email and he would, you know, write me and ask me questions and I would just respond to him answering those questions.

And and I saw him a couple of weeks ago and he just came up and he said, thank you so much. It's just really strengthened my faith to get those answers. And I'm feeling, you know, like I'm really growing in the Lord.

And, you know, but Satan is just thinking back on that situation. You know, here's a young guy newly saved. He's trying to knock him out before he can ever get started.

And that's what he does. But, you know, he doesn't stop. He keeps doing it.

He's relentless. But how do we stand against that? Paul said it here, above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. So as we just stand firm in the faith rooted in it and grounded in it, when those things come.

With all of that intensity. And all of that intention of just consuming us. Boy.

Through faith, that whole thing, it just quenched. The enemy is stopped in his tracks. He doesn't get anywhere because we're trusting the Lord.

We're standing firm on the word of God. We're holding fast to what God has said in his word. You know, I don't even know how to express this.

And I know many of you know this and believe this already. But just in, you know, just again, almost lacking the ability to communicate it, we can trust. Completely the word of God.

We can trust it completely. They've been attacking it for centuries. And yet it's still standing.

And it's still standing without a dent. You know, all of the effort to undermine it, all the effort to discredit it, all the effort to do away with it, to rid the world of the Bible. The Bible is still here and it still says the same thing today that it said when it was written, unlike other religious literature.

And it's firm, it's certain you can count on it. Everything it says is true. And, you know, as people come along and as things change in society and as certain things become more popular, certain ideas and things that challenge the scripture, you can just stand firm.

The scriptures are right. The scriptures are true. There's never been one thing put forth to disprove anything in the scripture.

Isn't it amazing that people go under this false assumption that the Bible is full of mistakes? There's there's no mistakes in the Bible. There's no one has ever proven not even one mistake in the Bible. Now, people have written books and said the Bible is full of mistakes and then they, you know, rattle off some things that they think are, you know, mistaken statements or whatever.

But it just shows you their own stupidity. They haven't done their homework. Most of those questions are very easily answered.

You can trust. The word of God, you can trust everything that God said, you can stand firm in your faith and whatever the devil throws at you. You can overcome that by trusting the Lord.

Through his word, and of course. The greater you know him, the easier it is to trust him. How do we get to know him better? We get to know him through the scriptures.

As a matter of fact, you remember, Paul said in writing to the Romans. He said faith comes by hearing the word of God. Now, in the context, he's talking about saving faith.

People need to hear the word. In order to. Put their faith in it, but the principle is true in our lives as believers as well, people who have already received it as we continue to hear the word of God, our faith continues to grow and increase.

So if you feel like your faith is lacking in some way. If you feel like your shield is a little bit small, maybe you're getting hit the shield that Paul actually referred to was that there were a couple of shields the Roman soldiers had, there was a small shield that they would use in hand to hand combat, and then there was a large shield that they could get their whole bodies behind for total protection from the enemy. That's the shield that Paul is talking about here.

So our faith in God and his word that gives us that total and complete protection from the evil one, and then he moves on and he says, and take the helmet of salvation. Take the helmet of salvation. In First Thessalonians five, eight, Paul said, put on as a helmet the hope of salvation, and I think the same idea is what he's communicating here.

I think when he's talking about the helmet of salvation, I think what he's actually wanting to communicate to us is that we are to mentally hold firm to the reality of our salvation, that we're saved today and that

we're going to be saved in the future. So that no matter how difficult it becomes, no matter how fierce the battle grows, we're confident that we're going to be saved. We're confident that heaven is at the end of this road and that in and of itself will get you through a lot of the conflict, just knowing that you're saved, knowing that God has a plan for you, knowing that your destination is heaven.

And then he says, and take the sword of the spirit. Now, I want you to notice something. Everything that we've mentioned up until this point, looking at it from the military imagery that Paul uses, all of the various pieces of the armor are for the purpose of defending.

The soldier now, Paul moves from the defensive aspect of the armor to the offensive. Aspect of the armor. Napoleon once said.

That the best defense is to attack. And you've heard the best defense is a good offense. We need to be on the offensive, not merely on the defensive.

We do have to defend ourselves because the enemy is relentless and he's ruthless and he doesn't stop, as we've been saying. And so we there is that necessity to defend ourselves, but we don't want to be defending ourselves in the sense that we're backpedaling and losing ground in the process of trying to just survive. We want to be holding ground.

We want to be taking ground. And now here's how we do it and take the sword of the spirit, Paul said, which is the word of God. Take the sword of the spirit.

You know, think about that. The word of God, the Bible is the sword of the spirit. What does a sword do? A sword slays.

A sword slices, a sword cuts, a sword destroys the opposition. What is the Bible? The Bible is the sword of the spirit. You see, that's how God does his work.

That's how he destroys the opposition. That's how he breaks down the opposition. That's how he cuts the cords and sets people free.

He does it by the word of God. That's why Satan, being the wise strategist that he is, that's why his primary attack is always directed at the word of God. Satan has successfully conquered a lot of the church because he has.

Taken away the sword of the spirit. He's attacked. The Bible.

And Christians have lost confidence in the Bible. And so they're soldiers without a weapon. What does a soldier do when he doesn't have a weapon? Well, he runs.

What else is there to do? And that's what's happened to much of the church today. Tragically, the church is running. The church is backpedaling because the church has failed to take the sword of the spirit.

We need to take the sword of the spirit. Remember that it's the spirit sword. It's the Lord's sword.

This is how the Lord does his work. He does it through the word. You see why it's so important to know it.

If I don't know the word of God, then, in effect, I have no weapon. I don't have any protection. I don't have any ability to go out offensively either.

It's the sword of the spirit, it's God's sword by which he takes territory, by which he advances his kingdom, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Now, we're all familiar, I think, or maybe that's an overstatement. Most of us are familiar with the fact that there are different Greek words that are translated word.

The most common Greek word translated word is the word logos, and most of us are familiar with that word because we know that Jesus is the logos. He's the word of God. There's another word that's translated word in the New Testament, another Greek word, and that word is Rhema.

And that's the word that we have here. And this is a very interesting word, Rhema, because Rhema could more literally be translated. Word is a literal translation of it, but a more descriptive translation is a saying.

Rhema is a saying. And what it's actually referring to would be a specific word or in our context, it would be a particular verse or number of verses. So you see what Paul is saying here.

Is that in order to have victory, we have got to take up the sword of the spirit, which is the specific word of God. There are specific words from God. That address specific situations, and we have to go to that situation with that specific word of God, with that specific verse.

That's why Bible memorization is such an important thing. It is really an important thing to memorize scriptures. You don't necessarily have to memorize the exact verse, you know, so you can say chapter and verse exactly.

But to know that scripture and to know generally where it's found, but to know what it says and what it means and to be able to apply that to situations as they come. I'll tell you, when you get into a situation where you're sharing the Lord with somebody, especially someone of another religious persuasion, perhaps, or some person, you know, rooted deeply in some sort of philosophy or something like that, you find that you really need specific words to speak to their situations. It's not good enough to just give them a vague sort of a general, you know, well, the Bible's the word of God, so you're wrong kind of a thing.

You've got to be much more specific. That's the sort of the spirit. And when we start taking the the specific word of God, the verse or the verses, and we apply them in our own lives to situations we're dealing with, we apply them in our minds when Satan comes against us or we apply them to people as we're encountering them.

That's when we really start seeing the kingdom of God advanced. There are four things that I want to leave you with concerning the word of God. Number one, the word of God is compelling.

Number two, it's convicting. Number three, it's converting. And number four, it's consoling.

And let's talk about each one of those points real quickly. The word of God is compelling like no other word. You know, you can read things and you can get your emotions stirred and, you know, you can read fiction and get that you can read sometimes nonfiction and get that you can read poetry, you can read philosophy and you can get a stir.

But there's nothing that moves a person like the word of God. Nothing can be compared to the compelling power of the word of God. Listen to C.S. Lewis as he describes how God moved him from agnosticism to Christ.

These are his words, he said, You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalene night after night, feeling whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet that which I greatly feared at last come upon me in the Trinity term of 1929. I gave in and admitted that God was God. And Nelton prayed, perhaps that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.

I did not then see what I what is now the most shining and obvious thing, the divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms. The prodigal son at least walked home on his own feet. But who can but duly adore that love which will open the high gates to a prodigal who is brought in, kicking, struggling, resentful and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance of escape.

The words compel in Trey compel them to come in, have been abused by wicked men that we shudder at them, have been so abused by wicked men that we shudder at them. But properly understood, they plumb the depths of the divine mercy. The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men and his compulsion is our liberation.

So C.S. Lewis, as you perhaps know, was the renowned professor of Renaissance at Trinity in Oxford or Cambridge in Oxford, and he was an agnostic. The last thing C.S. Lewis wanted to do was ever admit there was a God or yield his life to him. But as he began to come into contact with the Bible.

He was compelled. And that, of course, is the story of multitudes of people, the word of God is compelling. That's why we've got to get the word of God out to people.

You know, sometimes we forget that we forget that the gospel is the power of God to salvation. The gospel itself is the power of God. There is a dynamic in the gospel doesn't even matter who's preaching it.

People can get saved when a total godless hypocrite is preaching. Because it's not dependent on that person, the word of God itself is dynamic, the word of God itself contains the power, it's compelling, it's convicting. How many times have we had the sense that we were being singled out by the scriptures as we read them or as we heard them expounded? Have you ever had that experience where you feel like.

Who told him about me? You think I'm going to kill my wife, I can't believe it. I know she's going to see the pastor to tell him all the, you know, horrible things that I've done. We've all had those experiences.

You're reading the scripture and suddenly it's just you and God, you're right there and God is convicting you. Nothing like the word of God does that converting the power of the word of God to transform derelict lives. Oh, this story has been told a million, million times over in history.

Many years ago, there was a quite a renowned preacher evangelist named Harry Ironside. Some of you perhaps have heard of him. We have many of his commentaries in our bookstore.

Ironside would often go out and preach on the streets, and one time he was holding an open air meeting and as he was preaching, a very famous socialist of the time came up and he challenged him to a debate. He said, I want to debate you on the subject of agnosticism versus Christianity. And Ironside just this quick, he was he was a sharp guy that quick.

He said, all right, I'll tell you what to do. I will debate you, but I require that you bring two people with you. That have had their lives transformed through your message of agnosticism, I want you to go and find for me a person.

And he just, you know, describes, you know, you described a man initially, a man who was a drunkard, a man who was, you know, just completely derelict, a man whose life had completely been destroyed through excess and so forth. And yet that man, he came into a meeting and he heard the powerful message of agnosticism. And now his life is completely transformed and it's a total asset to society.

You know, and all this, he said, I want you to bring me a person like that and I want you to bring me a woman, a woman of the night, a woman of the streets, basically a prostitute who, you know, was living this kind of a lifestyle. But having heard your powerful life transforming message of agnosticism, she came and now she's transformed and she's a real, you know, wholesome, healthy asset to the community and so forth. And he said he said to him, he said, and by the way, I will have 100 people with me.

That have that story, so if you want to still debate. I'll be happy to debate, of course, the man said, I'll get back to you because the reality is agnosticism doesn't do anything for anybody, does it? It can't. But the gospel of Jesus Christ, there's nothing in the world like the gospel of Jesus Christ for transforming people's lives.

And many of us right here tonight can stand up here behind this microphone and tell a testimony of how God changed your life. That's what the word of God does. And finally, the word of God is consoling.

How many millions could testify to the consoling power of the word of God? You know, I've done a lot of funerals over the years and. At some of the funerals I've done, people have done a variety of things, you know, sometimes people will sing a song, sometimes people will quote a poem, sometimes people will just get up and share their thoughts or whatever, and those things can be fine. But, you know, the real consolation comes when the word of God is brought into the picture.

Only the word of God has consoling power. Nothing else has the power to console. Listen to these words.

Think of the millions that have been consoled by these words, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. How many millions of people have been consoled by those words or these words? Fear not, for I am with you.

Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Yes, I will help you.

I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Or perhaps. These words come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. Or again, Jesus said, Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God.

Believe also in me and my father's house or many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again and receive you to myself that where I am.

There you may be also. Or how about this one? The last one. Do not be afraid.

I am the first and the last. I am he who lives and was dead. Behold, I am alive forevermore.

Amen. And I have the keys of hell and death. The word of God consoles.

The word of God converts, the word of God convicts, the word of God compels, Paul said, taking the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Our victory. Over the enemy is found in the word of God, Paul, John writing, he said to the young men, he said, You are strong and have overcome the devil because the word of God abides in you.

We've got to get the word of God into us. And we're doing it here tonight, but let's not just depend on this kind of a setting to do it in. Let's do it ourselves.

Let's have our Bibles with us. Let's be meditating on them. Let's be memorizing them.

Let's immerse ourselves, our lives being encompassed in truth. So we can ward off all of Satan's attempts to bring us down and to discredit our Lord and his work. Let's pray.

Lord, thank you that you've given us your word and Lord, I confess that I have so many times taken it for granted and been negligent. In regard to it. Lord, help me.

Help us, Lord, to be like Job, to esteem your word above our food, to esteem your word above our breath. Lord, to know that man shall not live by bread alone. But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, help us, Lord, to put on the whole armor of God.

That we can stand. And not just stand, but advance against the wiles of the devil, in Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Let's stand together. If you want some prayer tonight, some of the guys are up front to pray with you. We're going to go ahead and just get out to the concert immediately here as they're going to get started in just a few moments.

But we don't want to deprive you of the opportunity to get some prayer if you need it. So make your way up front afterwards. God bless.

Great to see you tonight. And Monday night, we will be having a service just to let you know it is Labor Day, but we'll be having the Monday evening service here. God bless you.

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