

(Ephesians) Victory in Jesus

by Jeff Noblit

The sermon highlights the necessity of spiritual warfare and the importance of donning the armor of God to achieve victory over sin and evil forces.

Scripture: Psalm 119:9, Ephesians 6:10, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "Victory"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of putting on the full armor of God in the ongoing battle against sin. He emphasizes that there are no shortcuts or quick fixes in this fight, but rather a constant, disciplined perseverance. The speaker highlights that although sin may wrestle and throw us down, in Jesus Christ, it cannot hold us down. He encourages believers to repent, seek forgiveness, and continue marching forward in the war for God's glory. The sermon also emphasizes that Satan and demons are our enemies, and we must rely on the strength of the Lord to fight against them.

Transcript

I think I can safely say that God has not so changed my life in any other season, other than those first couple of years after conversion, as He has in my study and preparation to preach through this book, and changed it for the good. I know, I know my Lord better, I understand my Lord better, I understand grace better, I understand more about the height, the width, the breadth, the depth of the love of Christ better, I understand the sovereignty of God better, I'm more in awe of Him than before, more grateful to Him than before, and it's just been an interesting study. When we first began diving into Ephesians, reading some of the great, great commentary writers, I tried to go back even three and four hundred years ago to find the best commentary writers, and they sort of warn you that, man, this book is just absolutely bursting with glorious doctrine and truth, and it's the kind of stuff that will shake you up a little bit if you're not careful.

Doesn't fit right into your thinking sometimes, you have to stretch yourself and get out of your little narrow view of who God is and what He can and cannot do, or the way He can and cannot do things, and it has been a glorious, glorious journey for me. I hope it's been a blessing to you. Now we come to that very, very practical section right here at the end, and we see it there in Ephesians chapter 6. We'll begin tonight in verse 10 and go through verse 18.

That seems absolutely impossible, doesn't it, that I would preach eight verses in one sermon and go on, but we're going to try it, we're going to make a shot at it. It might be 12 o'clock when we get done, but we're going to make a shot at it. No, seriously, I don't think so at all.

Matter of fact, I think it'd be a shorter message than usual, but anyway, verse 10. Finally, Paul says, Ephesians 6, verse 10, finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

For our struggles, not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God so that you will be able to resist in the evil day and having done everything to stand firm. Verse 14, stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

In addition to all, taking up the shield of faith, which, which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the spirit with this in view, be on the alert in all perseverance and petition for all the saints. Now we're in a warfare and I know that strikes a lot of Christians as odd because we, we haven't been taught the truth very often.

There's this notion going around that you call on Jesus somehow and do something and you're in heaven and you're on God's roll and you just come to church a little bit, maybe, and don't commit any sins that are too awful scandalous. And one day you go to heaven. No Christianity is signing up for war.

It's signing up for war. It's, it's a daily diligent, persistent, ever present, ever alert waging of war. Now, before you were converted, you were enslaved in the enemy camp.

You were part of the enemy's team. You're by nature, a child of wrath. Ephesians two told us you're of the spirit that's working in the sons of disobedience.

You were saved out of that though. You're still in the world that is characterized by that, but you're living for the world that is high and Holy and above that. So you're warring to live righteously in an unrighteous world.

You are warring to live holy in an unholy world. You are warring to live for God and an anti-God and anti-Christ world. There's a warfare.

And if you and I are not sober and alert to that reality, we are already functioning as prisoners of war. I told the elders this morning in our time about second Timothy chapter four, where Paul says, the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. The word endure there where he says endure sound doctrine is the word that's also used in another section where it says that we're to bear one another or bear with one another, forgiving each other, which means that it's not comfortable and doesn't feel good.

And it's not always joyous, but we're to be forgiving of one another. Well, it's the same way when you hear Bible preaching, there are sections of scripture and doctrinal truths that are just aren't real fun to hear. It's just not what you signed up for maybe, but we need them and we ought to hear them.

And in those seasons, you're to endure that sound doctrine. It's not, doesn't tickle the flesh. It doesn't make you excited maybe, but it's good.

And it's good for you. And I think this is one of those texts of scriptures where we need to be sort of rattled and shaken a little bit to realize, yes, we're victors. We can't fail, but we are in a tenacious and vigorous war as the children of God.

What are we warring against? Well, ultimately it's sin. Jonathan Edwards, probably the most brilliant man America has ever produced. And one of the greatest pastors since the apostle Paul said that if you preach a gospel that tells people they can be saved in sin, you get a hundred people to respond.

But if you preach the true gospel that says, God saves you to save you from sin, you'll get one to respond. And there's some truth to that. Well, the Bible doctrine of the gospel and the Bible doctrine of salvation is that we are saved to begin a warfare pursuit out from and away from the strongholds and the clutches of sin.

You see, when we sin, let me give you eight quick things. You don't have to write these down just by way of introduction. When we sin, we dishonor God personally.

Sin is a personal offense to God. It's not some impersonal, nebulous, indefinable thing that just happens. It's spitting in God's face when we sin.

We violate His law when we sin. We attack His righteous kingdom when we sin. We hurt our witness when we sin.

We harden or callous our conscience and our heart when we sin. We cause a brother to stumble when we sin. We, in effect, align ourselves as God's enemy when we sin.

Remember Jesus looking at Peter and saying, get behind me, Satan. He wasn't of Satan. He wasn't possessed by Satan.

But in that moment, he was thinking like he was aligned with Satan. And sin leads to death. The wages of sin is death.

Sin always destroys. It always hurts. It always maims.

It always cripples. What John Piper said his mother wrote in the cover of his Bible when he was a young boy, maybe a teenager, his mother wrote these words, this book will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from this book. And she also said, you will be either killing sin or sin will be killing you at every moment of every day.

You are either fighting it and killing it as it's trying to kill you. Well, let's look at this together and let me give you these introductory thoughts here. First of all, look at verse 10.

As Paul gets to this section, he begins it by saying, finally, or in addition to all the rest that I've told you, all that I've told you about marriage life and all that I've told you about the parent child relationship, all that I've told you about management and labor relationships from the child of God's perspective, everything I've told you about the glorious grace that has saved you. Now put onto all of that, this very important teaching in addition to all of that, put on the full armor of God. Now we have enemies to fight against.

We have a captain to fight for. We have a banner to fight under, and we have rules of engagement to govern our fight. And that's what Paul's going to talk to us about.

So he says, finally, and that is, it remains now for you to apply to your life, your duties and your responsibilities as a Christian soldier, warring against sin. Now, Roman numeral number one, Satan and demons are our enemies. That's what he's going to point out very, very strongly here.

Satan and demons are our enemies. Let's work down to that by starting in verse 10, where he says, finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Now there's a balance here.

You don't just sit down and say, well, it's God's strength. No, you work, but you work every conscience and every ever aware that it's God's strength that must be empowering you or enabling you or you're sunk. You have to find your strength in the Lord.

So here, Paul calls us to war. Be strong in the Lord because we're in this relentless struggle against sin and against evil. We have many battles to fight on our way to heaven, and we need a great deal of courage.

He says, stand strong. We must be strong in service, strong in suffering, strong in fighting. It is his strength that we rely upon because we have no sufficient strength of our own.

Well, how practically do we do that? Well, it begins in verse 11, put on the full armor of God. The word put on is like Ephesians 4 24, where he says, put on the new man. You've got to put on the armor of God and notice it's not your armor.

It's not something you come up with. It's not something you can develop or create. It's God's armor.

He's given you in grace. He's given you this equipping for your warring in grace, but you've got to put it on. You've got to make a deliberate effort.

Now in this period of time, the full armor meant a shield and a sword, a spear, a helmet, a leg and feet armor or boots, and then a breastplate. And Paul changed that a little bit. He's playing off the Roman armor of the day, but he omits the spear and he adds a girdle or the inner leather belt.

And Paul should have known much about Roman armor. He was chained to a Roman soldier for three years, so he knew well what he was talking about. Now, when he says it's the armor of God, he's referring to the fact that God both prepares and bestows this armor because our armor will not withstand in the day of testing.

It just won't make it through. And what we're to do is pray for grace to put on this armor and act and exercise the way he's telling us to when he says, put on the armor of God. Then he says so that you will be able to stand firm against.

What does he say? Against the schemes of the wiles of the devil. Now he's talking about the fact that wobbly Christians are easy prey for the devil. But we need to put on something.

We need to just have a resolute spirit to determine we're going to stand and we're not going to be any longer wobbly little weak Christians that the devil can just throw around and slap around any way he wants to. One of the ways to do that is just decide you're not going to be moved by things until you have full and ample and solid and concrete evidence. Just not going to let things sink in the first time you hear something.

He talks about here standing firm against the schemes of the devil. The idea here is of the methods the devil uses. He has methods and schemes to destroy us and destroy our witness for Christ.

He is crafty and he knows the weak spots in our armor. That's why he says stand firm. Brothers and sisters, I was convicted studying this that if I am not resolute in my determination to walk the way God

instructs me to walk, I'm up against a brilliant, intelligent, scheming, crafty, deceptive enemy.

And he'll do whatever he wants to with you if you're not careful. The phrase stand firm there in verse 11 that you may be able to stand firm means to hold out and overcome. It means Satan will assault and Satan will battle and Satan will attack, but you can hold out under it, not let it get you all the way down.

Both his force and his fraud that he comes against you because he has so many assaults and so many mechanisms and so many snares to throw at you. Now look at verse 12. He says, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood.

One of the things we need to remember is we need to stop looking at people and look at the spiritual forces behind and using the people that cause us trouble in our lives. We struggle not against flesh and blood. The word struggle there means wrestling.

It's a word out of the wrestling arena of the day. It literally means to wrestle somebody and throw them down and hold them there. Kind of like even that you see on that crazy stuff they call wrestling today on TV.

They have to hold them down for the count. I love that picture and that might be a foundational principle for this whole message that we want to keep in our hearts and minds. It may be true that Satan might evident might from time to time wrestle you down and throw you down, but he doesn't have to hold you down.

We can keep that from happening. Well, he says we struggle not against. It means face-to-face conflict all the way to the finish.

We've got a real war going on here. It's not against flesh and blood. The combat we're to prepare for is not our mere human enemies.

We're all going to have some enemies if we live for Jesus down here. It's not our corrupt fallen sin nature. We do battle against our old fleshly desires, but that's not the ultimate enemy here and certainly not the one he's talking about.

But these wicked forces of evil, the devil and his demons, let me say four things about these, this enemy rather Satan and his demons that we're talking about here. First of all, they're subtle. They're subtle.

The Bible says he's full of wiles that you may be able to stand against the schemes or the craftiness or the wiles of the devil. He has thousands of ways of beguiling unstable souls. If you're loose, if you're indifferent, if you're flippant, if you're lazy in your Bible study, if you're, if you're shallow in your pursuit of God, he's got thousands of ways to get you and he works at it.

He's subtle. The Bible calls false teachers wolves in sheep's clothing. They're subtle.

They're crafty. Look just like a lamb, but they're a ferocious wolf. One of his best wiles is to get us to doubt or discount his reality.

Have you been guilty of that? I've been guilty of that. Just kind of discounting that he's really there. He's really my enemy and he's really working to trip me up in my walk with God.

The Bible calls him a serpent, which speaks of craftiness. The Bible calls him an old serpent, which speaks of his experience and his expertise. He knows what he's doing.

Not only is he subtle, he's also powerful. Paul refers to him as a power here. We see that in verse 12.

We struggle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness. And the word rulers there means worldwide rule. And the Bible does call Satan the God of this world.

He has a worldwide dominion. Demons, Satan and all of his demons, they are numerous and they are vigorous in their work. And they're absolutely real.

Number three, not only are they subtle and powerful, they're spiritual. Paul uses the phrase, the spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. Their assault is unseen.

It's unseen. You don't see it coming. They chiefly annoy us with spiritual wickedness, things like pride and envy and jealousy and malice.

Oh, they know how to scheme and they know the methods to get you with that stuff. Well, number four, not only are they subtle and powerful and spiritual, Paul says they're wicked. They're wicked.

He just uses the phrase there, the world forces of this darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. It means they're about destruction, not construction. Darkness is their abode.

The darkness of sin and the darkness of falsehood is what they're all about. Wickedness. They strive to prevent our ascent into heaven.

You know, the Bible talks about Satan comes, comes along. And when the seed of the word of God is thrown out, Satan snatches it up and tries to keep it away from those who could receive the word and be converted. They try to deprive us of heavenly blessings because if he can get you stumbling along in pride or in envy or in malice or in jealousy and all those heart sins that he tries to deceive us to get us entrapped in, he can destroy your communion with God.

God's not going to fellowship with you if you're like that. Well, that was my first major point. That is Satan and his demons are our enemies.

Now let's get to this practical part. And I want to say something upfront. This doesn't develop the way I wished it had developed.

I would love to give you one, two, three, four, boom, you can defeat sin. You watch TV and that's what you get. If you watch the guys on television and there's some good preaching on television, just very, very little of it.

But I mean, there's so much out there that if you'll chant this thing, or if you'll say this phrase, or you'll pray in this way, or if you'll name this or claim that or do this and do that, you'll get this victory. You'll walk in the victory and you'll have it done and you'll defeat Satan. And wow, it's a great thing.

I wish it would work like that. But the amazing thing to me is those people come back next week for another pop and for another zap and for another victory. That's not the way this outlines.

This talks about an ongoing, ever-vigilant, ever-disciplined, warring perseverance. That's not what I wanted to hear. I wanted to do one, two, three and be done.

But that's what the truth is. And we need to see it as the truth. Well, Roman numeral two, we must put on the armor God provides to win the victory.

Put on the armor and walk with it on that God provides to win the victory. Notice what he says there in verse 13, put on the armor that God provides to win the victory. It begins in verse 13.

He says, therefore, since we have this enemy that's, that's malicious and that's crafty and that's full of mischievous methods, who's experienced and who has expertise and knowing how to trap us, since we have all that working against us, verse 13, therefore take up the full armor of God. Take up means to pick it up. You've got to pick it up.

You've got to put it on. It's an act of your will. You've got to say, I'm going to pick it up.

I'm going to put it on. I'm going to wear it. You have to do that.

It's not just going to happen. He says, pick it up and put it on verse 13. Look at it there so that you will be able to resist in the evil day.

That means stand against it, not let it knock you down. That resisting is what we need. Then he says, having done it all to stand, that's a, that's a graphic picture in the original language.

Having done all to stand means you, after the fight is over, one stands as a victor in the contest. Satan comes against you. He hurls his attack at you.

He comes against you in a way that he knows your childhood. He knows your early years. He knows you're vulnerable to get angry over certain types of things because it brings up old wounds from your past.

He knows he can get you jealous or envious in certain ways because of certain mistreatments or things maybe you were deprived of. He knows, he knows. He's got wiles and craftiness, but man, if you'll put on the armor of God, God will give you wisdom.

You'll see it coming and you'll repent in Jesus name and tell Satan to get out of your life. You're not going to fall into that jealousy, that envy, and that bitterness, and that hatefulness, and that ugliness. Amen.

You got to put it on. You got to determine I'm going to put it on. I'm not going to let it get me.

I'm not going to let it happen. It's, it's an aorist tense verb. It means you stand and you stay standing.

It's, it's like a, when I was a little boy, we used to play king on the hill and you fought your way up the hill. And we had a big old boy in my neighborhood. And when he got to be king on the hill, he stayed king on the hill.

We'd wrestle and fight and grab around his thighs. He just keep throwing us off. He stood and he stayed standing.

That's what he means here. Put it on. Aorist tense.

Stand and keep on standing. War and keep on warring. Fight, keep on fighting.

You got to stand up and put it on so you can resist. Not yield to Satan. Resolved by grace not to yield to him.

Resist him and he'll flee. And you know that's very true. When Satan gives his best shot, he'll work through somebody now.

He didn't just come up with his red suit and his red horns and his forked tail. He'll work through somebody and try to get you, man. I mean, where it's so hard for you not to get in the flesh, get irritated, get angry, get bitter, get jealous, get envy, get a, get a spirit of malice in your heart.

Want to fight back and seek revenge, all that garbage, sin, junk. But I'm telling you, if you'll stand and resist it and use the grace God gives you by putting on the armor of God, you'll find out Satan has faith to do something. He'll think, that didn't work with that old boy.

I'm going to let off a little bit in that area. And then he'll find another one because we have to keep warring. We cannot distrust our cause and we cannot distrust our leader.

Now listen, and we cannot distrust our armor. You've got to trust your cause. That's the cause of holiness and righteousness in an unholy world.

We got to trust our leader, our leader is the Lord Jesus Christ. We've got to trust our armor and we're going to look at what that is in this text. Because brothers and sisters, if we're going to walk in the true victory of the true man or woman of God, it's going to be the biblical way.

It's not going to be this little shortcut, name it and claim it, jump through the hoop things. It's going to be a continuous warring, fighting and walking in that victory. So we must by grace and by God's armor stand up against him, just like our Lord Jesus did in the garden when Satan would tempt him and he'd say, get behind me Satan.

It is written and stand on the word of God. That means having done everything to stand, stand firm. We're to strive against Satan and strive against sin and keep on standing and withstanding him until he's through with his assault.

Well, the full armor here is like Romans 13, 12. It's like the armor of light in Romans 13, 12, 2 Corinthians 6, 7. It's called the weapons of righteousness. Here we go with the full armor.

Number one, and we see it in verse 14 is the belt of genuineness, the belt of genuineness. What he says in verse 14 is stand firm therefore having girded your loins, that's the belt. Then that old Roman soldier, the first thing he put on is a leather belt that would really hold everything else together.

His sword was attached to it and it was really a part of his underwear more than anything else. He put that on first and he says, gird your loins, I put this belt of truth on. Well, truth there, the best understanding is not that it means the truth of the word of God.

It means truth in the innermost being. It means sincerity from your heart. It means integrity.

It means in the core of your being, you are genuine about wanting to honor God and live in holiness. You're going to have to work on that. That's putting on, putting on the armor starts with the belt of genuineness.

I genuinely want to see my Lord pleased and honored and I genuinely want to live above the attacks of the enemy in my life. I want to be genuine or true in my innermost being. Now I want to say this to you, put on genuineness and if you don't have it on, repent and get it back on.

If you get up in the morning, have your quiet time determining your heart, I want to be a genuine child of God today and really live for my Lord from my heart. And then by third day, you backslid a little bit, then you repent and say, I want to be genuine again. 10 o'clock, you just backslid and repent.

Say, I want to be genuine again. It's a war. You're putting on the belt of genuineness.

Well, let's go to the second one here in verse 14. And that is the breastplate of righteous living. The breastplate of righteous living.

Last part of verse 14, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. Now it could be alluding also to that moment in time when we trust Christ as Lord and savior and justification occurs. That is God declares that you are just in his sight, that he no longer sees you as a sinner.

Matter of fact, he now looks upon you with the righteousness of his son. Well, that's a part of it, but that's not going to really get you very far in the real world unless you purpose therefore to walk out that righteousness. And so that breastplate is that part of the body that would guard the vital organs, the heart, the liver, the inner organs, and we're to put on this lifestyle of righteous living.

And when you're purposing to do that, you can walk in victory over the enemy. Now there's a key insight in first Thessalonians 5.8. In first Thessalonians 5.8, Paul refers to the breastplate of faith and love. Now here's what I think that means.

The breastplate of faith and love. First of all, in faith, we are united with and walk with Christ. And in love, we are united with and walk with men.

In other words, here's what that means. I look to my Lord and in faith, I righteously serve and live for him. And in love, I righteously serve and live with my fellow man.

That's the breastplate of righteous living. Do right according to the truth toward God and men and thus do not live in sin. Well, the belt of genuineness, the breastplate of righteous living.

Thirdly, the boots of gospel assurance, the boots of gospel assurance. We see this in verse 15, having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Now they actually had brass shoes and armor covered shoes that protected their feet from what they called gall traps that they used to trap soldiers' feet.

And often they would bury sharp pointed sticks in the ground. And by having these protective shoes, they could keep their feet healthy so they could stand firm and wage war with a firm foundation. So we're to be prepared and resolve from our hearts to live for God.

Now, there's only one thing that can give you a firm resolve and stand firm in war for God. And that is when the gospel of peace has changed your life. When you walk in assurance that you're a man of God, when you walk in assurance that you're a woman of God, that is a child of God, and you know you belong to God, that gives a firm foundation to fight and war from.

If you wander around with all those vicious attacks of the enemy, giving you a lack of assurance and a guilt about your standing before God, then you're not going to have any firmness to fight. You'll be hesitant and

you'll be weak and you'll be faulting and you'll be questioning. So he talks about a gospel walk here that's essential to victory.

Now, let me ask you something. What is a gospel walk? When you've been changed by the gospel of Jesus Christ and you're walking in that change, what is a gospel walk? Well, whatever else it is, it's a walk of humility. It's a walk of contrition.

It's a walk of hoping in Christ and knowing that He is yours and you are His. It's a walk of repentance. Old Charles Simeon talks about the fact that the contrition that ought to abide in our hearts as the children of God, that is, that though we know we're fully forgiven, we still carry some of the woe of our wretched sinfulness before God, not in a sense of beating us down, but in a sense of gratitude that He would save such wretches like ourselves.

He says that attitude of contrition is like the ballast in the bottom of a ship. It keeps it steady in the storms. That's what he's talking about here.

So it's the gospel of peace, peace with God. So I have peace with myself. I can have peace with others and that gives me an incredible firm foundation and a strength to repel the flaming missiles of the evil one.

It also means I have gentleness and long-suffering and these things will guard me. Well, not only the belt of genuineness, not only the breastplate of righteous living, not only the boots of gospel assurance, but fourthly, the shield of temptation quenching faith. The shield of temptation quenching faith.

Now we're all going to be tempted, but God says you can quench that temptation with the shield of faith. Now the shield here referred to in verse 16 by the Greek word is not that little small round shield, but it's that very, very large shield that would actually protect their whole body. That shield was made by putting two pieces of wood together and gluing them together and then covering those with linen and then putting iron bands around the outside edges to hold it together.

And so the shield of faith is really our all in all during temptation. So we have to be fully persuaded, persuaded rather of God's promises and God's threatenings. Let me ask you something.

You know what faith means? Faith means when you read this book, you really believe the promises he says to you and gives to you, but it also means you tremble at the warnings and the threatenings he gives you. We don't have any of that anymore and that's why I think so many of us walk in weakness and in defeat because we don't tremble at God and his glory and his threatenings and we don't glory and stand with confidence by faith in all of his promises. I think that implies also we need to keep learning the truth of God's word.

I just can't tell you how much it means to me having grown in sovereign grace, to understand more of what the Bible teaches when it says that he foreknew me and he predestined me and he chose me and he elected me, all Bible words, and he regenerated me or quickened me, Bible word, and he sealed me. And he who began a good work in me will perform it to the day of Christ Jesus and he'll glorify me. When you understand more of that and you have faith in that, it gives you a great strength to know you're God's and you're special and you're for God's glory and you're his precious child that he loves so much.

Gives me a new boldness in my faith. Now he says when you have this shield of faith, you can have victory. What does the Bible say? This is the victory over the world, even our faith.

When Satan comes against you with those false accusations, you sinned this last week and Satan came against you and said, you're not a child of God. You can't go to church anymore. You can't witness for God anymore.

You can't teach that class anymore. I want to tell you that's a lie. You can ask forgiveness and he'll forgive you.

Those false, he's the accuser of the brethren. Don't listen to that mess. Put up the shield of faith and say, Satan, I'm going to let that one burn out right here in this shield and I'm going to let that get to me.

False accusations is one of the things that the shield of faith, false guilt, doubts, that temptation to rebellion or lust or malice or fear. Place faith in the word of God that that's not the right route and that's not the true way to live and that leads to destruction and don't let it poison your life. When he talks here about these flaming missiles, look at there in verse 16, in addition to all taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

I personally don't believe this means literal fiery arrows. I think it means poisonous arrows. Like when the Bible talks about a fiery serpent, it's not talking about a snake whose head's on fire.

Now it can mean that. I'm not saying it absolutely does not mean it, but it means he's poisonous. The guys over in Mississippi that bow hunt over in Mississippi, they have legalized, been legal for years, using pods on their arrows.

They actually put poison on their bow hunting arrows. It's actually a very, very strong muscle relaxer. And I mean, you just nip that deer and that relaxer gets in that blood system in just a few seconds.

He just relaxes and his heart and lungs, everything quits. Well, that's the picture here. Satan has fiery missiles and when those fiery missiles hit us, they're like a fiery serpent.

They just have the poisons that destroy our soul. And he says, put up the shield of faith and let those things hit the shield. So they won't destroy your soul.

I think they're called flaming arrows or fiery missiles of temptations because they're swift. I'm telling you, Satan can fling one on you so fast. They're swift.

They're imperceptible. You know, listen, listen, what I'm going to tell you, they're going to come when you least expect it and from whom you least expected it to come from. You find yourself all in the flesh, all with a bad spirit and an ugly heart, just like that.

Because he was swift to send it and he sent it from an imperceptible. You didn't know where it was coming from. And they make deep wounds in our soul when they get in there, like a poisonous dart will inflame the flesh where it hits.

These are violent temptations that Satan brings against us. But faith is the shield that quenches these fiery arrows and prevents them from hurting us. Well, let's go to the next one.

The next one, number five is the helmet of firm salvation. The helmet of firm salvation. Look at, look at there in verse 17 and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Now I think this is referring to the hope which has salvation as its object. Now a key verse here is first Thessalonians 5.8. In first Thessalonians 5.8, Paul says the helmet is the hope of salvation. The helmet is the hope.

Now that's different. In other words, when we say we have hope, you know, we don't mean we maybe think something might happen. It means we have a confident assurance of things in the future for us.

Brothers and sisters, when you know that you know that you know where you're going to end up, it makes journeying faithfully down here a lot easier. A confident hope of salvation. It purifies your soul.

It keeps it from being defiled by Satan. It comforts the soul and keeps it from being troubled and tormented by Satan. He would tempt us into despair, but good hope keeps us trusting in God and rejoicing in him.

Now let's go to number six. And that is the sword, which is the spirit of God, the sword. Look at it there in verse 17.

He says, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. So the sword is the word of God. I said spirit of God.

I should have said the word of God. Now it's the Holy spirit of God. And by the way, this is the only offensive weapon we've come up against so far, but it's the only one you need.

I mean, when you've got the magic sword, you don't need anything else. Have you ever seen star wars? He pulls out that laser beam. It's over.

Well, that's the way we are. If you take the word of God, which is the sword of the spirit, you've got all the offensive power you need. And it is the spirit that renders the word efficacious.

That means it accomplishes what it's supposed to accomplish and powerful. Hebrews 4.12 says the Bible is sharper than any two edged sword. So with the word, we assault the assailants that come against us.

And scriptural arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel temptation. So with this offensive weapon, sin must be dragged forth from its hiding places and slain before the Lord. That's what God requires.

Remember what our Lord did in Matthew four, Satan came against him. He'd say, it is written. It is written.

It is written giving us the example of using that offensive weapon, that two edged sword of the word of God. There's a power in that. Have you ever been in a tempting moment and a word of God, the word of God came to you.

And by the way, I've noticed in my own walk, it doesn't just come. I have to put it on. Are you with, you remember that? He said, put it on.

That may, you know what that means? That means I'm going to have to beforehand make sure I've got some scripture memorized and hidden my heart with the expressed intent that I'm going to use this when temptation strikes. It's a preparation and a perseverance and an ever present diligence in this warring against sin. Psalm 119, nine and 11.

How can a young man keep his way pure by keeping it according to that word? I've hidden that word within my heart that I might not sin against thee. Well, now let's go to the conclusion and we see the seventh item here. And I've, I've given this one a name.

It's not in the scripture, but I call this the buckle of persistent prayer. That's number seven. Now buckles not in here.

I made that up, but it's just so you can remember it. Notice what he says in verse 18, the buckle of persistent prayer. He said with all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the spirit.

And with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the same. Now I call this the buckle of persistent prayer, because it's the buckle that unlocks the power of each one of these pieces of armor. Prayer has to surround and energize, if you will, all of it.

Persistent prayer. We must join prayer with all the other graces, all this grace armor that we've been given. We must go to God, imploring him and pleading with him for help and assistance.

Praying always is talking about a disposition of prayer and attitude of prayer. Prayer is foundational for the deployment of this armor and the exercising of the two edged sword. Now notice the accumulation of terms he uses there in verse 18, and he uses this to emphasize the ever necessity for prevailing persistent prayer.

Notice with all prayer and petition, that's talking about types of prayer. Pray at all times. That's talking about just a continual walk in prayer in the spirit.

With this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance. That means you got to work at prayer for all the saints. That means we got to pray for each other.

Do you notice the emphasis there? All prayer and petition. That's all types of prayer. That's why in the accountability notebook we talk about praise and we talk about adoration and appreciation and thanksgiving.

We talk about confession. We talk about supplication and intercession. All prayer and petition, all times.

That's that walk in prayer. Paul says in another place, pray without ceasing. Then he says with all perseverance.

That means there's a work in prayer at times. And then for all the saints, that's praying for each other. And can I get you as we close to look at Luke 22? We'll be closed with this.

Look at Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. Look at Luke 22 and look at verses 31 and 32. Luke 22 verses 31 and 32.

Jesus is responding to Peter, calls him Simon here. And I don't think it's incidental that the preceding verses talk about the apostles arguing about who's going to be the greatest. And Jesus telling them that you should try to be servant of all, not the greatest.

And behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat. Satan has asked God to get you, Simon. Satan has asked permission to just sift you like wheat, just tear you up.

Boy, I love this. Look what Jesus says in verse 32. But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail and that you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.

Maybe you've got a child that's gone wrong. I want you to pray for them that God would not allow Satan to sift them like wheat. Maybe your husband or your wife is not right with God and maybe they're in a rebellion.

I want you to intercede for them like Jesus did for Simon. Say, God, I ask you, don't let Satan sift them like wheat. Maybe you've got a friend in Christ that's not right with God.

Intercede for them and pray and say, God, I ask you, don't let Satan sift them like wheat. I believe God will honor that prayer. I believe that'd be a good prayer for you to remember as you intercede for one another in this warfare.

So we are to daily and persistently walk, warring with God's armor, the belt of genuineness, the breastplate of righteous living, the boots of gospel assurance, the shield of temptation, quenching faith, the helmet of firm salvation, the sword of the ministry of the word of God, and the buckle of persistent prayer. Now listen, listen, that's the way and the only way you can fight sin and win. There are no shortcuts.

There are no quick fixes. There are no little chance, no little mantra you can say and get it fixed. That's the way you fight against sin and win.

Now it may wrestle you at times. It may wrestle you and throw you down, but I want to tell you, child of God in Jesus Christ, it cannot hold you down. And there's gospel forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Amen. If he throws you down once, repent and ask God forgiveness. God will forgive you.

You get back up on your feet and you get back in that march and you get back in that line and you go back to war for God's glory because God didn't give up on you and you can't give up on yourself. He didn't own us. We don't belong to him.

We belong to God. And there's a victory in Jesus. The preceding message comes from the expository preaching ministry of senior pastor teacher, Dr. Jeff Knoblett.

For more information or other materials that are available, contact Anchored in Truth Ministries at www.anchoredintruth.org or call us toll free at 1-800-565-PRAY. I have food to eat you do not know about. He had some of that hidden manna.

Then in modern amplified paraphrase, the disciple said, did somebody go out and get the Lord a big mac and fries? He said he's got food we don't know about. I mean, did somebody slip something in here when we weren't looking and gave him something to eat? And John 434, the Lord said, no, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and accomplish his work. Jesus said, I am just faithful to my Father's will and he provides the manna.

He meets my need. Listen, child of God, God not only has abundant provision of material goods for his faithful children, he has rich satisfying food for the soul. When you need it, when the world says you won't make it, when the world says you're not going to get ahead, when the world says you're a loser.

And in this coming Babylonian empire, the world's going to look at them and say, you can't buy, you can't sell, you can't trade, no commerce, no money, no food. God looks at them and says, don't worry about it. Stand for me.

Don't take the mark. I've got hidden manna. I have things they know not of.

He'll give the material provision and he'll give food satisfying to the soul. He'll bathe your soul in the balm of Gilead and with the oil of his presence. And you will know peace, love, and joy in his will.

And you'll know more peace, love, and joy than all the pagans back in Egypt and all the false prophets at Jezebel's vial table will ever know. And all the compromisers and false professors who succumb to the mark of the beast and line it with Babylon, they will never know the love, joy, and peace that God will provide to his own, right in the midst of their suffering. Well, he said, I'll be your provision.

I've got some hidden manna for you. Let me ask you something, child of God. You ever tasted some of that hidden manna? You ever tasted some of that? You ever stood when everybody said, no, don't stand here? I wish I could tell you the times I had some all-wise prophet look me in the face and said, that won't work.

That won't work. We just go the Word of God. The Word of God, God didn't, God didn't, you know, God never tells me to work.

He just says, do it. And then time after time after time after time, He provides hidden manna nobody ever saw. Oh, goodness gracious.

Some of this is going to hit some of y'all about your third rib tomorrow. And Jesus is going to throw it up in there and say, praise God, I got hidden manna nobody knows about. You better hear me, First Baptist Church of Muscle Shoals.

You're known as a church that's purposing to walk with God in a day when it's very comfortable to compromise in the church. If you keep purposing to walk with God, you're going to need some of this hidden manna along the way. And I promise you, it'll be there.

It'll be there. Well, he says, I've got more than that for you. Boy, God's good to His people.

He's good to His people. Well, look at verse 17 again. He's got more.

To him who overcomes, to him I'll give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone and a new name written on the stone, which no one knows but he who receives it. Now, first of all, He says, for those believers on earth, when the awful events of Revelation unfold on earth, those future believers, He said, I've got something special for them. I've got a new name for them.

The world's going to be calling them heretics, fanatics, right-wing extremists, cultists. We know our forefathers of the faith were accused of cannibalism, adultery, breaking up homes, all kinds of slanders. These folks are going to be labeled everything in the world.

But listen, listen, listen, listen. God says, I've got a new name for you. I'm going to put on you.

Nobody knows the name yet. Now, what's the point? The point is this. In this day, you can wear one of two names.

You can be a people of the lamb or people of the beast. God says, I've got a new name for my people. Those who are on the earth during this event, I've got a new name.

God prophesied this of Israel. In the end times, the majority of those saved are going to be Israel because God prophesied, I'm going to redeem Israel. There's going to be a saved remnant of Israel.

And I'm going to come establish a thousand-year kingdom with them on the earth. And during that process of being established, that's when they'll get their new name. And no one knows it yet.

Isaiah 62, 2. And the nations will see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory. And you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will designate. What is that new name? We don't know yet.

He's got a special label for the people of God that go through the tribulation. Isaiah 65, 15. And you will leave your name for a curse to My chosen one, and the Lord God will slay you, but My servants will be called by another name.

We do know back in the text we looked at a little bit earlier, Revelation 19, when the Lord Jesus comes, the Bible says He has a name which no one knows. So the Lord says, just hang on. They'll ridicule you, mock you, reject you, even kill many of you for not taking the name of the beast.

But don't worry about that. I've got a new special name for you. Brother Jeff, what is that new name? Don't know.

By the way, I'm not going to be there. But the ones that are will receive this new name. Now tied in with this, notice there in Revelation 2, 17, He said, I will give him a white stone and a new name written on the stone, which no one knows, but he who receives it.

Now we do know this is most likely a parallel, an analogy of what the high priest wore. The high priest had a breastplate and on that breastplate he had stones. On the stones of the high priest's breastplate were the names of the tribes of Israel.

So he's taking that thinking that any Jew would understand and he's saying, I'm going to write a new name on a white stone that will stand for, if you will, the presence of God. So I think what he's saying here, as the priest was the one who entered into my presence, in these difficult days, others may have the mark of the beast, but you're going to have a new name and you're going to enjoy my intimate presence. Shout of God, listen to me.

If you've got intimacy with God, you need nothing else. Nothing else. Now that doesn't mean we shouldn't try to have other things.

We have families and homes and retirement. Those are all appropriate and good. But I'm telling you, if it means losing everything for your Lord, He will come with an incredible, precious, supernatural presence.

He said, I've got a white stone for you. That's the stone of the breastplate of the priest who could go into the presence of God. And the people of God will have this new name on this stone.

And I do not believe this is literal, it's figurative language. And what this says is, as they walk through this earth, they have the mark of the lamb while others wear the mark of the beast. Because when this day comes, there will only be two types of people.

The people of the lamb and the people of the beast. And God says, I'll take care of my people. Today on Anchored in Truth, Pastor Teacher Jeff Knoblet concluded our study of the church at Satan's throne.

It's a part of our ongoing series of the seven churches of the Revelation. You can receive an audio copy of today's study by writing Anchored in Truth, Box 520, Florence, Alabama, 35631. Again, the address, Anchored in Truth, Box 520, Florence, Alabama, 35631.

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Call toll free at 1-800-565-PRAY. Or request it online by visiting our website at www.anchoredintruth.org. This has been Anchored in Truth, the expository preaching ministry of senior pastor teacher, Dr. Jeff Knobloch. Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace.

You're invited to join us as we celebrate God's amazing grace during Spring Outreach 2005 at First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals, Sunday, April 17th through Wednesday, April 20th. Our guest speaker for the week will be Dr. Jimmy Milliken of Mid-America Baptist Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee. Worship through singing will be led by Brother Tom Clay, Associate Pastor, Director of Music Program and the First Baptist Church Choir and Orchestra.

Join us Sunday morning at 9 o'clock for a small group Bible study and for the service at 10.30. Sunday evening we begin at 6.15, then Monday through Wednesday the services are at 7 o'clock each evening. Spring Outreach 2005, Sunday, April 17th through Wednesday, April 20th at First Baptist Church, Muscle Shoals.

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