

Fil-Am Community Church

Pastor Rolly Estabillo

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BE A WARRIOR, NOT A WORRIER (Part 2)

Good morning, Warriors! I didn't say worriers, although many of us, I believe, haven't made that jump yet from being worriers to becoming warriors. They're so closely related in spelling but largely different in meaning. God wants us to make that jump. And I hope we'll always keep this in mind as we bravely face the challenges in front of us.

Wouldn't it be nice if we don't worry anymore? That's easier said than done.

There's a poem called, "Why Worry?" It says,

In this life there are only two things to worry about.
Either you will be rich or poor.

If you are rich, there is nothing to worry about.
But if you are poor, there are only two things to worry about.

Either you will be healthy or sick.
If you are healthy, there is nothing to worry about.

But if you are sick, there are two things to worry about.
Either you will live or you will die.

If you live, there is nothing to worry about.
If you die there are only two things to worry about.

You will either go to heaven or to hell.
If you go to heaven, there will be nothing to worry about.

If you go to hell, you'll be so darn busy shaking hands with all your friends, you won't have time to worry!

SO WHY WORRY?

Last week we talked about the spiritual battle that takes place every day of our lives. We looked at verses 10-13 of Ephesians 6.

So, please open you Bibles to this passage and let's read together verses 10-13. *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."*

From these verses we saw that our real strength is being strong in the Lord because ultimately all power comes from him. Then, we also saw that our real defense is the full armor of God, and lastly, we saw that our real enemy is the Devil and his demons, not people like us.

We also saw the picture of a Roman Soldier who the apostle Paul compares the Christian too. The Roman soldier was the best fighting soldier during that time.

Our message today is the second in a two-part series on that spiritual battle that takes place every day of our lives, and the armor of God that we need to put on in order to survive that battle. We will continue to look at our scripture from Ephesians concentrating today on verses 14-20. We will take a look at the pieces of armor that Paul tells us we need to put on. So, here we go.

The first piece of armor is mentioned in verse 14 which is

1. The Belt of Truth – which refers to Living Uprightly.

Paul compares it to a soldier's belt. Now, many of us wear a belt to keep our pants up, although as time goes by, my pants seem to be shrinking around the waist and I don't seem to need one as much as I used to. When I was a little boy, I was so thin that I never wore pants without a belt. If I didn't have a belt, I would use a "perdible" or in English, a perdible. Just kidding, it is safety pin.

Nowadays, belts are decorative as well as functional. And they come in different colors, shapes and sizes. How many have more than one belt? Sometimes, it's hard to decide which belt to use.

But for a Roman soldier, there was only one belt and it was a part of his armor. The belt, which was often made of leather, was wrapped around the soldiers waist and kept his toga or cloak from flying all around during battle.

The Roman soldier's belt held everything in close, keeping him in fighting readiness. It was also where he would keep his sword and other weapons ready for battle. The belt tied everything together.

In our spiritual battle gear, truth, our belt, wraps itself around the believer. It is truth which ties together the believer's armor. In our warfare against Satan and his demons, our enemy uses deception and deceit as one of their weapons. It is our belt of truth that illuminates our way and enables us to be ready to fight. Truth speaks of an authentic lifestyle. This lifestyle means telling, living and representing truth.

There are many people today who live a double lifestyle, saying one thing and doing another. Living a truthful life today is getting harder and harder. More and more we see people whose conduct reveals their dishonesty. Wearing the belt of truth means that we live honestly, in integrity, and without hypocrisy. It means applying truth to how we live our lives. There is also the truth in the words we use.

We, as a society, have twisted our words so that they are no longer meaningful. I read somewhere that taxes are described as "revenue assessment enhancements". Truth says that they're taxes. Abortion is called "freedom of choice". Truth says that it is destruction of unborn life. There is this former Governor in the south who was having an affair while in office and when he got caught referred to her mistress as his "soul mate". Truth says that they were having an adulterous relationship. Satan has worked at

us so much that all our words now have to be politically correct so as not to offend anyone.

I heard someone say to another, "You are lying!" "No, I'm not" came the reply. I'm just twisting the truth."

When we have the belt of truth girding us, it keeps us living in truth, not twisting it. It means walking in truth, being authentic, not living a life of deception.

The second piece of our armor is mentioned also in verse 14 which is

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness. This refers to Knowing Who I Am in Christ.

The Roman soldier wore the breastplate. This piece is very important because it covered his vital organs. The heart, lungs, kidneys stomach, and other organs were covered by this important piece of armor. Paul is using this symbol to tell us that it is righteousness that protects us in those vital areas of our relationship with God so that the life of Christ within us is not removed. Righteousness comes from God. It is not something that we have. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."*

It is through Christ that we are made righteous, not guilty, innocent of our sins. That righteousness which is through Christ means that we are able to turn away from sin and experience fellowship with God. We have been set free from our former manner of life. We are a new creation as the Bible says in 2 Cor. 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”* So, without this breastplate of righteousness, we will be susceptible to every temptation from Satan.

The Bible tells us that we have been set free from the slavery of sin and death through Jesus Christ. The challenge is to live like who we really are. Romans 6: 1-2 and 11-13 says *“Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more kindness and forgiveness? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?..... So you should consider yourselves dead to sin and able to live for the glory of God through Christ Jesus. 12 Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to its lustful desires. 13 Do not let any part of your body become a tool of wickedness, to be used for sinning. Instead, give yourselves completely to God since you have been given new life. And use your whole body as a tool to do what is right for the glory of God.”* (NLT)

When Satan attacks our heart, he does it in little insignificant ways, getting us to sin in small, seemingly insignificant ways, until the poison of his attacks destroy and kill our heart for the Lord. When we put on the breastplate of righteousness, we guard our heart against these attacks, we

live depending on the goodness and mercy of Christ, and walk in His holiness every day.

The third piece of armor is mentioned in verse 15, “your feet fitted”. This talks about a pair of sandals or boots. So, we have the

3. Boots of Peace. This refers to “Being Still”.

Some historians suggest that the Roman soldier’s boots were the secret of the Roman conquest. The boot that a Roman soldier wore was an open toed, spiked shoe which laced up past his ankles. It could be compared to the shoes that football players wear. Any football fan knows the need for a player to have shoes that can grip the different types of turf that they play on. Without the proper shoes, a football player will slip and slide and be unable to evade or fight off a would-be tackler. It was very similar to a Roman soldier’s need for firm footing. A soldier must traverse different terrain, climb rocks and trees, walk over sharp jagged stones, wade through ponds and swamps, and have sure footing during combat. Most battles were hand-to-hand and a soldier could not afford to be pushed backwards or slip. The soldier’s boots helped a soldier stand his ground and advance on his enemy.

We must put on the boots of peace. When we battle against the attacks of Satan, we must have the gospel of peace to stand firm. There are two qualities of peace that we experience as Christians. The first is the peace that we have with God.

As Christians, we are no longer fighting against God, turning our will against His. Paul tells us in Romans 5:1 *“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”*. Because of the good news in Jesus, we now experience peace and harmony with God. We no longer struggle against Him or his will for our lives. The second quality is the peace of God. Philippians 4:7 says *“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* This is a peace in knowing that no matter what we go through in life, we have the peace of God within us. The peace of God, means that we can experience His peace even in the most difficult circumstances. It is the peace of God that is within us that causes us to have that calm, self assurance no matter what the situation.

We’ve all heard or even told someone to “get a grip” when life’s problems cause them to fall apart. But how can someone “get a grip”, if they nothing to grip onto? Knowing Jesus gives us something to hold on to, to have something to grab when problems arise. Putting on the boots of peace enables us to stand firm, It gives us traction in our life. It’s a way to plant our feet against Satan’s attacks and climb and walk on uncertain ground. When we wear the boots of peace, we can face any attack Satan may throw at us and be able to stand firm and have a peace about everything, knowing that we have the strength and power of Jesus within us.

The first three pieces of our armor are things that must be put on and worn all the time, by the Roman soldier, as well as us, and they are never taken off.

The next three however, were only taken up when the actual fighting was about to begin.

Now remember, Paul is writing this as he is actually chained to a Roman soldier, one of the best fighting soldiers in the world at that time, and he is comparing the weapons and armor of this mighty warrior to the spiritual weapons and armor that we must have in our battle.

The fourth piece of armor Paul describes in verse 16 is

4. The Shield of Faith. Which refers to “Trusting God”.

Now a Roman soldier had two different types of shields that he would use. The first was a smaller shield, about two feet in diameter which was strapped to the arm and was used in close combat. The shield Paul is referring to, however, was a much larger shield, about 2-1/2 feet wide and 4-1/2 feet tall. It was made of wood and covered with leather or metal. What happened during times of combat was that the enemy forces would launch a barrage of arrows toward their enemies soldiers. Often these arrows were wrapped in pieces of cloth and soaked in pitch. The tips would then be set on fire and the arrows would then be shot at the enemy. These flaming missiles could inflict serious damage on unprotected troops. The Roman soldier would stand behind these large shields to protect themselves from these flaming arrows. The shields were designed so that the arrows when striking the

shields would be put out by the leather covering on the shield which was often soaked with water.

Our shield is the shield of faith. When Satan launches his flaming arrows or darts at us we have our shield of faith to protect us. And what are these flaming darts? Well, how about doubts, discouragement, depression, fear, feelings of hopelessness, guilt, shame, greed, lust, pride, stubbornness, not trusting and the list goes on.

The shield of faith is a shield of trust. We are told to walk by faith, putting our trust in the Lord. Believing in God to take care of our every need. Having faith that no matter what happens to us, God will be there to help us through. By using the shield of faith, we are able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of Satan. When we are attacked with doubts, worry, discouragement, temptations, guilt and shame, we can trust in God and in his ability to protect us and having confidence in his word.

Psalm 91:1-4 (NLT) say “Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. 3 For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. 4 He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.”

Our fifth piece of armor described in verse 17 is

5. The Helmet of Salvation. This refers to Confidence in Christ's Work.

The helmet of a soldier protected his head. Even today, the helmet is a vital part of a soldier's armor. No soldier in his right mind would go into battle without his helmet. The helmet gives the soldier a certain amount of confidence.

The helmet of salvation gives us confidence in Christ. We have been saved by what Christ did for us on the cross. No one can take that away. The helmet of salvation protects our minds from the attacks of our enemy. Satan seeks to strike us with discouragement and doubt. He loves to point out our failures and faults and anything else that seems negative. He wants us to doubt our salvation, to doubt God's goodness, to doubt God's word, to be just generally depressed. Satan will try by every means at his disposal to discourage and defeat us. But it will be the helmet of salvation which will give us our assurance in Christ. That no matter who we are and what we do, we can be confident that we are headed to heaven because of Christ's work on the cross.

Jesus died on the Cross in order to give us this helmet of salvation. When he died on that cross, He made the greatest statement about His love for us and about His desire to save us that could ever be made. If you want assurance, look to the cross. Jesus died there for you. Salvation is not only the forgiveness of past sins, it is the strength to overcome, even conquer, present

and future sins. The helmet of salvation gives us confidence in our eternal security.

So, salvation is not about our goodness, which we really don't have, or our good works, which we think we do. Salvation is not about us, but about God. Titus 3:5 says, *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."*

Now so far, all the pieces of armor that we have talked about have been defensive in nature. A protection against the attacks that we face. But we also have an offensive weapon in our armor. This is the 6th piece of armor what Paul calls in verse 17 as

6. The Sword of the Spirit or the Word of God. This refers to Using the Bible.

The sword that the Roman soldier used was a short 18" sword that was razor sharp on both sides. It was used both offensively and defensively and it was deadly. Our sword is the Word of God. The Greek word that is used here for Word means to utter, to pronounce or speak. It means the actual saying or speaking the word of God. Hebrews 4:12 says *"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart"*.

Jesus used this spiritual weapon when he was tempted by Satan in the desert. Each time Satan attempted to deliver a blow, Jesus blocked the attack with the word of God, quoting scripture. In every encounter He went on the offensive speaking the word of God. When Satan comes at you again and again and again, follow Jesus's example. In Matthew 4:10 and 11 Jesus said *"Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'"*. Then the devil left him.

Using a sword is something that takes time and practice. A soldier must practice using his sword, practice the defensive and offensive moves to defeat his enemy. In order to use our sword, we must also practice and use it.

That means being in the word every day. Memorizing God's word. Knowing and understanding the Bible. Studying it. By becoming familiar with the Word of God, you are storing away spiritual weapons for the Spirit to use. He will bring to your mind those passages which apply to the situation you are facing. Your mind will be trained to think like God thinks. You will be able to pierce through the lies and deceptions of the enemy.

Jesus knew the word of God and was able to defend and attack the devil, using the scriptures to attack and drive His enemy away. When we come under attack, we must use our armor to defend ourselves and know and use the spoken word of God to counter-attack and drive our enemy away. The word of God is a powerful weapon in our unseen battle.

Now, as Christian soldiers, we have another weapon that the Roman soldier didn't have. This secret weapon is prayer. Paul says in verse 18: *"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind. be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints"*.

Paul tells us to pray, pray, and pray, and then pray some more. It is said that all of hell trembles when we pray. Now, I will not talk much about it because we have a whole series on prayer that we will tackle right after our family camp. For now, let me just stress that we are in a battle, a war. When we accept Christ, we become the front line soldiers in the unseen battle of the spirit world. The only problem is, is that we are sheep. And sheep don't go to war like a horse or elephant does. So God gives us the armor and weapons we need to fight our battles. He gives us the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the boots of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit and the power of prayer. It is up to us to put that armor on. With this armor we can defend and defeat any attack Satan may throw at us.

Without it, we are defenseless against his tricks, temptations, deceit, discouragement, and lies. And we will fall victim to his attacks.

Folks, the Bible says that we are God's warriors and conquerors. In fact, more than conquerors. Romans 8:37 says, *"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."* Why? Because Jesus Christ has already conquered all your enemies for you. Look at the next two verses,

Romans 8:38-39, *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

God loves you, that’s why he’ll do anything for you. But like a good warrior, we must be trained and put on the armor that God has given us as we ready ourselves for the battles ahead of us.

We have the power of the living God available to us. Jesus has already won the war, the victory is ours! Put on the armor of God. Put on the strength and power of Jesus Christ. And we will have victory in our battle.

Let us Pray....