

THE MAIN THING:

Donning the Armour of God allows us to withstand and stand firm against the spiritual attacks of Satan and his demons.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. How do you think Facebook has changed the way people talk to each other?
2. How does having coffee or conversation challenge you to keep from getting caught in unhealthy talk?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. What is the methodology of Satan in our daily battles? (See Genesis 3:1, John 10:10, John 8:44.)
2. What are the purposes and advantages of the police officer's duty belt, bullet-proof vest, and duty boots?
3. Read Ephesians 6:10-15. What is the Christian affirming by daily putting on the belt of truth?
4. Read Romans 8:1, 1 Thessalonians 4:7, and Revelation 12:10. What is the significance of continually wearing the breastplate of righteousness? What is the cost of not wearing it (Psalm 51:6-12)?
5. How does proper footwear give us the readiness and confidence to stand firm? Why do we need to stand firm?

PURSUSSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community*

1. What are your challenges of keeping these three pieces of the armour on throughout the day?
2. A prayer to pray each day. "Lord, here I am. My hands are open and available to do the assignments you have for me."

THE WORD (NIV)

Genesis 3:1 (NIV) Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

John 10:10 (NIV) ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 8:44 (NIV) ⁴⁴You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Ephesians 6:10–15 (NIV) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For 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. ¹³Therefore 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. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Revelation 12:10 (NIV) ¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

Psalm 51:6–12 (NIV)

⁶Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

⁷Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

⁹Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.

¹⁰Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Sermon Study Summary

The '**Armour of God**' is an imagery the Apostle Paul used to describe how a Christian ought to prepare himself to face spiritual tribulations. We shall examine the first three armour pieces. Satan loves to deceive us, to discourage us, and to distract us from God and the Word. The good news is that when we place on the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, and the Shoes of Peace we can have the confidence to withstand the attacks of the enemy. Beginning with the Belt of Truth, we must repeatedly remind ourselves of the truth revealed through Christ, because we know Satan will use various means of deception to make us question the Word of God through lies and half-truths, to have us doubt God and his promises. If Satan can manipulate a person into a position of half-surrender then he has them where he wants them; lukewarm Christians who 'go through the motions' of life are left paralyzed in their faith and, therefore, are unable to carry out God's will to its full extent. Now the analogy of armour Paul used was probably inspired by the Roman centurions who guarded Paul during his imprisonment, and a centurion's belt served to support and protect his abdomen, but also was a support for his essential equipment – sword, shield, and the like. It held all the defensive and offensive tools needed to fend off an opponent. In a similar way, when we put on the Belt of Truth each day we are reaffirming our faith in God and thus equipping ourselves with the necessary beliefs and mindset to fend off Satan's deception. The reader must remember that Satan is the father of lies: when we lie or exaggerate details of our lives we do so in an attempt to look more impressive to other people even though we are deceptive in the process. We may even lie to hurt others out of revenge or spite. The slanderer is the devil's delivery person; lies is the language of Satan; there is no truth in him. And since God embodies truth He opposes every lie, no matter the context. Since the Lord loves truth, He comes near to those who live with integrity; with the Belt of Truth we pledge to live in God's truth and to live honestly and with integrity.

The **second armour** piece is the Breastplate of Righteousness. This armour piece is to withstand the attacks of the devil, who seeks to discourage our faith in God. Military breastplates were used to protect a soldier's vital organs – the heart being one of them. In the ancient world, the heart was seen as the centre of our human will. We must put on the righteousness of God, or 'holy living', daily and by doing so recall these two truths. First, in Christ we are righteous before God; He no longer sees our impurity but sees Christ's purity. Second, we declare in our hearts that we yearn to live a God-centred life each day. The many failures we experience can be traced back to failing to live a God-centred life wholeheartedly. When we draw our confidence and identity from God, the accusations of the Enemy are mitigated or silenced.

The **third piece** of armour is the Shoes of Peace. This armour protects us from the distractions of the Enemy. In everyday life, a soldier's footwear is an integral part of his full armour. A centurion's footwear was imbedded with spikes to hold his ground and stand firm when faced with opposing forces. When we step into the Shoes of Peace we proclaim, "Lord, I am at peace with you and others" and "Lord, my hands are open and available to do the assignments you have for me." Satan's aim is to interfere with our relationship with God and to distract the Spirit's promptings and guidance. When we are at peace with God we are able to nurture our relationship with God. When we attain this peace we are capable to surrender our lives and will to God and live in humility so we may bring glory to the Father, for God shows favour to the humble and strengthens them. When we put on the Shoes of Peace we also declare, "Lord, please use me as Your instrument of peace." In Hebrew the word for peace is translated as *Shalom*. But more than simply a blessing of peace and non-conflict, *Shalom* was a blessing of prosperity. Peace is also meant to bring spiritual growth. The peace we find in Christ enables us to reach out into the world and reveal the Gospel through our actions and our lives. The hopelessness, despair and pain of this life do not need to be the end of the story. When we live for God we invest in people, people that matter to God. Joy in this world, therefore, does not come from divided passions but comes from serving God and seeking His kingdom above all else.

With these three armour pieces we can withstand deception, discouragement, and distractions and retain our focus on God and His work.