

From Now On, Buckle Up

I. Recognize the enemy and his tactics

A. Enemy

"We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces of evil." v. 12

Satan is the force behind the cosmic battle waged in the heavenly realm.

Satan- adversary, Devil- slanderer, Apollyon - destroyer, descriptive of who he is and what he does.

B. Schemes or strategy

1. Turn us away from God

a. Liar

Foundational lie is *the* lie of Romans 1

"Meaning, significance and fulfillment is found in created things rather than the Creator, who is not good, but random, stifling and unfair." (TCH)

Leads to self-reliance and pride. Trusting in our own agenda and abilities.

Temptation – *Did God really say?*

b. Accuser

Flaming arrows - accusations of the conscience, reminders of your failures, guilt, fear, and doubt.

Self-reliant pride and self-condemnation turn us inward and we lose sight of Christ.

2. Tear down

Destroyer - assault on:

a. What God is building

Creational structures – Relationships in family, household, especially marriage

The church -Divisions, factions

b. Our trust and enjoyment of God

Intent on destroying 5 things:

The word of God and its reliability

The character of God and His generosity

The righteousness of God and His dependability

The enjoyment of God and its abundant pleasures

The fellowship of the people of God; and its harmony and unity. (Ferguson, 176)

The believer's own "righteousness, integrity, or rectitude of mind cannot resist the accusations of conscience, the whispers of despondency or the power of temptation much less the severity of the law or the assaults of Satan." (Baugh, 528, quoting Hodges)

II. Remember the source of your strength

"Finally be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

A. The Lord has won

Under His feet and ours - Christ has defeated His enemies. They cannot prevail against His church.

*"May you know the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe, according to the working of the **strength** of His **might**...when He raised [Christ] from the dead and seated Him...far above all rule*

and authority and power and dominion, and above every name...He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church.” (Eph 1:19-22)

Power, strength, might (v. 1:19) the same three words used in 6:10. The power that raised Christ is the same resurrection power God brings to bear in our lives.

B. The Lord is inseparably for you

Q. “If God is for us -

Who can be against us? Who can bring a charge? Who can condemn us? Who can separate us?

A. No one...Nothing. “God is the one who justifies...more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

Rom 8:31-3

III. Tested armor –forged & furnished by God

A. Messianic Warrior - anticipated in the OT, who straps on his armor to vindicate His people.

“Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist, and faithfulness the belt of His loins.” (Is. 11:4-5)

“He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede;

Then His own arm brought Him salvation and His righteousness upheld Him.

He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head.” (Is. 59:16-17)

Exchange -The righteous for the unrighteous, *“in Your righteousness deliver me!” (Ps. 31:1)*

“The armor in Isaiah is the Lord’s own which He takes up to defeat enemies for the sake of His people, who had no one in their ranks who were righteous to save.”(Baugh, 528)”

B. Tested to the Limit - proven by Jesus in His titanic battle with Satan in the wilderness and on the cross.

David: “I cannot go with [Saul’s armor] for I have not tested it.” Let no man’s heart fail on account of this [uncircumcised Philistine.]” (I Sam 17:32, 39)

Jesus, your champion did not fail, so your heart need not fail on account of your enemies.

C. So stand - the ground Jesus won is the ground we stand on.

“Be courageous, stand fast and you will see God’s deliverance.” (Ex 14:13)

D. Put it on

Imperatives- *take up, put on, stand*, something you must do, by putting on what God has furnished.

Illustration – MWTC soldiers *issued* equipment.

IV. Wear the whole armor of God

“Christ is the ‘whole armor of God’ so that ‘putting on the whole armor of God’ is the same as ‘putting on the Lord Jesus.’” (Baugh, 528) “Put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision for the flesh.” (Rom 13: 14)

The armor stands for truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation and Word – all describe who Jesus is, and what He has given to us.

A. Belt of truth

Belt Leather, buckled on to gather up tunic. Soldier is unimpeded, ready for action. Held the sword.

Truth Jesus is *“the way the truth and the life.”* And *“full of grace and truth.” (John 14:6 1:14)*

“It is only the truth which can dispel the devil’s lies and set us free.” (Stott, 277)

Since the church has *“embraced the truth found in Jesus and His gospel, (4:21, 1:13), we respond by speaking truth in love (4:15).”(Baugh, 550)*

B. Breastplate of righteousness

Breastplate Covers the front and usually the back, protecting the heart and other vital organs.

Righteousness - Irrevocable justification in Christ protects us from Satan's accusations. *"We have an advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous."* (1 Jn. 2:1)

Justification leads to our growth in personal righteousness:

"He who trusts in Christ is one with Christ, having the same righteousness as He...This righteousness is primary; it is the basis, the cause, the source of all our own actual righteousness. For this is the righteousness given in place of original righteousness lost in Adam. It accomplishes the same as that original righteousness would have accomplished; rather, it accomplishes more." (Luther)

C. Boots - equipment of the gospel of peace

Boots Caliga – Half boot, heavy hob-nailed sandals prevented soldier's foot from slipping.

Gospel We are at peace with God, which gives us a firm footing to fight evil, and is the source of our readiness to share the good news: *"how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace."* (Rom 10:15)

"The devil fears and hates the gospel, because it is God's power to rescue people from his tyranny, both us who have received it and those with whom we share it." (Stott, 280)
Jesus: *"He Himself is our peace."* (2:14) *"In Me you may have peace."* (John 16:33)

D. Shield of faith

Shield The larger, door sized shield, which covered whole person. Water soaked leather quenched flaming arrows. Soldiers raised shields in tight configuration, forming an impenetrable wall. United we stand – the church is called to mutual defense, protecting one another.

Faith Is a gift from God's hand: *"faith...is not your own doing; it is a gift of God."* (Eph 1:8)
"It is by faith that we flee to Him for refuge. For faith lays hold of the promises of God in times of doubt and depression, and faith lays hold of the power of God in times of temptation." (Stott, 281)

E. Helmet of Salvation

Helmet Made of heavy metal, could only be pierced by an axe or hammer

Salvation It is the *"hope of salvation"* (1 Thess 5:8). *"the assurance of future and final salvation."* (Stott, 282)
Jesus is our salvation: *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name in heaven by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

F. Sword of spirit = word of God

Sword Short sword used in close encounters, for attack as well as defense.

Word Heb 4:3 stabbing, cutting power of the word which is *"sharper than a two edged sword"* (Heb 4:3)

Context is 5:26 - Your Bridegroom *"gave Himself up for you, having cleansed you by the washing of water and the word."*

*"The word of God is the prophetic, Spirit uttered **gospel** by which Christ's treasured people have been cleansed, which gives the church the most solid ground on which to make it's stand. It is not a word of warning and threat in it's context, but the scriptural word, by which they can turn aside temptations and the attacks of Satan as Jesus did when on earth."* (Baugh, 556)

Jesus is *“the word made flesh.”* (John 1:14) He is God’s last and best word. (Heb 1:1-4)

V. Advancing the kingdom

“Paul turns to the main defense and means for the church not just to stand fast, but to advance in an inexorable, worldwide military march fearful to her enemies - not through instruments of death, but of life: prayer and the gospel proclamation.” (Baugh, 557)

A. Prayer

All times, all prayer, with all perseverance, for all saints.

“What would happen if in your prayer time, you resolve to find ways to serve others by love? Pray for the grace and love of the Spirit to take over, so that you can be part of God’s kingdom purposes for them. Think about how they might be suffering or discouraged, or struggling with sin or temptation. Start to do battle for them in prayer.” (C. J. Miller)

B. Proclaiming the gospel

Boldly – used twice, first for clarity, second for courage.

“The gospel is the core conviction that Jesus has already done everything necessary to connect us to God in way that can’t be broken. We have been armored by Jesus and with Jesus. Preach this to your heart and mind and it will give you the power and motivation to pray and witness.” (TCH)

VI. Blessing from the King

“Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.” (v.23, 24)

A. Brothers – instead of “you” conveys the sense that the letter is for the whole church throughout time.

B. Is grace conditional? (Based on our incorruptible love for the Lord Jesus Christ)

The word order suggests that *“incorruptible”* should qualify the phrase closest to it. i.e. *“the Lord Jesus Christ, who dwells in incorruptibility.”* (Baugh, 576)

Our love for Christ is responsive. When we comprehend *“the love of Christ that surpasses all knowledge”* (v. 3:19) we answer back *“with a love that cannot be corrupted, a love that will never die, a love that will last for all eternity.”* (Ferguson, 193)

C. Full circle

Ephesians *“Opens with the eternal past, [God choose us in Christ before the foundation of the world], and closes with the outlook of immortal hope, [undying, incorruptible love].”* (Stott, 291)

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