

Symphony Devotional Ephesians 6:10-18a

Hello, everyone. Today's devotional will be from Ephesians 6:10-18.

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ 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 firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Over the past couple of weeks in our daily devotionals, we went through the book of Ephesians where the Apostle Paul talked about a lot of different things. Some of these things included oneness in Christ between both Jews and Gentiles, unity in the body of Christ, spiritual strength, what it means to have a new life in Christ, walking in love and submission; all of these things are glimpses and signs of a changed heart because of the Gospel. And in today's passage, the Apostle Paul is giving a final exhortation to the Ephesians. He starts this passage with the word "finally"—after having written to the Ephesians about what it looks like to live a life reflecting the Gospel, Paul says: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." He calls the Ephesians to be strong, not in themselves or in their own might, but in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Paul knows that being strong in ourselves and in our own might will lead nowhere; we are to be strong in the Lord.

Then, Paul goes on to say: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against rulers,

against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Paul reminds us that this battle we are fighting is not a physical one against people, but a spiritual one against evil spiritual forces. This is why he calls us to “put on the whole armor of God”; we are being equipped with spiritual weapons to fight a spiritual battle against spiritual forces. No matter how much we try to fight these battles on our own, we won’t get anywhere without being equipped by the armor of God. It’ll be like flailing our arms at the wind. Instead, Paul exhorts us in verse 13 to “take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

So, what is the armor of God? I’ll just list out what Paul says in this passage. He says there’s:

- The belt of truth
- The breastplate of righteousness
- The shoes of readiness
- The shield of faith
- The helmet of salvation
- The sword of the Spirit (word of God)

Whenever I read through this section about the various pieces of the armor of God, I always thought that the actual specific pieces of armor didn’t really matter. But as I was reading through this passage again, I realized that each piece of armor makes sense with what it’s connected to. Truth is a belt because we can take out and utilize the various truths about God in any given circumstance, much like a tool belt fitted with a tool for every situation. Righteousness is a breastplate because it protects the heart; in this case, righteousness protects our hearts from running astray and from being attacked by the lies of the world. Readiness is like shoes because being ready in the Lord allows us to maneuver and traverse difficult terrain—being ready to maneuver through difficult circumstances. Faith is a shield because it protects us from the lies of the enemy which verse 16 describes as “flaming darts”. Salvation is a helmet because helmets keep secure the most important part of the body, the head, that is to keep us alive; this is exactly what salvation is—an assurance of life because of Christ. And the Spirit, or the word of God, is a sword because the Spirit and the word of God drive out and destroy the enemy; the enemy flees from the might of the Spirit and the might of God’s word.

So, Paul calls us to put on this whole armor of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of readiness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. But at the end of our passage today in verse 18, Paul gives another exhortation, and that is to pray. “Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.” What good is this armor if we don’t supply it with prayer? I kind of view it as a car, where you can have all the parts to a good, functioning car (the engine, the transmission, the wheels, the tires, the brakes, the frame and suspension), but what good is it if it has no fuel? If we are to fight this spiritual battle against spiritual forces with our spiritual armor, we must have our spiritual fuel, and that is prayer. Paul calls us to pray “at all times”—to never cease praying—and to pray “in the Spirit”—that is aligned to the Spirit. He calls us to pray with “all prayer”—that is all kinds of prayer (from lament to thanksgiving, individual to congregational, kneeling in our rooms to during our commutes) every kind of prayer. And he calls us to pray with “supplication”—that is with earnestness and desperation.

So, this morning, I want to give us this reminder that we are battling a spiritual battle against evil spiritual forces. And to combat them, God has given us his spiritual armor, his whole armor, so that we can fight and fuel our battles with earnest prayer. In verse 12, Paul says that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but...against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” We are to wrestle against the spiritual forces of evil. This is not a passive suggestion to sit quietly in our own space, but it is an active command to take up arms and wage war against the spiritual enemy. We are called to fight. To fight with truth, righteousness, readiness, faith, salvation, the Spirit and the Word, and with prayer.

I want to encourage us to keep this reminder in our hearts throughout our day today, our week, and onward: that we are waging war in a spiritual battle against the spiritual enemy. And the way to do that is by actively loving our neighbors, worshiping and crying out to God with our church body, and praying earnestly everywhere we go. When we do this, the Kingdom of God comes down to earth and the enemy is severely weakened as it can’t do anything in the presence of our God. So, let’s remain strong in the Lord, put on the whole armor of God, and never cease to pray.