

Deliver Us #5: The Armor of God

October 29, 2023

Ephesians 6:10-17

D E L I V E R U S
Life in the victory of Jesus

Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray: *Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen.* (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)

Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another.

1. Share a time you felt particularly victorious or particularly defeated.
2. What's the best thing you have but never use? For example, do you have a bike you don't ride, a guitar you don't play, or a book you haven't read?

Introduction

Whether we gather in person or online, our goal remains the same: to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus. His life and teaching is our example and our source of truth. Remember the commitments we make to each other to foster safety and freedom as we pursue spiritual growth together:

- ☐ Whenever possible, please listen to the sermon prior to gathering (Sunday or online).
- ☐ While we are meeting (even online), commit to focussing rather than multitasking. Be all here.
- ☐ Give every person an equal opportunity to share, even if it takes time to form or finish their thoughts.
- ☐ Be respectful and non-judgmental.
- ☐ Honour sharing boundaries (only what you have permission to share, no gossip) and guard confidentiality (what we share here stays here).
- ☐ Don't try to fix, problem-solve or rescue; keep pointing one another to the truths of the gospel for our lives.

Listening to God's Word

If a hockey player showed up to a game without his stick, or a musician without her instrument, or a doctor without a mask or gloves, we would say they were ill prepared for what was happening. In Ephesians 6, Paul says that we are in a battle with the invisible forces of evil, and that our success depends on being equipped with God's armor. Fortunately, this armor is not based on our righteousness or our strength but is provided to us by God. While the battle is real and the opponent is strong, we have victory in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and are given tools to ensure we remain standing at the end of the day.

Small Group Discussion

- ☐ **Read Ephesians 6:10-17.** *What is your first thought when you read through this passage?*
- ☐ *Talk through each piece of armor briefly. How does the physical armor resemble each idea (e.g. how is faith like a shield)?*
- ☐ *Which piece of armor is your favorite or has been most significant for you?*
- ☐ Paul says that it is important to put on the armor because we are fighting against the 'spiritual forces of evil.' *As you consider the past weeks, months, or years, how much do you feel you've been battling evil invisible beings? When do you think you might have been battling and not realized it?*
- ☐ *When have you felt successful in this battle? When do you feel like you've failed? What had made the difference for you between success and failure?*
- ☐ **Read Isaiah 59:15-17.** The Armor of God is not just in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it is described as the armor that God Himself puts on. *How does this change your understanding of what it means to put on the armor of God?*

- ☐ **Read Galatians 3:26-27.** As Christians, we do not just wear the armor of God – we are also ‘clothed with Christ,’ meaning that the victory of Christ is our victory as well. *Where in your life have you experienced significant victory? Where in your life do you want to experience that victory?*
- ☐ In a life group discussion, we sometimes pursue understanding as the chief goal. We take more time to ensure everything makes sense, but could neglect to apply it to our lives. *How often do you work towards simply ‘understanding’ God’s truth rather than living it?*
- ☐ **Read Ephesians 6:13 again.** The purpose of the armor of God is not to ‘understand’ but to ‘stand.’ The word ‘to stand’ is like a fortress that resists every attempt by an enemy army to invade it. *What is the difference between understanding the armor and actually equipping it?*
- ☐ *When has the armor of God enabled you to ‘stand,’ even when the attack has been strong?*
- ☐ **Read James 4:7.** ‘Resisting the Devil’ is a similar idea to ‘standing.’ However, James adds a second encouragement: don’t just resist the devil but ‘draw near to God’ as well. *What has ‘resisting the devil’ looked like for you? Are there any tips, tricks, or techniques that have been fruitful?*
- ☐ *What has ‘drawing near to God’ looked like in your life? When has this gone particularly well for you?*
- ☐ ***How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to or act on what we have read and discussed?***

Practices – Putting on the Armor

The Armor of God is a beautiful picture with rich imagery. However, Paul doesn’t treat it as a simple metaphor but twice says to ‘put on’ the armor (v. 10 & 13). As a group, take a moment to ‘put on’ the armor. (If you own a set of Roman armor at home, one person could put it on as an example.¹) This could take a few different forms:

- One person could simply pray out loud and say, “God, would you please equip us with your armor?”
- Different people could pray out loud for each piece: “God, please equip us with the...”
- Different people could pray a longer prayer out loud for each piece. “God, would you please equip us with the breastplate of righteousness. Even though our righteousness is not enough, remind us that you have redeemed us and that in you we have the righteousness of Christ....”

After you have done this, **read Ephesians 6:18-19.** Paul brings the whole section on the armor of God to a key point: make sure you pray. Prayer is an act of spiritual warfare in which we ‘stand against the devil’s schemes’ (v. 11).

You can stay together as a group but consider breaking into smaller groups or partners. Keeping the armor of God in mind, take some time to pray ‘in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers and requests,’ and specifically for some of the ‘Lord’s people’ who come to mind.

Caring for One Another

- ☐ *Take some time to share if there is something practical your group can help with. After all, part of being a life group is acting like family! **Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?***

¹ If you own a set of Roman armor at home, please let me know. That sounds amazing.