

The Armor of God

Աստուծոյ Մպանազիւնութիւնը

Ephesians 6:10-24

We have arrived to the end of the letter to the Ephesians. What a journey we had together.

I want to stress on the word **together**. God wanted to create **a new family, a new community under Christ's headship**.

“They must put away all the uncleanness of their pre-conversion behavior and live a life of true ‘righteousness and holiness.’ And they must learn to submit to one another in every kind of domestic relationship and so promote harmony in their homes. **Unity, diversity, purity and harmony**,¹ those are the characteristics of the new life in the new community. (Gentiles and Jews)

YET, the opposition is a dark reality, and it is there to attack the Christians. If God has a plan to create a new community, then the opposition likes to destroy it.

God intends to bring people together to worship Him. The evil intends to destroy this unity and to **confuse** the people so that they would **live aimlessly**.

Just look around and you see what I am saying. Wars are countless between nations and between families and individuals.

We have a society where moral laws are relative; the concept of right and wrong is vanished.

Let us read go to the passage:

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. (Eph 6:10-13 ESV)

-**Finally**, or another way to translate, “from now on...” This is the period until the second coming of Jesus.

-Be strong in the Lord, which means to be strong in HIS strength and might. Find your strength in the LORD.

Our strength comes from the LORD. No way we can face evil without HIM. Jesus on the cross defeated the Devil, yet the final victory will be won in His Second Coming. Meanwhile...

We also have our role:

Paul says twice, “Put on the whole armor of God...” and later three times he says “stand firm...”

Without God we cannot stand firm.

-This is not a joke; this is a quite serious attack where the enemy is hidden. It is not “flesh and blood” that one can see.

Our war is:

“against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Eph 6:12 ESV)

In the early writing, Paul already warned the church about the identity of the devil:

in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2 ESV)

and give no opportunity to the devil. (Eph 4:27 ESV)

-The main objective of devil is to guide people to disobedience.

The Devil deceived humanity from the beginning of the creation story: “Why do you need to obey God?” The Devil is a master liar who leads people against God. How sad is the reality when people’s hearts are hardened towards Jesus. We can fall in this trap easily. So let’s read this passage carefully:

Paul gives weapons to fight against evil.

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. (Eph 6:14-18a ESV)

-Stand firm. Հաստատուն կայնիլ

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.

Stand therefore....

How do we stand firm? By putting on the whole armor of God:

-the belt of truth

-the breastplate of righteousness

-shoes of the gospel of peace

-the shield of faith

-the helmet of salvation

-the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

-unnamed weapon: praying at all times in the Spirit

Paul knew Isaiah's writings about the Messiah, we find the concept of the Armor of God there:

but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the

wicked.⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. (Isaiah 11:4-5 ESV)

He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; (Isaiah 59:17 ESV)

In the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul prepared us by mentioning five important points:

Ephesians chapter 1:13

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

We find in this verse five pieces of armor: word of truth, gospel, salvation, believed (faith), sealed with Holy Spirit.

Let us examine those six pieces of clothing that a soldier would wear:

1. The belt of truth: the belt is an important instrument to hold a soldier's tunic as well as his sword. We hear the term, "**tighten your belt**", which means be ready **for action**. **The Truth** is our Lord Jesus Christ; It also can mean to be truthful, having integrity. Without Jesus, I don't think I can have any integrity.

2. The breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate protects the body, the chest, the heart. Righteousness, it means a right relationship with God. Jesus is the

righteous Son of God, the One who made us right with God. This is a strong protection against satanic accusations.

3. Shoes of the gospel of peace. Imagine a soldier without shoes. They provide firmness and protection to the feet; they provide mobility to the soldier to walk forward. The world needs the Gospel of peace, taking the Good News to the world is a war against Satan's world.

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace”, (Isaiah 52:7)

4. The shield of faith. Those shields measured 1.2 (almost 4 feet) meters by 0.75 (2.5 feet), which covered the entire body of the soldier. Our faith in Jesus guards us from doubts, from disobedience, from lust, from fear.

By faith we face the daily challenges that Satan can bring forth in our lives. We can extinguish fire-tipped darts. God himself is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Prov 30:5)

5. The helmet of salvation. The bronze helmet will protect the head of the soldier. Assurance of salvation is a great protection against evil. When we are saved, we are free from the bondage of Satan. We are adopted into the new family of Jesus.

6. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God

The sword has been used for defense and offence. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

The Scripture is double-edged sword; we should never be ashamed to use it. Also, the Holy Spirit will put the Scripture verses in our mouths to fight Satan.

In summary, **the Word of God, the message of the Gospel is the center of this armor.**

What do I mean?

-The Gospel message is the story of God who has victory over sin, death, and the Devil through His Son Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose from the dead; and through the Holy Spirit, who gracefully conveys us that we are sinners and need redemption and salvation from sin and death. Therefore, our lives are transformed to become Christ-centered. We are new creatures in the Kingdom of God. Satan is not content with the Gospel Message, brothers and sisters.

Evil is defeated, yet He is alive and maneuvering humanity.

God's war is not final yet. The kingdom of God is here and not yet fully established. The Devil is alive and wants to swallow us.

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith.

(1 Pet 5:8,9 ESV)

BUT God is stronger than devil. The devil is defeated.

Resist him, firm in your faith...how?

We need to stand firm; we need be watchful... how?

We need to know the truth of the Gospel. We need to know God.

When we are armed with the breastplate of righteousness, that means we are saved by Jesus, and we say NO to sin, and we say YES to Jesus.

We ask the Holy Spirit to protect our minds from false teachings. We embrace a holy life, because God is holy and is asking us to live a holy life.

Last Sunday I urged parents to bring kids to the church. Why?

Where do we learn about the Gospel of peace?

Where do we learn about righteousness of God?

Where do we wear shoes of the Gospel of peace, and go to the mission fields?

Where do we learn about the Truth?

Where can we equip our youth with the sword of the Spirit, defined as the Word of God?

Where do we learn how to pray?

Watch and pray.

It brings me to final unseen weapon, **PRAYER**

Why prayer is important? What does it mean to have a life of prayer, not prayer as ritual, or like spare tire, we use it when we need. NO, prayer is an intimate communication with our Father.

¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, ¹⁹ and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph 6:18-20 ESV)

Equipping ourselves with God's armor is not a mechanical operation; it is itself an expression of our dependence on God--in other words, of prayer... Thus, Scripture and prayer belong together as the two chief weapons which the Spirit puts into our hands.²

Paul brings some important concepts:

We should pray with supplication ինդրուածքով

We should pray and be ALERT. Soldiers are on alert. այս բանին վրայ հսկեցէ՛ք

We should pray for all the people բոլոր սուրբերուն համար,

We should pray to be bold in our testimony. բերանս բանամ համարձակութեամբ

Paul is in prison writing this letter. Instead of asking to be released from prison, his prayer request is to be bold in his teachings.

may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel...

We faced the tragic death of Badveli Harut Khachatryan. We prayed for the miracle of healing. Not every time we will receive what we were asking in prayer. Harut is with the Lord. Now I am praying that the miracle continues after his death. I am praying that the Gospel of Jesus Christ be manifested in all the persons to whom Harut preached. I am praying that more people know the truth of Jesus. I am praying that Harut's testimony about Jesus through music continue that more people would find Jesus as personal Savior. That is the miracle. That is what Paul is asking in his prison. Pray that the gospel will be proclaimed boldly.

This is community prayer. Each person should have personal prayer time, but Paul is asking the church to pray together.

We don't fight alone. We fight together. We pray together. Share your pain with the community that you trust in the church. We are prayer warriors with you.

Let me prepare you, sometimes you will not get the answer you want to hear. We continue to pray together asking God to protect us from the evil, and guide us daily to know Him.

Application

Paul ends with prayer:

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

1. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 206

2. John R.W. Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today, The Message of Ephesians*, P 226