

# THE CHRISTIAN'S CALL OF DUTY

Ephesians 6:10-20

**INTRO:** Open your Bibles once again to Ephesians chapter 6. Last week I started a 2 part sermon called, THE CHRISTIAN'S CALL OF DUTY. Today I wish to finish this sermon. We are talking about SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

We established last week that according to God's Holy Word, and contrary to popular opinion, Satan is indeed real, and he is really out to get you. If you were here, you will remember us reading from **1 Peter 5: 8-9** *"Be sober-minded and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in your faith and in the knowledge that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering."*

Paul, in dictating this encyclical, or circular letter to Tychicus to deliver to the churches of Asia Minor, did everything he could to prepare the congregation at Ephesus, and the others as well, for the spiritual battles they would face. A correct exegesis of this passage gives way to a very sound application for us today. Last week we talked about...

**I) WHAT TO EXPECT:** **vv 10-12** (When you find yourself in a Spiritual battle)

**A) An Impossible Fight:** **v 10** *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power."*

**B) An Invisible Foe:** **vv 11-12** *"Put on the full armor of God, so that you can make your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

After we talked about WHAT TO EXPECT, secondly, we looked at...

**II) WAYS TO EQUIP:** **vv 13-17** We only made through **v 13** where we read, *"Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you will be able to stand your ground, and having done everything, to stand."* The two words, "full armor" is the Greek word, panoplia (pan-o-plee'-ah), which means, full, complete, or ALL! Paul was telling his readers to take up arms, and take it all, they would need it. And so do we!

So, I want to pick up right here at v 14 and see if we can get through the rest of this passage today. Let's read verses 14-17...

**vv 14-17** *"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness arrayed, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."*

Remember last week we spoke about what it meant to "Stand firm". That's the Greek word, Histemi, (His'-tay-me). It means to maintain a specified position or posture. In context it conveys the idea of digging in. We need to dig in, or stand our ground. Paul tells us that to do that, we must have...

**A) The Belt of Truth, Buckled around our Waist:** **v 14** *"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist..."* As we get into these verses, there's two things to...

## I) WHAT TO EXPECT: vv 10-12

A) An Impossible Fight: v 10

B) An Invisible Foe: vv 11-12

## II) WAYS TO EQUIP: vv 13-17

A) **The Belt of Truth, Buckled around our Waist:** v 14 *“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist..”* CONTINUED ...note. First, is the type of armor, and second is the placement of the armor. The first piece of armor mentioned here is the BELT OF TRUTH, and we are told it should be fitted around our waist. Now, it's not uncommon for a belt to be buckled around our waist, but it's unusual for us to think of TRUTH being wrapped around us. So, what's being said here. NOW, LET ME SAY SOMETHING. It's real easy in a passage such as this to read into it conjecture. That's called Eisegesis. Eisegesis is when you interpret a text with a preconceived notion or a predetermined meaning in mind. That's an incorrect handling of God's Word.

The correct method of studying scripture is called Exegesis. Exegesis is when you let scripture speak for itself, and we simply discover the meaning based upon what is revealed to us by the Word and the Holy Spirit. I take very seriously the responsibility of handling God's Word appropriately, so we will be extremely careful as we move through these verses.

V 14 (Berean Literal Bible) *“Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,”* Now, this is very similar to the KJV that says, *“having your loins girt about with truth.”* Let's take these translations together and see what God is wanting us to know. That word, girded, or buckled, is translated from the Greek perizōnnyimi (per-id-zone'-noo-mee). And the definition is, 1. to fasten garments with a girdle or belt 2. to gird one's self 3. A state of readiness.

The definition that is most fitting here, is the state of readiness. In biblical times, soldiers wore either robes or tunics, or in the case of the Romans, skirts, much like a kilt. Obviously, these would not have been easy to run or fight in, so when they made themselves ready for war, they would pull up the garment and tuck it into their belt. This would leave their legs free and unimpeded for battle.

In our passage though, we're not told to fasten up a garment, rather we are commanded to fasten TRUTH around our waist. The idea being that we are only ready for spiritual battles when we are held firm, held together, by the truth. TRUTH is essential to fighting off the lies of Satan. Jesus says in **John 14:6** *“...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me”* So, Jesus is truth! The truth! Our waist, or loins, represents the core of who we are. Physically, it's this center section of our body, think of core exercises. Spiritually, it's the embodiment of who we are! And we are told to wrap ourselves, tightly, and to ready ourselves for battle, with the truth of Christ, and in doing so, He becomes our core strength and help. As **Psalm 46:1** tells us, *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.”* In **John 17:17** Jesus prayed for His disciples and said, *“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”* And we know from reading John 1 that Jesus is the Word. WOW, what a God we serve!

So, *“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist..”* To ready yourself for battle, you MUST read and study God's Word, and hide it in your heart!

I know what you're thinking, he's never going to get through all this armor today. Ha, you may be right.

## I) WHAT TO EXPECT: vv 10-12

A) An Impossible Fight: v 10

B) An Invisible Foe: vv 11-12

## II) WAYS TO EQUIP: vv 13-17

A) The Belt of Truth, Buckled around our Waist: v 14

B) The Breast Plate of Righteousness: v 14b *“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness arrayed,”*

Okay, this is a lot! I could easily preach a dozen sermons on this little phrase, but I'm trying to hurry.

When we first believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we were justified (that is, declared righteous by God). This happened by faith, and it describes what's known as **positional righteousness**. What Paul is referring to in this passage is not so much our position of righteousness but our daily practice of righteousness, **practical righteousness**, living rightly before God and man as we rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Puritan writers called this both the "imputed and imparted" righteousness of Christ for our lives.

Although positional (justifying) righteousness is necessary for us to even enter the fight, Paul is saying that it is our practical (sanctifying) righteousness that must be worked out (relying on the Spirit) in fear and trembling.

Someone has well said that, "When a man is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable. Words are no defense against accusation, but a good (righteous) life is." We are commanded to live a righteous, good life, honoring the God we serve, as a means of defense against our enemy. How are you doing with that?

C) The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace: v 15 (*“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness arrayed,”*) 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace. As we get to verse 15, it's important that we go back and pick up the first phrase of v 14, *“Stand firm then...”* The little conjunction, "and" at the beginning of v 15 let's us know this is a continuation of thought. We "stand firm" by, Buckling the belt of truth, and by, putting on the breastplate of righteousness, AND BY, fitting ourselves with shoes of the gospel of peace!

As I said last week, Roman soldiers had spikes that would attach to the bottom of their sandals to help them dig in, or stand firm, against their enemy. FOR THE CHRISTIAN, it's the GOSPEL OF PEACE that gives us such an advantage. The GOSPEL is the firm foundation on which Christians are to stand! Well then, what is the Gospel of Peace?

**1 Corinthians 15:1-4** *“Now I make known to you...brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved...3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures”* **THAT'S THE GOSPEL!**

It's called the Gospel of PEACE because Adam's sin caused hostility between God and man. Our sin nature causes us to be at war with God. It's only the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of peace, which can bring about reconciliation of man to God and establish the peace that God desires. Amen, thank the Lord!

## I) WHAT TO EXPECT: vv 10-12

A) An Impossible Fight: v 10

B) An Invisible Foe: vv 11-12

## II) WAYS TO EQUIP: vv 13-17

A) The Belt of Truth, Buckled around our Waist: v 14

B) The Breast Plate of Righteousness: v 14b

C) The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace: v 15

**D) The Shield of Faith: v 16** *“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”* The phrase, “In addition to all this” has been translated, “Above all”, “Besides all this”, “And with these”, Here, in the south we would probably say, “On top of all that”, which is likely the most accurate. Above all can indicate a value of more importance. That is not what is meant to be conveyed. Paul has already told to take the full armor, ALL the armor. It’s ALL important. These last three are in addition to the first three.

In biblical times, a shield was a large rectangular shield, about 2 ½ ft wide by 4ft tall. The front was usually rounded so to deflect any arrows that might be shot at a soldier. The Christian soldier’s shield is faith, a faith in God’s trustworthy Word and in the One Who is named Faithful and True, the Lord Jesus.

Paul tells us exactly what faith if God will do. It extinguishes ALL the flaming arrows of Satan that is shot at you. HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE ARE A PEOPLE OF FAITH! Christians who struggle with their faith will always, always, be devastated by spiritual warfare! AND FAITH DOESN’T HAVE TO BE A PROBLEM. **Romans 10:17** *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* NOW NOTICE...

**E) The Helmet of Salvation: v 17** *“And take the helmet of salvation...”* I love the fact that we are told to TAKE the helmet of salvation. This means to accept deliberately and receive readily. The idea is to take or receive or accept into one’s hands, a picture especially appropriate in regard to this portion of the armor, which is salvation.

God offers to all of us the helmet of salvation. Without it you will be destroyed by Satan. There’s no way you can defeat him on your own. The only chance you have is to take the salvation that God freely offers through His Son, Jesus Christ. **Acts 16:31** *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”* Are you willing to put your faith in God today and be saved? Maybe your faith isn’t strong, would you be like the father who cried out to Jesus in **Mark 9:24** *“Lord, I do believe; help [me overcome] my unbelief.”*

I heard Dr. David Smith preach a sermon years ago titled, DO YOU HAVE YOUR HELMET ON? Can I ask you that today? Do you? Are you wearing the helmet of salvation? It’s offered freely to you. You just have to TAKE it! Notice...

**F) The Sword of the Spirit: v 17b** *“And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* The Greek term translated sword (Gr. machaira) refers to the Roman gladius, a short sword about 2 ft long, used for close hand-to-hand combat. The idea is that the Spirit provides a sword for you, and that sword is the Word of God. To effectively use the sword, you must be trained in it’s use. That’s why we offer Bible studies of every sort here at C1C. We have classes going on every week. You need to train in God’s Word!

The Sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon mentioned by Paul in this passage.

## I) WHAT TO EXPECT: vv 10-12

A) An Impossible Fight: v 10

B) An Invisible Foe: vv 11-12

## II) WAYS TO EQUIP: vv 13-17

A) The Belt of Truth, Buckled around our Waist: v 14

B) The Breast Plate of Righteousness: v 14b

C) The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace: v 15

D) The Shield of Faith: v 16 “

E) The Helmet of Salvation: v 17

F) The Sword of the Spirit: v 17b CONTINUED And it's a marvel of a weapon.

Hebrews 4:12 *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it pierces even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

The Word of God is your one great hope. READ IT!

Notice lastly. We talked about, WHAT TO EXPECT and WAYS TO EQUIP, Now notice...

III) WHERE TO ENGAGE: v 18 *“Pray in the Spirit at all times, with every kind of prayer and petition. To this end, stay alert with all perseverance in your prayers for all the saints.”* The best place to engage Satan, is in your prayer closet. If you don't pray, you will never be able to defeat your enemy, the devil.

## CONCLUSION: