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#8 In the Battlefront Series

Standing our Ground

Forest Park Church

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By Jason Corder

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17)

In studying the armor of God and our need to stand in spiritual warfare, we must remember that each piece of armor not only represents an action or attitude that we need to daily practice, but it also represents ways our enemy attacks us.

- We need the belt of truth because Satan is a liar who tries to deceive us and keep us from God's best.
- We need the breastplate of righteousness because Satan continually attacks our vital organs which represent our mind and emotions.
- Believers need the footing of peace because Satan is always trying to attack our relationship with God and our relationships with others. The gospel, truly understood and applied, produces peace with God, the peace of God, and peace with others.
- The last piece of armor considered was the shield of faith. Our enemy always encourages us to doubt God and his promises. However, it is by believing in God and his promises that we can stand in the war.

Today we will consider two more pieces of armor—the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

- We will consider what they represent, why we need them, and how to put them on.

2 I. The Helmet of Salvation

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17)

3 A: The Helmet of Salvation is a Crucial Piece of Armor.

In the movie Saving Private Ryan, there's a scene where a soldier takes off his helmet to analyze a bullet that just hit it. The moment he does so, a soldier takes advantage and shoots his exposed head, killing him instantly.

In the same way, the helmet of salvation protects us spiritually from a powerful **blow of doubt** from the devil.

- As with every other piece of armor, the helmet of salvation shows us how the enemy attacks.
- Here we see how he attacks the how sure we are of our salvation.

4 B: Satan's attack on our minds is actually two pronged.

- He seeks to assure those who are not saved that they are, and are in fact, "good"
- He seeks to create doubt in those who are truly saved, leading to discouragement and depression.
- **I've noticed it is often the Christians who are walking faithfully with God that struggle the most with the certainty of salvation.**
- And those who are not walking faithfully with him are not very concerned about their salvation at all, even though they should be.

When we are constantly worried about their salvation, we are not much use to the kingdom of God.

- We typically don't evangelize or serve.
- We essentially stop growing because we are too concerned with themselves.

- This is why attacking the head is a common tactic of Satan—it makes a Christian unprofitable.

Christ says this about the last days:

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Matthew 7:22-23

“Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

Jesus explains this in the Parable of the Weeds and Wheat (Matt 13:36-43).

- God plants wheat—true believers
- Satan plants weeds—false believers.
- Because of this reality, we must consider if we are truly saved.

Paul and Peter both taught about the need for salvation.

II Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?”

2 Peter 1:10

“Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall.”

This is not something to put off!!

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C: We must use the tests in Scripture to confirm salvation.

Several portions of Scripture are written specifically for this purpose.

1 John 5:13

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life”.

In the book, he gives a series of tests so we can know that we have eternal life.

7 1. The test of obedience.

I John 2:3-5

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him:

No doubt John remembered what Jesus said:

John 8:31

"If you abide in my words, then you are truly my disciples"

If we don't love and follow his Word can we really call ourselves Christians (Christ Followers) in the first place.

Are you abiding in his Word?

8 2. The test of love.

I John 3:14-15

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

Again John repeats Jesus:

John 13:35

"They will know you are my disciples by the way you love one another".

Romans 5:5

and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Do you love People?

9 3. The test of doctrine.

I John 4:15

"If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God."

This is a proper acknowledgment of Christ's humanity and deity.

In the above text John was dealing with the false doctrines of the Gnostics, which were attacking the Ephesian church. I

Do you pass the doctrinal test?

10 4. The test of Loyalty.

I John 2:15

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

- The rich young man was not willing to leave his riches to follow Christ (Matt 19:16-22),
- We are called to be willing to leave the praise, adoration and riches of this world for the kingdom of God (Lk 14:26-27).

It is sobering to consider that the rich man was highly spiritual.

- We know he appeared righteous because he kept the law; he also desired eternal life.
- Because he was an upright person and a successful businessman, he might have soon become a leader in most churches.
- However, he was living for the riches of the world and not for God.

11 5. The test of saying no sin.

I John 3:6,9

No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him... No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

This may have been the people's problem in Matthew 7:21-23. Jesus said to them, “Depart from me, you workers of iniquity. I never knew you.”

- They professed Christ, but lived a life of sin.
- True salvation always changes the lifestyle of believers (2 Cor 5:17).
- They still sin, but the direction and pattern of their lives will be different.
- They will practice living for God and yet stumble—sometimes repeatedly.

- However, the direction of their lives will have changed—they will be trying to serve and honor God.

Is there a pattern of decreasing sin in your life? Or do you profess Christ, but not live for him?

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6. The test of persecution.

I John 3:12-13

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.

Because of their changed lives and values, believers will often be disliked and persecuted by society. Jesus Said.

Matthew 5:10,

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

He essentially says that those who are persecuted for their faith are part of the kingdom of heaven. This doesn't necessarily mean that we will all be beaten, stoned, or jailed. Persecution often shows up in more subtle ways, like verbal abuse or being considered strange

I Peter 4:3-4

For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.

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7. The test of perseverance.

I John 2:19

“They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.”

Paul says:

Colossians 1:22-23:

*But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you **continue in your faith, established and firm**, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel...*

These are just a few of the tests.

- The Beatitudes are essentially tests of salvation,
- The book of James has many as well. James says, “Faith without works is dead” (2:26).
- If our faith doesn't change us, it won't change our eternal destiny either.

Do you have on the helmet of salvation?

- Satan wants to take a shot at your salvation.
- He wants to steal the work God has called you to.
- If you don't know you're saved, then your head is vulnerable and you're not prepared to fight.

14 II. The Sword of the Spirit.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17)

The sword Paul refers to is not the broadsword (rhomphaia) but the dagger (machaira), which varied in length from six to eighteen inches. It was the common sword used by Roman soldiers in hand-to-hand combat, and was carried in a sheath attached to the belt.

A skillful soldier used it to deflect the blows of his enemy, and the Word of God must be used in this fashion.

We get a picture of this when Satan attacked Christ in the wilderness (Matt 4). To each of Satan's temptations, Christ responded with Scripture. The Christian who does not know the Word of God will have problems defending against the attacks of the devil.

This emphasizes the extreme power of each Scripture verse.

- Christ said that man shall not live by bread alone but by "EVERY" word that comes from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4).
- Scripture is God-inspired and powerful.
- Both in the pulpit and in the pew, people profess to believe in the power and necessity of the Word of God, yet they deny it by their actions.

Moses tells the Jews in Deut 6:7 to talk about the Word of God at home, when walking along the road, when lying down, and when getting up.

15 1. We take up the sword of the Spirit by reading Scripture.

Most Christians have never completely read the Bible.

- By reading 3.25 chapters a day, or slightly over twelve minutes a day, you can complete the Bible in a year.
- Or, if you read only thirteen chapters a day, you can complete the Bible in three months.

Are you taking up your sword by reading Scripture daily?

16 . We take up the sword of the Spirit by memorizing Scripture.

- Christ defeated the devil with specific Scriptures committed to memory.

Psalm 119:11

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Each verse that we memorize is a dagger to help us in spiritual warfare.

17 3. We take up the sword of the Spirit by meditating on Scripture.

Psalms 1:2 talks about the blessing on the man who meditates on the law of God day and night.

The word “meditate” in the Hebrew was used to describe a cow chewing its cud.

- A cow has a chambered stomach with four compartments.
- It chews and swallows its food, then regurgitates it and repeats the process.
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- The Hebrew word used can be translated “ponder” or declare.

God blesses the person who thinks and speaks about the Word of God all day. This person is taking up the sword of the Spirit.

18 4. We take up the sword of the Spirit by studying Scripture.

II Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

“Study,” which can also be translated “Be diligent” or “Do your best,” obviously overlaps with reading, memorizing and meditating.

1. We study by taking notes during sermons, Bible studies, and our devotions in order to help commit the truths to memory.
2. We study by comparing Scripture.
3. We study by using tools to increase our understanding, such as a study Bible, concordance, commentary, or theological dictionary (cf. Eph 4:11-13).
4. We study by writing the truths in a systematic manner to organize our thoughts.
5. We study by teaching the truths we’re learning to others, which is the most effective way to internalize something.

Hebrews 5:11-12

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you

need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Doctrine needs to be restored to God's church, but the church also needs to be prepared to receive it.

- If you're going to stand against Satan's attacks, you must take up the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—by reading, meditating on, memorizing, and studying it.
- What is your Bible study routine like? How can it be improved?

1 Conclusion

How can we stand firm by taking up the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit?

1. Believers Stand Firm by Putting on the Helmet of Salvation

Do you have assurance of salvation? Are you proving your salvation by growing and producing fruit?

Do you have the hope of your final salvation? If not, you will become worldly, earthly, and vulnerable to the temptations of the devil.

2. Believers Stand Firm by Taking up the Sword of the Spirit

Are you taking up the sword by reading the Word, memorizing it, meditating on it, and studying it?