

15th / 16th January 2014

Home Group Study Notes

The Armour of God - 1

Ephesians 6:10-20



Ephesians 5:1-2

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

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Last term we looked at God's amazing, 'crazy' love for us. Now that we are fired up to live out God's love in our own lives, we will be faced with many struggles – so let's not forget our armour!

Police officers in many parts of the world now routinely wear bullet-proof vests as part of their standard uniform. Troops of a number of nations are regularly equipped with 'flak jackets' when they go into combat. But what about Christians? What do we have that helps to protect us from the barrage of evil influences that are fired in our direction?

Whilst imprisoned in Rome for two years under the watchful eyes of Roman soldiers, Paul was able to write four epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) and continue preaching "the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" to all those who came to hear him (Acts 28:30-31). Likely whilst in prison, he saw the soldiers' armour enough to become well acquainted with it, learned to understand the function of each piece, what purpose it served and why it was important.

Just as the Roman soldiers required physical armour to fight their wars, we Christians require spiritual armour to successfully fight ours. As the pieces fell into place, Paul saw that each piece of Roman armour had a powerful correlation with our own spiritual defences. It is this analogy that the church in Ephesus received and which God has preserved for two thousand years for our benefit. The uniform may have been updated, but it is still just as relevant for Christians today!

We are studying the Christian armour of Ephesians 6 over the next 3 sessions:

- the necessity for the armour – verses 10-13
- its components – verses 14- 17
- 'each piece put on with prayer' – verses 18-20

(Throughout this series, we give many references and ask many questions. These are very helpful for personal reference but leaders may find it helpful to limit them for the Home Group meeting.)

15th / 16th January 2014

Read:

Romans 13:12-14

1 Peter 4:12-13

1 Cor 15:57

Ephesians 6:10-13

1. Summarise the situation the church faces in this world.
 - What does it mean for our lives as Christians?

2. Verse 10

Considering the tense it is written in and what this mighty power is capable of:

- What does the phrase 'in the Lord' mean to you?
- Can you be strong in the Lord always?
- Try paraphrasing this verse and personalising it!

3. Verse 11-12

Whether we conscious of it or not, we are daily engaged in spiritual warfare.

- Who or what are the rulers, powers and forces of darkness in today's world?
- How aware are we of this battle that is raging on a day to day basis?
- Consider the strategy of the enemy as described in 2 Cor 11:14-15. How does he attack *you*?
- Sometimes we try to avoid attack in our own strength. What ways do you use to do that? Do they succeed? Why or why not?
- From where does strength for this battle come? How do we get it for ourselves?

15th / 16th January 2014

4. Read

James 4:7

1 Peter 5:8-9

Hebrews 2:14-15

Four times in verses 10-13 of Ephesians 6 we are told to 'stand' in spiritual warfare ('withstand' here is the same word as used in James 4:7 and in 1 Peter 5:9 and means to stand against). Putting on the armour of God is the means Paul gives by which we can put that advice into practice.

- How much of the armour are we told to wear? Why do you think this necessary?
- Do we always need to wear it? Whose responsibility is it to put the armour on?
- Why do you think we are told to 'stand' rather than 'attack'?
- Can you recount an example when you knew the benefit of having worn the armour?

5. 'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.'

In closing, it may be appropriate to spend some time worshipping our Mighty Victor who has already defeated sin, death, and the devil.

1 Samuel 17:47

All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands.'

1 Corinthians 15:57 'But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The next Home Group is on 5th/6th February and we will be taking a closer look at the individual parts of the armour.

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