

LECTURES ON EPHESIANS

by

Louis T. Talbot, D.D., LL.D.

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CHAPTER NINE

THE BODY—ITS WARFARE (6:10-24)

We are now to consider the warfare of the Spirit-filled believer. This is recorded in verses 10-20.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

There are three divisions into which these verses fall:

- First, the warrior's foes; secondly,
- The warrior's armour;
- Thirdly, the warrior's resources.

Consider first the warrior's foes.

They are not flesh and blood, but principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

We are given an insight into the unseen world where Satan and all his hosts abide, whose combined purpose is to thwart the will and the purpose of God in the believer's life. Satan is the god of this age and he has as his cohorts the host of fallen spirits, a well-organized army divided into ranks and divisions called in this passage "**principalities and powers,**" "**the rulers of the darkness of this world.**"

The word, "**rulers,**" does not mean men at the head of nations. These are oftentimes good men; however if they are not men who know God, they become tools in the hands of the real "**Rulers of the darkness of this world,**" whose commander is Satan.

When we study these and other verses contained in the Word of God dealing with the subject of demonology, we become aware of our utter dependence upon our God. Demonology is an immense subject, which cannot be discussed fully in this study. I desire, however, to call attention to one or two statements concerning this subject in order that we may begin to realize how dependent upon God we are.

When we group Job 1, Zechariah 3, II Chronicles 18 and Revelation 12 we discover that Satan, though fallen and an enemy of God and His people, has access to the presence of God. He stands before God as the accuser of God's people, with the purpose of bringing about their eternal ruin. He knows that God is just and righteous, that "**The wages of sin is death,**" and that judgment must be executed upon the sinner. He, therefore, entices the people of God to sin after which he wings his way into the presence of God to accuse them before Him.

How hopeless would be our lot were it not for the fact that we have an Advocate with the Father!

Only in this fact does I John 2:1 have real meaning. "**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**"

The word "**advocate**" has the same meaning as our word "*lawyer*" has. A lawyer is a man skilled in the law; he can take the case of an accused man, appear before the judge, and plead his client's case. Now it is impossible for a lawyer to defend his client with any degree of success, unless a lawyer knows all of the details of a case; it is impossible for him successfully to defend his client. With all of the facts in his possession, he can meet the judge and put up a defense for his client.

Thirty years ago, I placed myself and my case in the hands of the Son of God. He became my Advocate and today stands at God's right hand, making intercession for me. Should I sin when I am tempted, Satan immediately appears before God to accuse me. But my Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, is there to defend me; He puts to rout the enemy of my soul.

"*Yes,*" He says, "*the accusations are true, but I was wounded for his transgressions; I was bruised for his iniquities; the chastisement of My peace is upon him, and by My stripes he is healed.*" (cf. Isaiah 53:5).

Thus the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses me from all sin!

Some day that accuser will be forever cast out from the presence of God. This final expulsion from God's presence is described in Revelation 12:7-10. The event will take place during the seventh week of Daniel, and will bring to an end the reign of the accuser of our souls. He will be driven forth by Michael who assisted the heavenly messenger when Satan endeavored to reach Daniel.

Have you placed into His hands your case? Before you can know Him as your Advocate, you must know Him as Saviour, for He intercedes at God's right hand for those who have been saved.

The exhortation in Ephesians 6:10 to “**put on**” the whole armour of God is given in order that we might be equipped for the conflict with the unseen principalities and powers. If we are to become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might we must put on the whole armour which God has provided for the believer to assist him to wage a successful warfare and fight a good fight of faith.

*We are to “**put on**” the whole armour of God, not “hang it on.”*

In the tower of London there are statues on which is hung armour—hung, because the statues are not alive. Sometimes men, “**Dead in trespasses and sins,**” hang on the armour of God and try to produce the graces of the Spirit in their lives, both of which belong only to the born-again child of God. To put on the whole armour of God requires life. The instruction included in these verses becomes a believer’s responsibility to follow.

Shall we note each piece of armour which He in His grace has provided for us?

The first piece girds the loins.

In the days when the letter was written, a girdle was a belt worn by a soldier around the waist, holding in the loose garments in order that he might not be hindered in his progress in meeting the enemy. To have the loins of our mind girt about with truth is to have a belt of Scripture reining in and controlling our desires. When our loins are girt about with the truth, all of our flabbiness and looseness of character will be taken away. To put on this girdle means that one must read the Word of God every morning and put into execution what the Lord commands.

How searching the Word of God becomes when we read it for this purpose and not for the purpose of criticizing it.

The Bible becomes a searching Book when one reads and obeys its commands. Its costs something to do this, however, for it means that we have to contend with our own will which is reluctant to relinquish some favorite habit. It means putting to death self-indulgence in order to obtain or experience victory.

*The second piece of armour mentioned is the “**breastplate of righteousness.**”*

This righteousness is not the righteousness imputed to us by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but is personal righteousness wrought in us by the Holy Spirit showing to the world that we have been born again, and made a new creation.

The apostle refers to this righteousness in writing to Titus saying that the grace of God teaches us to deny the “**Ungodliness and worldly lusts**” and to “**Live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world**” (Titus 2:12). Every believer should be righteous, or straight, for righteousness in this sense means straightness in one’s dealings toward God, toward one’s self, and toward one’s neighbor in business relations.

The breastplate is worn upon the heart, from whence originate our affections and emotions and out of which the issues of life arise.

Many unconverted people rankle under a sense of injustice as they deal with professing Christians, because such Christians do not have upon them the breastplate of righteousness. Eloquent testimonies carry little weight when they are neutralized by unrighteous deeds and acts. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit and when we yield our lives to the indwelling Christ, it is an easy matter to put on the breastplate of righteousness.

The third piece of armour which is to be part of our equipment is for the feet (cf. verse 15).

Shoes speak of readiness, ready to do anything, ready to go when God says, “Go,” ready to stay when He says, “Be quiet.” Oh, for obedient and ready souls, anywhere and everywhere, on a train, a streetcar, on a public highway, or in a home!

That is the kind of Christians we need, not merely church or chapel goers, but Christians ready for service. Having “**Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace**” means just that. Christ has “**Made peace through the blood of his cross**” (Colossians 1:20). The responsibility of making it known has been placed into our hands.

*The fourth piece of armour is the “**Shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**”*

The devil purposes to instill doubts in regard to the faithfulness of God into the minds of God’s people. Each doubt concerning God’s faithfulness and reliability and authenticity of God’s promises is like a fiery dart tipped with flames of hellish hate speeding to the heart of a soldier of the cross. These Satanic darts are to be met by the “**shield of faith,**” which is protecting the heart. How often the doubts with regard to the assurance of God’s forgetfulness of our past sins creep into our thoughts—fiery darts they are. Meet them with faith in God’s promise, “**I will remember them no more. I will blot them out as a thick cloud, I will bury them in the depths of the sea, I will cast them behind my back.**” “Calvary Covers It All.”

Oh, how the devil shoots a fiery dart when we pass through strange and trying experiences and testings.

When a loved one is removed from our presence, or when our possessions are swept away, how the darts encompass us and cause us to question the goodness and the faithfulness of Him who said, “**I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee**” (Hebrews 13:5).

Strange things happen to us in the plan of God and sometimes in trying to find out the reasons why He allows certain incidents to occur, we give the devil an opportunity to cast darkness, discouragement, and doubt around us.

Do not reason why, bow low before Him and say, “Oh, God, teach me the lesson which Thou hast for me to learn through this circumstance. Give me the heart of a little child to believe that what I do not understand now I shall understand hereafter.” This is the way to ward off the fiery darts of doubt with the “**shield of faith.**”

Job wore the “**Shield of faith**” when he suffered in the midst of afflictions that were his portion, and though he could not understand why God dealt with him in such a manner he cried, “**Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him**” (Job 13:15).

*The fifth piece of armour, the “**Helmet of salvation,**” is designed for the head.*

A wound in the head is a serious matter because it is a vital part of our being. We, therefore, need protection for that part. A soldier of Christ may be true-hearted but if the devil aims a dart at his brain and it hits, that soldier loses his worth in the army of Jesus Christ. Some believe that all that is necessary is for a Christian to possess a warm heart. The possession of a warm heart is not to be undervalued, but unless it is coupled with right doctrine in the head, intellectual understanding, there is great danger that much mischief will result.

Many men have been useless in the service of God because they have not had the right kind of doctrinal instruction, and intellectual grasp. Then, too, when a measure of success has been given and enjoyed in the service of God, how easy it is for pride to lift the head. Such strutting bossiness and enlarged personal esteem have destroyed the ministries of many servants of Christ. If the devil cannot fire a dart through your heart, he will certainly try to affect your head by shooting his arrows of pride and conceit, supplying an abundance of applause and flattery.

John Bunyan told an incident which took place at the close of one of his sermons.

A man said, “Mr. Bunyan, what a beautiful sermon you gave us this morning.”

“You are too late,” said Bunyan, “the devil told me that before I came out of the pulpit.”

My Christian worker, the devil will tell you the same thing and lest you become intoxicated with your success, you need to wear the helmet.

To know God’s salvation in one’s own experience is the helmet which God has provided for the Christian warrior in his warfare with “**principalities and powers.**” He must know from his own experience of sin dominating his heart that the gospel is the “**Power of God unto salvation.**” He must be able to speak that which he knows and be able to declare what he has seen.

*The sixth piece of armour is the “**Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,**” referring to the ability diligently to use the Word of God in the culture of our souls.*

Jesus certainly used the Sword of the Spirit in the wilderness when He met the devil by saying, “**It is written.**” This is the only offensive weapon mentioned in the armory of God. Was there ever a time in the history of the church when God’s people had greater need for a firm grasp of the “**Sword of the Spirit**”? It is little wonder that Satan continually raises the question, “**Hath God said?**” How easy it is for him to pervert and counterfeit the Book. He knows that when that Book is proclaimed, it is like a warrior wielding a sword; therefore he tries to turn the servant to human philosophy and schemes of men. Whether men believe that the Bible is the Word of God or not, proclaim it, worker; let its keen edge be in their consciences and hearts. We have no need to defend the Word of God. Spurgeon once said, “You do not need to defend a lion; let him out and he will defend himself.” This is true of the Bible. Make it known, proclaim its great doctrines, preach the marvelous gospel which its pages reveal, and you will find that the Spirit of God will recognize it as His chosen instrument by which men will be brought out of darkness into the most marvelous light.

This is not all. If the whole armour of God is to be put on and used effectively, we must follow the injunction of verse 18, **“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”**

Note that we are to pray with all prayer. What is the meaning of the expression, **“Praying always with all prayer”**? All prayer seems to refer to the various elements which enter into true prayer such as, adoration, confession, thanksgiving and petition mingled with supplication. Prayer is the making known of our petitions using the various elements above mentioned. Supplication is the intensity with which the desire is expressed, and is not to be intermittent. We are to pray **“always,”** living in the Spirit of prayer, thus obeying the apostle’s injunction, **“Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”** (I Thessalonians 5:17, 18).

Prayer should be like a spring that bubbles from a source of desire, desire that we should be instruments in His hands bringing glory to His own name. Go to God’s armory today and clothe yourself with each of these pieces of armour which God has provided for you; submit yourself unto Him, and sin shall not have dominion over you. Dr. F. B. Meyer said, “Daily meditate on your union with the existent Christ; reckon that in Him you have died to sin; and present your tempted members as instruments of righteousness unto Christ and yours will be a life of unbroken victory.”

You will also find when so equipped that there is no Satanic enemy who is able to withstand you. You, in the feebleness of human strength, when so clothed, will become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Verses 21-24 conclude this marvelous Epistle:

But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

How interested that apostle was in the lives of fellow-believers! He desired to know their affairs in order that he might pray for them intelligently. He desired also that the Ephesians might know some of his affairs in order that they might, in like manner, pray for him. What a beautiful testimony Paul gave of Tychicus, his fellow-laborer, in verse 21. He refers to him as a **“Beloved brother”** and **“Faithful minister in the Lord.”**

May the heavenly record at the judgment seat of Christ reveal us as being faithful ministers of Jesus Christ.

What a marvelous Epistle the Ephesian letter is! What a solid rock on which to stand! May God create within our hearts an ever-increasing enjoyment of the wonders of His Word!

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