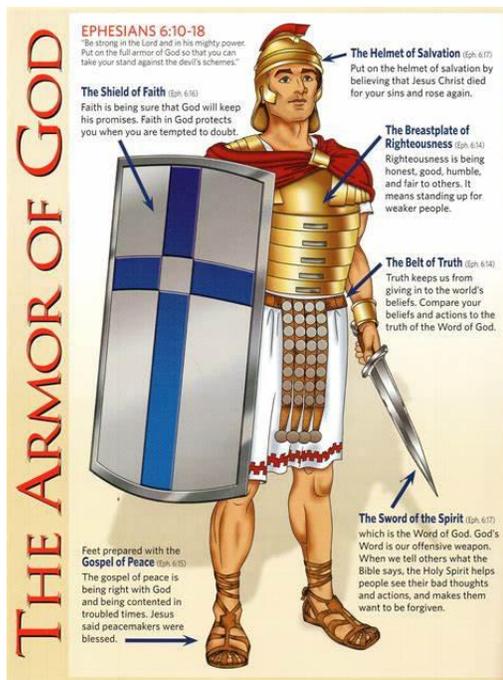


## Ephesians 6:14-15



As we come to the specific named pieces of the armor of God, remember that they are part of a whole, we are to have all of it. Granted, we might be stronger in some parts than others, but that is just a reminder that we need some extra work in those areas.

\*\*16. As you go through the list of the Armor of God, consider what aspect of the armor you most lacking right now? What can you do to correct that problem?

<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist,

The officers of the Roman army usually wore a short skirt, not unlike the Scottish kilt. Over that, they would wear a tunic that reached almost to their knees. To prepare for battle, they would take the back of the bottom of the tunic, bring it through their legs and tuck it into the broad leather belt they wore. Thus the belt was a foundational piece of equipment – it held everything together. It was also where their sword was hung at the ready. There was also a leather “apron” than hung in down from the belt, often covered with small brass plates to provide additional protection.

In the same way, truth is foundational. In order to have the belt of truth, one must know the truth. This includes being about to discern truth from error.

There are two aspects:

The first is the truth of the Gospel. Where does one find this truth? In Scripture. In John 17:17, Jesus indicated that the Word of God is truth. And in John 14:6a.... *I am the way the truth and the life.*

Jesus said in John 8:32 ....*you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.* When a Roman soldier had his belt on properly, it allowed him the freedom of movement he needed in battle.

Twisting the truth in one of Satan’s favorite strategies. We see him do this in the temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11.

In describing the devil, Jesus said, *He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

People who are unsure of the truth are easily swayed by every new fad or philosophy that comes along.

\*\*17. What are some of Satan's lies?

The second part is personal integrity and honesty – so often lacking in our world. Our adversary also encourages us to lie. But we are to be examples and proclaimers of God's truth.

In the third verse of "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," Martin Luther writes:

"And tho' this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph thru us."

We also need to start with being honest with ourselves. When we delude ourselves, we are headed down a dangerous path.

\*\*18. In what ways might a person be dishonest with themselves?

14b...and put on the breastplate of righteousness.

The Roman breastplate was usually made of leather covered with bronze. Of course, protection of the torso is critical, as this is where the most vital organs are, and where a blow would most apt to be fatal.

The heart needs to be protected! If your heart is right with the Lord, if you are doing the right thing, you will be far less vulnerable to attack. If you know that your life is a study in inconsistency, then Satan will be able to attack.

First, remember that righteousness is one of the attributes of God:

Psalm 119: 137 *Righteous are You, O Lord.*

Psalm 145:17 *The Lord is righteous in all His ways.*

Isaiah 59:16b-17a says that God's own *arm worked salvation for Him, and His own righteousness sustained Him. He put on righteousness as His breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on His head....*(Paul was undoubtedly familiar with the words of Isaiah!)

Secondly, the ultimate source of our righteousness is the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in Philippians 3:9-10, *...[I want to be] found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

And in 2 Corinthians 5:21... *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

♪ The hymn, "The Solid Rock" (or, "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less") illustrates imputed righteousness this way:

“Dressed in His righteousness alone, Faultless to stand before the throne.”

\*\*19. How do you think that most people view the idea of “righteousness”? What does “righteousness” mean to you?

The breastplate was a strong defense for the soldier as our righteousness should be for us. When someone falsely accuses or verbally persecutes you, the best answer in your life.

In Ephesians 5:8-9, we read, *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth).*

When Plato was once accused of certain crimes, he responded: “We must live in such a way as to prove that these accusations are a lie.”

<sup>15</sup> As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

A Roman soldier’s footwear had thick leather soles for the rugged terrain. The also often had nails driven through to create a type of spike to guarantee they would remain sure-footed in battle.

As Christians, we also need a firm foundation.

♪ “How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word.”

The Gospel is the good news (what “gospel” means) of peace because it declares that the conflict between God and humanity is over, and we are reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Thus, the gospel of peace is an assurance in the face of difficulty. In Romans 16:19b-20 (NASB), Paul writes, *I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

So then, this peace is not just an subjective (a matter of feelings), but objective (something we know). As Paul wrote in Romans 5:1, *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This is one area in which Satan will often try to attack the believer:

“Are you sure that you have salvation?”

“God couldn’t really love you!”

“God is angry with you.

“You had better do just the right thing or God will get you.”

\*\*20. What would you say to someone who told you they were not sure if they were a Christian or not?

This piece of armor is also a reminder that we are to move out with the Gospel, and share it with

others in both word and deed.

Just as Paul says that we are to be ready to proclaim the Gospel of peace by putting on this part of the armor, Peter also wrote that we are to be prepared (or ready – same Greek word) to do the same. 1 Peter 3:15-16 says, *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

(Note that in verse 16, this is essentially the matter of righteousness that was already addressed.)

\*\*21. What are some ways that we can make ourselves “ready to proclaim the gospel of peace”?

It might seem somewhat paradoxical that this soldier has as his shoes the “gospel of peace.” But it is a reminder that it is – as the prophet Zechariah said (4:6) – “*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,*” says the LORD Almighty.