

## **Sermon Notes: *Put on the whole armor of God (I) (Eph. 6:13-14)***

**Intro:** While there are echoes in these verses of the armor of a Roman soldier, the basic elements of the armor of God are taken from the OT description of the Lord as the Divine Warrior who is mighty in battle (Isa 11:4-5; 59:16-17). Isaiah's words were fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ. He proved the reliability of God-forged armor in the conflict with Satan.

Throughout his earthly life but particularly when tempted in the wilderness and on the cross, our Lord tested God's armor to the limit. He endured Satan's full fury and blows. Yet even though he was tempted in every way as we are, Jesus was without sin. In our flesh, the Lord prevailed and won with God's armor and he has proven that when it is worn properly it will protect the believer. All God's people experience days of trial. We must put on God's armor and doing so stand firm. We must avoid specifying too narrowly what Paul intends by each piece. But the main truths are evident.

**#1: Put on the belt of truth.** Previously, Paul our dutiful apostolic commanding officer exhorted us to take up the whole armor of God so that we may be able to withstand in the "evil day." Christians are soldiers in spiritual battle holding fast against the enemy's charge. But this is particularly true in the "evil day" when the devil's attack is particularly sharp. Satan's onslaught ebbs and flows throughout this age until our Lord returns with power and glory to rend the heavens and rescue his people forever. Until then, we may enjoy times of reprieve from the ferocity of the fight, but we must never be lulled into a false sense of security. This side of heaven the battle is never over. The phrase "having done everything" impresses on us that not only watchfulness but responsible preparation is necessary. The Greek historian Polybius said that the Roman Centurion was the kind of soldier who could be relied on, when under pressure, to stand fast and not give way. Christians too must make all necessary preparations for war starting with the belt of truth. The standard form of dress in the ancient world for both Jews and Romans, was a robe. A flowing robe prohibited ease of movement on the battlefield. Ancient soldiers prepared for war by pulling their robes above their knees and gathering them with a belt. That which makes the believer's freedom possible is "truth." How? Two ways: We have a new identity. Catalog in your mind, what the gospel says is *true* of you as a believer according to this letter (1, 2:1-10). Once you were dead in your transgressions and sins, but now you are spiritually alive. Once you followed the ways of this world and were under the dominion of the ruler of darkness, but now you have been raised up with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly places. Once you were an object of God's wrath, but now you are his glorious inheritance (1:18). Once you were a foreigner and alien, but now you are a fellow citizen with God's people and a member of his household. Why? Because the Spirit of God enlightened your mind in understanding how the incarnate Son of God died as an atonement and payment for sins. Because the Spirit of God persuaded and enabled you to trust in Christ's atoning blood and God gave you a new nature and identity. You are a new creation. The power of the risen Lord operates within you. We have a new destiny. God will not cease perfecting his will in you until Christ returns. Having heard the word of truth and gospel of your salvation and believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance (1:13). According to gospel truth, we must put off the ways of thinking and habits of behaving that correspond to the old person we once were but are no longer. Our minds protest. We say "this is not how I feel." The Deceiver says we are basically the same person we were before we first believed. But the gospel says "You are a new creation in Christ with a new identity and destiny."

Armed with this hope, you must stand firm.”

**#2: Put on the breastplate of righteousness.** The breastplate fitted over the soldier’s torso and protected the vital organs against puncture. We might think of a Kevlar bullet-proof vest. Either way, righteousness protects the Christian’s spiritual vitals against destruction. Christ’s righteousness protects us. Christ’s righteousness credited to us when we receive him by faith guards us against the mortal wounds of Satan’s accusations. The believer must know that having fled to Christ for safety by faith, his sins were credited to Christ who was condemned for them and Christ’s righteousness has been credited to him and he is justified (accepted as righteous in Christ) because of it (Rom. 3:28; 4:5; 8:33). When Satan accuses, don’t defend yourself but tell him and yourself of the greatness of Christ’s righteousness which is yours as a gift by faith alone. Our righteousness protects us. There is nothing meritorious about this! Simply put, God credits Christ’s righteousness to us when we first believe, but then he also works in us to make us personally righteous (Phil 2:13; Eph 2:10) according to the new nature he has given us. Conflict works to increase our faith and strengthen our character. We learn to responsibly: claim the reality of God’s love, fill our minds with his Word, appeal to him in prayer, and seek the support of fellow soldiers.