

BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE STRENGTH OF HIS POWER.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

DECEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2006

**Ephesians 6:10-20** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>**In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.** <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. <sup>19</sup>Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup>for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Paul is using items that the Jews were very familiar with. They lived in an occupied country. Their country was full of Roman soldiers wearing the gear that Paul writes about here.

The armor of God that He has provided for us is His Son Jesus Christ.

To put on Christ, to be in Christ we must do as the scripture says;

**Ephesians. 4:22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **Col. 3:10** and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

For me to understand the armor I must take a good look at the life of Jesus, because it is Jesus that the armor represents.

We can see the activities of Jesus here on the earth that lasted three years. This gives us an understand what it is like to be in Jesus.

As we study the three years of the life of Jesus, we see that he fought the enemy every day. You might ask, what enemy? **John 10:10** The thief [Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

So here in this one verse we see the battle that has raged for 6,000 years, the war that Satan is engage in to destroy man, the fight by Jesus to bring a life with fulfillment to each man. Jesus found the seed of Abraham in need of His help. That is why He said, **Luke 4:18-19** "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ." **Luke 19:9** Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. Just as the Seed of Abraham needed help then, we Children of God need help today..

You and I can plan our lives wanting security for us and our families. That security when placed in things of this world can be taken away over night. Fran and I invested part of our retirement money in stock of a major company. That stock went from \$68 a share down to a \$1 a share in three weeks. Today it now has gone back up to \$3 dollars a share. I know of Enron employees who worked hard for their company and were looking forward to great retirement years, and now all the retirement they have is what they will receive from the government.

We must always remember that we have one who is against us, he is at war with us whether we enter into the fight or not.

We must ask, what have we overlooked. What unpleasant surprises

awaits us today, tomorrow or next week.

That is why it says, We must put on the FULL ARMOR OF GOD, and that means for us to be in Jesus.

God the Father knew that we would be dealing with these issues, for they are the same issue that man has dealt with from the beginning, for it all started in the Garden.

Satan has always been jealous of man, and wants to destroy us. He is jealous of who we are now and who we are becoming. **1 John 3:2**

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he [Jesus] appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

We must learn to focus on these two things. Who we are in Jesus and what we are becoming in Jesus.

So the battle that is being waged against us is this, to get our focus off Jesus or make us question who He is. Because looking at Jesus and learning of Him tells us who we are and what we are becoming.

Our weapons are to demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to the truth of Christ.

We are in a spiritual war, not a war in the flesh. Our weaponry - the armor of God is designed to pull down strongholds. What do these strongholds consist of? **SPOOKS AND GHOSTS**

No. Arguments, ideas, thoughts and disobedience.

All the pieces of the armor of God are different aspects of who Jesus is to us. To wear the whole armor of God is to put on Jesus, to be in Jesus, to focus on Jesus. Each piece helps us to defend

ourselves against Satan, while at the same time, advancing us ever further towards being more like Jesus Christ. This morning we are going to look at two pieces of the armor.

We need to understand that it is dangerous for us to try to live our lives without having Jesus and the Holy Spirit as the center peace of our lives. How often when our focus is off of Jesus, we find it is easy to speak words of criticism, slander, gossip and anger that are so destructive to others. Also our conduct will not be “walking in the spirit”, but “walking in the flesh”. And that conduct is destructive to ourselves and those around us as shown by scripture.

**James 3:5-7** Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider how a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup>The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

When we are speaking of the Armor of God, the first thing I have come to realize, as seen above, to put on this armor, which is Christ, In most cases, we must first take something off.

Each time I speak of the Armor of God The first item that I must always look at and review is the belt of truth. I think there is a reason that we are told to put on the belt first, we do not have access to the others until this one is in place.

I want to repeat that, for it is very important.

We do not have access to the other pieces of armor until this one is in place.

The Greek says that Truth is the opposite of falsehood, it is the opposite of hypocrisy and we know that the ultimate truth is Jesus

Christ, and the Word of God. Jesus tell us HE IS TRUTH.

When we began to hear the word of God and learn of Jesus we must make a decision.

Are we going to take off our belt, that is our truth and put on His truth, or are we going to do like many today, try to wear the Belt of Truth over our old belt. That is, except the Truth of the Bible as long as it lines up with my preconceived ideas.

When God's Truth is in us through the Word and the Spirit, then our habits begin to line up with the Truth, and our words and actions also begin to express truth.

How much truth do we need, to be fully girded with the belt of truth?

As much truth as God has revealed to us.

Let God be TRUE and everything else a liar.

So now let us go forward with Just the Truth of God

With the Belt of God in place we now want to look at the Shield of Faith.

All the weapons except the Shield are for hand to hand combat. The shield is for an enemy attacking us from a distance. And the Word here says you really need the shield to stop the fiery darts he shoots at you. And the purpose of the fiery darts are to destroy your shield so the enemy can get at you. To destroy our Faith In God, so that we have to face the enemy as a mere man.

Now the soldier had three kinds of arrows.

The first arrow that we want to look at is the arrow that some of you use to hunt with. It is a arrow with a sharp point. What does it look like in scripture? **1 Cor. 10:13** No temptation has seized you

except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

These are common temptations or testing, getting mad, saying things we should not say, thinking things we should not think. For them God has provided a way out of them. That way is His Peace, His Love, His Joy, and a clean heart.

When these arrows hit the shield in good repair they just stick, they go no where. They do not get to us to do real damage, when handled correctly they are more of a nuisance than a danger. But the shield that is need of repair, Faith in God is not strong. These same arrows; anger, abuse, pornography have destroyed marriages, friendships, careers, yes lives.

The next arrow is the fire arrow, when it hits the shield if the shield is not well maintained the shield will burn. This is the start of what Paul is warning us about. The scripture says that **Proverbs 30:5** "Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

It is this trust that Satan is out to destroy, he has to destroy your trust in God before he can destroy you.

The flaming arrow is the testing that is gradual, it just keeps on coming. You get up in the morning and you have a tennis game or a golf match scheduled and it is raining. You decide you might as well fix a nice breakfast so you start to fry some eggs, the phone rings, you get involved in the conversation and you forget the eggs, they are turned to charcoal. You decide you might as well go

to Bible Study, you go out to get in your golf cart and you find one of the tires are flat. Everything you want to do that day seems to go bad. That is the constant testing that wears us down. This is the fiery trial.

**1 Peter 4:12** Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Why are these trials coming? To test your faith?

When Jesus is talking to Peter the last night before the crucifixion He warns Peter. **Luke 22:31-32** "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. <sup>32</sup>But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Why is Satan doing this? To get you to the point that you are not looking to the Father for the things in your life.

Why is this so important?

**Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Another way to say this, God is pleased when we are trusting him to provide rewards to us.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

And another way to say this, you have no faith if you do not have things that you are hoping for and are sure that you are going to receive them.

When you do not believe, or stop believing God for things in your



life you loose favor with God.

The third type of arrow - The explosive tip arrow.

That is the arrow that when it hits, all Hell literally brakes out.

The best example can be seen in the life of Job.

**Job 1:1-6** In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. <sup>2</sup>He had seven sons and three daughters, <sup>3</sup>and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

One day Satan came to God and taunted Him by saying that Job did the things that he did, not because he loved God, but because God did everything for him.

**Job 1:12** The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

**Job 1:14-19** a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, <sup>15</sup>and the Sabeans attacked and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" <sup>16</sup>While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" <sup>17</sup>While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and carried them off. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!" <sup>18</sup>While he was still speaking, yet



another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup>when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

To the natural eye it would look like the Sabeans, the fire of God, Chaldeans, mighty wind was the enemy of Job, But we have just been told who the enemy is, Satan. That is why the scripture says, our fight is not with each other, man, it is Satan using men and nature to attack us. That is why we have to use spiritual things to fight this fight.

**Job 1:22** In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

The fire that we have to deal with most today is to see that God is not our enemy.

Job was a man who did all he could to be right with God, then how was Satan able to hurt him so bad?

**Job 3:25-26** Job says "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. <sup>26</sup>I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."

Here we have a GREAT CLUE to the problems of Job. HE FEARED, fear is the opposite of FAITH.

When God is speaking to Satan about Job this is what he had to say,

**Job 1:8** "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

Here is a man who revered God and keeps from evil.

The statement that God is making is so true, We can see this in the things that he did, **Job 1:4-5** Job's sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. <sup>5</sup>When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

I see in Job the majority of the Christians of today. They are thankful and they love Jesus for saving them and making a way for them to get to heaven. But it has never occurred to them, that God wants to protect them from the things of the world, and bless them while they are here upon the earth.

We are told these things about ourselves today!

**2 Cor. 8:2** How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

**Hebrews 11:36** And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

**1 Peter 1:7** That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Yes, if I hold on to my FAITH in GOD, no matter what happens, it gives me great reward. Is that all that this life is to be about.

What I want is a shield that protects me and the things that are mine.

Just as the Roman shields were built of two materials, wood and leather, I want my shield built of two materials, Wood, yes no matter what I go through I will continue to have faith in God. But I want leather in my shield, and that is going to be the Faith of Jesus Christ. .

And this is what Jesus believed.

**Mark 11:22-24** "Have faith in God," Jesus answered. <sup>23</sup>"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. <sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

**2 Cor. 9:6-8** <sup>8</sup>And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

**3 John 1:2** Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you,

**John 8:31-32** Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. <sup>32</sup>Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

This then is What I pray and what I want my shield to accomplish. I want Satan to also have to say this of me.

Job 1:10 "You [God] have put a hedge around him [Andy] and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.

This is the God I will put my Faith In.

I want to put on the Shield of My God, that shield is Faith in Jesus

Christ and He never lost a battle to Satan. He set the captive free and gave gifts unto man.

But you can say, “Andy, I see even the disciples had great problems, and all but one was martyred.” And I will say that is true, but before this happened a conversation was held, Jesus told them that they were to go through the 7<sup>th</sup> Baptism, He may want me to go through the same Baptism. If He does, After talking to Him about it, I will know it has a purpose. I will say your will be done. Even then, I will keep the armor on, and I will say. Even if He slays me, I will still trust in Him.

May we all put on THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD.

Let us Pray

Heavenly Father we know that when we are in Christ we have the strength of Christ. Help us to put on and ware proudly the armor that you have provided for us, Your Son Jesus Christ.

A Men