

Reading: **Ephesians 6. Vs.10 - 24**

Key verse: v11 **Put on all of God's armour so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.**

As Paul comes to the concluding part of his letter,  
He's very concerned about:  
His friends in Ephesus & **the dangers they face.**  
They're like '**his children**'  
He's helped with their spiritual birth.  
And taught them daily, for over **2 years.** (Acts: 19.v10)

Since his conversion on the Damascus road,  
And the commencement of his teaching ministry,  
He's never: **stayed that long** ~ anywhere else.

Paul's own physical safety, is now uncertain.  
He may ... never see them again,  
But his greatest concern, is for **their spiritual welfare.**

The Devil had many different schemes, to infiltrate the  
New churches ~ & **deflect the New Christians.**  
**And that's still the same, today ! He doesn't care,  
what you believe. So long as it's ... not the truth !**

There were 3 common dangers ~ for the Ephesians.

(Coming from: the **Romans**, the **Jews**, & the **Gentiles**.)

**The 1<sup>st</sup> danger ~ was ‘Emperor worship’**

The **Roman Senators**, recognising:

The enormous strength of **religious commitment**,  
Declared **the Emperor** to be **‘divine’** (ie. A god)

Then they required loyal citizens,  
to show their loyalty, by burning incense,  
**On an altar, dedicated to the Emperor.**

The Christians ~ saw this as idolatry,

And contrary, **to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 10 Commandments.**  
(Exodus 20.v2)

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> danger ~ was ‘Judaism’**

Groups of **Jews**, were going from place to place,  
Teaching the **Gentile Christians**, that to be right with  
God, they must **obey the laws of Moses**. & only then,  
Could they ~ **add** ~ believing in ‘Jesus’ & his teaching.

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> danger ~ was ‘Gnosticism’**

Some **Gentiles** who’d studied Greek philosophy,  
called themselves ‘Gnostics’

(from the Greek word for: **knowledge**)

They claimed ... **To have Special, Secret Knowledge**  
Saying: only those who learned **this secret** from them.  
Could have 'that **Special life**' !

**The Gnostics** taught that the 'physical world'  
And the 'spiritual world' ~ **were quite separate,**  
But **the Gnostics,** were divided, by **2 opposing views.**

**View 1.** Said: The evil in our bodies must be punished  
So if you felt tempted to sin ~ in any way,  
You must punish your evil body, with a stick or whip  
To beat it into **submission** !

**View 2.** Said: The evil in our bodies, didn't matter.  
Because our bodies had **no connection** with our Spirit.  
You could **indulge** your body, as much as you liked.  
It didn't matter ! **Guess which view, was more popular**

Paul knows: **All of these viewpoints are dangerous.**  
And contrary, to the Christian Faith.  
They threaten the development of Christian character,  
And sooner or later, will be promoted in Ephesus.

In this concluding part of his letter.  
He issues: **commands** ~ not suggestions !  
As he tells them **what they must do ... & why.**

v10. **Be strong with the Lord's mighty power.**

V11. **Put on all of God's armour**

so that you will be able to stand firm  
against all strategies and tricks of the Devil.

We're not left to struggle thro' life, as best we can !  
The Lord says: we can draw on HIS strength,  
**BUT... We must use the armour ~ He's provided.**

A Roman soldier was issued with: **a helmet, a sword,  
a belt, two shields, 'body armour' & sandals.**

He had to **carry them, wear them, and use them.**

They were supplied, as important: **tools of trade,**

Not as ... **status symbols !**

The Roman soldier's uniform, always included:  
the leather 'breastplate' or 'body armour'

It covered his body, both front and back.

He wore it ~ even when he was on ... 'police' duty,  
or 'prison' duty ... around the city.

Every day Paul was reminded of the soldier's armour  
with the 'changing of the guard' ~ that supervised  
his 'House arrest' in Rome.

A soldier's armour, **must be able to protect him,  
But without restricting his freedom of movement.**

The Roman army:

Was an extremely efficient: '24/7' fighting machine !

But, **because the metal armour, was so heavy,**

It was only provided, if a battle was about to begin !

When a soldier ~ was promoted to: '**Centurion**'

(an Officer over 100 men) ... he needed to study:

**battle tactics** ... and the enemy's **strategies**.

He needed: both physical strength, & mental alertness.

You weren't fighting just: 'the **brute strength** of men'!

But also: **The tactics** an enemy might use - **to trick or, confuse you**. Must be **understood & remembered**.

Paul saw this as **an illustration**: of the Christian's fight against spiritually evil powers !

So he says: **Put on ... all of God's armour**.

It's not just the 'human **attitudes**' of people around us, that we're fighting against, but also the **Spiritual**

**Authorities** ~ *represented ~ by the errors they teach*.

**v13. Use every piece of God's armour to resist the Enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle You will still be standing firm.**

In any battle:

A soldier ~ not wearing all his armour, was a **liability**.  
The people of **Ephesus** saw Roman soldiers, **every day**  
Walking in their streets.

But also, at the gateway to their huge Amphitheatre,  
There was a **larger than life statue** of a Roman soldier

So these Ephesian Christians could easily understand,  
Paul's spiritual references, to the soldier's:

**Helmet, sword, shields, armour, belt, & footwear.**

Each piece of armour had a purpose,  
And each was important in its own way.

v14a

**Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth**

**The belt** was not very **visible** ~ but it was **essential**,  
because it **secured** the upper & lower body armour,  
and held the scabbard for the sword.

Paul says: Let the belt represent: ~ **Truth**.

The story of God's dealings with man,  
from Adam & Eve ... until today,  
Repeatedly demonstrate, the importance of **Truth**.

**Truth** is not a **decoration**, to be tied on, ‘like a pretty bow’  
**Truth**, needs to be buckled on securely,  
So it can’t be lost, in a fight !

**Isaiah** ... Writing about the **Messiah**, says:  
He will be clothed with fairness and truth. (chpt.11.v5)  
It’s impossible to have ‘**Fairness**’ without ‘**Truth**’

**v14b: and the body-armour of God’s Righteousness.**

The ‘**breastplate**’ or **body armour**,  
was usually made of hardened leather,  
& moulded to cover both the chest, & the back,  
So that: **all the body’s vital organs** were protected.  
However, **the metal, armour ...** was so awkward  
The soldiers had to help each other, fasten it on.

So what about this word: ‘**Righteousness**’ ?

The word means: Fairness with Integrity,  
(‘Integrity’ ~ means: **actions based on honesty**)

That is **Doing** what is ‘**right**’ ~ **because it is right**,  
Even if I’m personally disadvantaged !

So Paul is saying:

Everything that’s vital to a Christian’s functioning,  
Must be enclosed in **God’s Righteousness**.

And held securely in place ~ **by Truth**.

**v15. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared.**

The Roman soldier's **sandals** were very **versatile**,  
They were equally suitable:

- on a roadway,
- climbing a ladder,
- walking in the desert,
- or crossing a stream.

**Even**, when a Roman soldier lay down to sleep.  
He kept his sandals on.

So that ... at a moment's notice, he could leap up,  
To defend himself ~ or chase an intruder.  
The soldier's '**readiness to respond**' could save his life.

You may remember, from a film or a book the words:  
'**Pax Romana**' which means: '**The Roman peace.**'

**The Roman wars of conquest**, (creating the Empire)  
Went, on & on ... for over 100 years.

They continued until '**the Empire**' commenced with:  
The selection of the **1<sup>st</sup> Emperor: Augustus**. (In 27 BC)

A lot of the countries they'd conquered.

Were divided by small tribes, each with its own '**king**'  
But these tribes were often at war ... with each other !

As Rome conquered ~ they stopped the local fighting  
Built paved roads ... & unified the country.

A mixture of **local** and **Roman** laws were applied,  
And: **local leaders**, who knew the **local customs**,  
Were appointed, to sit in **local courts**. (eg: Herod)  
BUT, to oversee Rome's interests, and apply **their** laws  
Senior Roman Officers, were posted to key 'Positions'  
As **Governors ~ Proconsuls ~ & Procurators**.  
To maintain law & order, by using **force** if necessary.

The people discovered: that '**Roman peace**' ~ was **real**  
They could travel and trade, across their own country,  
And into other countries, if they chose !  
But **Roman peace**.  
Had come, by outside intervention & force.  
So, Paul sees ... both **similarities**, and **contrasts** !

**v15, again:**

For shoes, put on **the Peace that comes from the  
Good News**, so that you will be fully prepared.

The Christian ‘**gospel of peace**’ is chosen **voluntarily**.  
Not forced on us... By a soldier with a sword !  
Our ‘Peace’ is: ... **The peace of God in our hearts**,  
**First** ~ we must accept the gospel for ourselves,  
To gain **that peace** personally.  
**Only then**, can we **share that peace**, with others.

**v16** **In every battle you will need faith as your shield**  
**to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.**

The Roman soldier was provided with 2 shields,  
(small & large) the smaller one, was for ‘hand to hand’  
fighting ~ to deflect the other man’s sword.

In **v16**, Paul refers to the **larger shield**,

The most feared projectile was: **the flaming arrow**,  
A strip of fabric was tied on ~ just behind the point,  
dipped in lamp oil ~ lit from a fire ~ & quickly shot.

**The Large shields**: could be ‘**interlocked**’ into:  
A metal wall, for deflecting these flaming arrows.  
A squad of soldiers, would form a square,  
with their large shields creating a wall of metal in front  
at the 2 sides ~ and acting as a ‘roof’ over their heads !

**v17a. Put on Salvation as your Helmet,**

A soldier could survive being wounded:  
in many different parts of his body.

**But**, a wound to the head or neck, was often **fatal**.  
**Wearing** his metal helmet, could save his life !

God's salvation, gives us new life ~ **Eternal** life !  
Satan sometimes wounds us, but he cannot **defeat** us,  
When we are wearing, the **helmet of Salvation**.

**v17b. And take the Sword of the Spirit,  
which is the Word of God.**

So far ... all the armour has been: '**Defensive**'

**But a sword**, can be either '**Offensive or Defensive**'  
Paul says ... it's a picture of **God's Word**.

Those churches that follow '**Liberal Theology**' say:  
'The Bible is **not God's Word** ~ it's just **man's word** !  
Just a collection, of **old religious ideas**, from the past.'

They say: The Bible is an interesting **curiosity** ...  
**But of no Spiritual importance** !

As '**Evangelical**' Christians ~ we don't believe that !

**The Lord Jesus ~ accepted the OT scriptures:  
As being ...both factual & authoritative,**

**And He said to his disciples: John 14.26**

**But when the Father sends the Counsellor  
as my representative, and by the Counsellor I mean  
the Holy Spirit, He will teach you everything,  
& remind you of everything, I myself, have told you.**

Also, in Peter's 2nd letter: 2 Peter 1.20,21

**Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in  
scripture, ever came from the prophet's themselves,  
or because they wanted to prophesy. It was the  
Holy Spirit who moved the prophets to speak from God**

And in Paul's 2nd letter to Timothy: 2 Tim 3.16,17

**All Scripture is inspired by God  
and is useful to teach us what is true  
and to make us **realise** what is wrong in our lives.  
It straightens us out, and teaches us **to do** what is right.  
It is God's way of preparing us in every way,  
fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do**

So the **Sword** represents the Bible ~ **the Word of God**  
The only weapon for both defence ~ and attack.

**But** ... by '**attack**' we don't mean forcing our beliefs,  
On those who don't want to hear them !

**But**, carefully using the **truths of scripture** to explain:

**Why** we believe something is: '**true**' or '**false**'

And therefore: '**right**' or '**wrong**' !

**V18:**

Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power  
of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your  
prayers for all Christians everywhere.

**To pray in the power of the Holy Spirit,**

We must pray: **in harmony with God's Spirit.**

Which means: our prayer has to be in harmony,  
With what God's Word reveals, about His Character.

To pray in any other way,

Would mean: **We're giving God ~ our instructions !**

Whereas, when we ask Him to bless us, & others:

**Physically / Mentally / Emotionally / Spiritually !**

It shows, we want **God's way** in **our lives** & theirs.

**Vs19, 20.** And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me  
the right words as I boldly explain God's secret plan  
That the Good News is for the Gentiles too.

**Notice, Paul is not too proud:**

To ask the Ephesians to pray for him !  
Both for the **right thing** to say,  
And the **courage** to say it fearlessly.

**Vs. 21,22:**

Tychicus, a much loved brother & faithful helper in the Lord's work, will tell you all about how I am getting along. I am sending him to you for just this purpose. He will let you know how we are, and he will encourage you.

Remember: Paul is issuing **commands**,  
not making suggestions.

In summary they say:

**Be Strong with the Lord's mighty power**

**Put on all of God's armour**

**Stand firm against the strategies of the Devil.**

**Use every piece of God's armour to resist the enemy**

**Lastly ...** Paul concludes with a simple benediction:

May God give you **peace**,

Dear brothers and sisters, and **love with faith**,

From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God's **grace** be upon all who **love** our

Lord Jesus Christ with **an undying love**.