

Please have your Bibles opened up to Ephesians chapter 6 - starting from verse 10

There's the usual outline in the bulletin to make notes if you wish

Let me ask for God's help before we begin...

## **Intro**

As some of you might know - I enjoy watching the cricket

This passage from Ephesians reminded me of what a batsman needs to wear when he goes into bat:

### **[PowerPoint 1-Intro]**

A batsman wouldn't dream of going out to play cricket without all the correct protection gear on and without a cricket bat

And it's the same with a soldier - a soldier wouldn't go into battle without protection and a weapon to fight the enemy

It's also the same for a Christian - as we've seen in our children's talk this morning - as Christians we have an armour of protection -

And as Christians we shouldn't contemplate living our lives - without making use of this protection - it would be very silly and naive and in fact extremely dangerous to live our lives as Christians without this Christian armoury

This Christian armoury gives us strength and protection

## Source of Strength and Protection (6:10-11a)

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 6 verse 10-11 tells us where the **source** of this strength and protection is from:

[PowerPoint 2-Source]

This strength and protection is from the Lord, God - it's His mighty power and it's His armour we are going to use -

It's not our strength and it's not our armour - it's God's!

See v10 - "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power"

Literally "be made mighty and powerful" in the Lord - not by the Lord but in the Lord!

This means living a life in union with God - As Jesus tells his disciples in John 15:1-5 - apart from Him - they can do nothing

The point is, we are not left to our own feeble strength, but there is "**divine strength**" that we can "**put on**" to protect us in the "battles" we must face

In verses 10 and 11 - there are *two* steps

First, we must be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power

Then we put on the full armour of God

Both steps are essential - we must not neglect either

Before a soldier is given a gun or shown how to fire a missile - the soldier has to go through basic training. It's like the army says "Soldier, we're giving you the best weapons and armour possible; so first we want to make sure you're strong enough to use what we're giving you"

And notice verse 10 says IN His mighty power

And it doesn't mean going walking around - like you're in some magical spell chanting - "Be strong in the Lord - and in His mighty power"

Might is an inherent force - like a muscular man's big muscles display his might even if he doesn't use them. It's obvious he has that strength in reserve to use if need be

Power - is using the might or strength we have - like a muscular man can use his might and strength to bend an iron bar.

In the same way - God has vast reservoirs of might that can be shown as His power in a Christian's life

But God's mighty power doesn't work in me as I sit passively doing nothing

His mighty power works as I rely on it and step out to do the work

Now I could rely on His mighty power and do no work at all

Or I could do work without relying on God's mighty power

But neither of these is what Paul is saying here

Paul says we must rely {that's what IN the LORD means} we must rely on God's mighty power and then do the work

It is not "*We do everything and God does nothing.*"

It is not "*We do nothing and God does everything.*"

It it's not even "*We do all we can and God helps with what we can't do.*"

Each of these approaches falls short.

The key is for us - by faith to rely on God's mighty power and rely on it more and more - and then do the work

Perhaps you're here this morning

And you're like me

And you've been relying on your own strength - instead of relying on God's strength

Welsh preacher Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his series on Ephesians - suggests that Christians sometime waste their strength

He says it's as if they had received some of the available mighty power from God and it simply leaked away like water in a bucket that is full of holes

He lists some things Christians do which waste the strength God has given them

Things like:

- *Committing to too many spiritual works or ministries*
- *Having too many conversations*
- *Getting involved in arguments, debates and wrangles*
- *Being lazy*
- *Spending too much time in the wrong company*
- *Too much foolish talk and joking around*

- *Chasing after and loving money and a career*
- *Desiring for respectability, image and status*
- *Ungodly entertainment*
- *And a wrong attitude towards God's Word or doubting God's Word*

All these can drain us of the strength and mighty power God has given us

So we need to be watchful and examine ourselves - to see if the strength God has given us - is increasing or declining

(pause)

### **Why we need God's Strength and Protection (6:11b-13)**

So why do we need God's strength and protection anyway?

[PowerPoint 3a-Satan's schemes]

**Firstly**, to stand firm against the **devil's (or Satan) schemes** (11b)

Who is the devil or Satan anyway?

People's beliefs concerning Satan range from the silly to the abstract—from a little red guy with horns who sits on your shoulder urging you to sin, to an expression used to describe the personification of evil. The Bible, however, gives us a clear portrait of who Satan is and how he affects our lives. Put simply, the Bible defines Satan as an angelic being who fell from his position in heaven due to sin and is now completely opposed to God, doing all in his power to thwart God's purposes

Because of Satan's sin, God permanently removed Satan from his exalted position and role. Satan became the ruler of this world and the prince of the power of the air (John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2). He is known as an accuser (Revelation 12:10), a tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5), and a deceiver (Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:3). His very name means "adversary" or "one who opposes." Another one of his titles, the devil, means "slanderer."

Even though Satan was cast out of heaven, he still seeks to elevate his throne above God. He counterfeits all that God does, hoping to gain the worship of the world and encourage opposition to God's kingdom. Satan is the ultimate source behind every false cult and false world religion. Satan will do anything and everything in his power to oppose God and those who follow God. However, Satan's destiny is sealed—an eternity in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

So back to v11b - we need God's strength and protection from the Devil's schemes  
Schemes here means - tricks, craftiness, deceit and cunning

What sort of tricks would the devil (Satan) use?

- *Blinding people with false doctrine (2 Cor 4:3-4; 1 Ti 4:1-3)*
- *Tempting people to indulge sexual immorality (Eph 2:1-3)*
- *Convincing people God will understand their sin and rebellion*
- *Bringing persecution upon those who do right by God (1 Peter 5:8)*

- *Reminding us of all the bad stuff we did in the past (which Jesus has forgiven us of) but the devil likes to bring into our minds and bash us over the head with. [I don't remember Satan ever reminding me of anything good I did]*
- *Satan plays both the bully and the tempter*
- *He will use every trick in the book - to break up Christian churches and Christian relationships - and to stop people hearing the message of Jesus*

(pause)

[PowerPoint 6b-spiritual battle]

**Secondly** we need God's strength and protection because we are at war

At it's an enemy that we can't physically see - because as Paul says in v12 - we're not at war with people who have flesh and blood -

It's a spiritual battle - against Satan and his army

Paul describes this spiritual battle (literally a wrestle) as being against *rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm*

Paul uses a variety of terms to refer to our spiritual enemies

We should regard them as being on many different levels - and of many different ranks

So the spiritual battle is many dimensional and far ranging - Satan and his helpers infiltrate or influence world leaders and rulers, governments and countries in our world - as well as influencing individuals. At the same time there is a spiritual warfare going on between Evil and Goodness - between Darkness and Light

And all these spiritual enemies have one goal: *to knock the Christian down from their place of standing.*

We may not fully understand how the "rulers of the darkness" operate, but we **MUST** see how much we need all the strength God provides us in order to "stand firm" against such evil forces.

[PowerPoint 3c=Stand]

**Thirdly** we need God's power and strength - as it says in v13 - so we can stand our ground - and not be defeated by Satan and his army - in whatever spiritual battle comes our way.

So Paul suggest putting on the ***full armour of God***...

Which leads us to how we get God's power and strength

By putting on this full armour of God

**What is God's Power and Strength? (Ephesians 6:13-20)**

Now - remember Paul is in chains (v20) - in prison - probably chained to a Roman soldier - and Paul can't help but compare the roman soldier's armour to the armour that God supplies

So let's take a closer look at the full armour of God

[PowerPoint 4-Belt of truth]

The first part of the armour

### Is the **Belt of Truth**

It's not the world's truth but God's truth

They are not always the same thing

It's God's truth that holds our lives together and gives us a sense of direction and purpose

As Jesus says - believing in Him set us free - because we are no longer slaves to sin but our sins have been washed away and forgiven by Jesus' blood on the cross.

So the belt of truth tells us Satan is a liar when he reminds us of our sins and tells us they're not forgiven

It's the belt of truth that tells us - anyone who believes in Jesus can't be condemned of their sins anymore (Romans 8:1)

It's the belt of truth that tells us - that Jesus is the way and the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through Jesus (John 14:6) -

Satan will try to trick us and lie to us that other ways and other religions can get us to Heaven but the belt of truth says only Jesus can do that!

So friends - make sure you have the belt of God's truth strapped tightly to your waist.

The next piece of the armour is the **breastplate of righteousness**

[PowerPoint 5-Breastplate]

Having the breastplate of righteousness

Tells us that despite what Satan might tell us we are right before God because God in His wonderful grace sent Jesus to die for our sins and declare us not guilty anymore of our sins (Rom 3:23-24)

It's the breastplate of righteousness that assures us that we are God's people, the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3)

It's the breastplate of righteousness that tells us our old self has been crucified with Jesus - and that Jesus now lives in us (Gal 2:20-21) - and that because of our faith in Jesus - we now have righteousness that comes from God on the basis of that faith (Phil 3:9)

And because we are born again - born of the Holy Spirit - the breastplate of righteousness reminds us that we are God's children - who should be thinking, speaking and doing all that is good and right in God's sight and protecting our hearts from evil thoughts, words and deeds

So friends, do you have your breastplate on reminding you that you're right before God and reminding you to act in a Godly way

Next is the feet fitted with the readiness that comes from **Gospel of Peace**

[PowerPoint 6-Gospel of Peace]

The Gospel literally means the Good News

The Good News that Jesus came and conquered sin and death and replaced it with forgiveness and eternal life.

By his death on the cross and then His resurrection, Jesus has defeated the power of Satan

People don't have to die for their sin and people don't have to go to Hell - and be separated from God forever

The Gospel - the Good News - says Jesus wins and gives us the hope of living in Heaven with God forever

That Gospel - Good News - gives us peace - peace with God - and peace in our hearts (Rom 5:1)

That's why Jesus says to His disciples and us - when he went to the cross -

**27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)**

So we can have a peace in our hearts (a peace that surpasses all human understanding) - a peace that we are right with God and we know where we're headed - to Heaven. No matter what Satan throws at us and no matter what this world tells us

The Gospel of peace is crucial to our ability to stand firm - knowing we're in Jesus' hands, we are saved and can't be snatched from His hands

That then means those same feet that are standing firm

Can be beautiful feet that bring the Gospel - Good News to others (Rom 10:15)

So friends, are your feet standing firm in the Gospel of Peace - knowing you have peace with God - and are you encouraged to be beautiful feet - bringing the Good News to others?

Then there's the **shield of faith** that extinguishes Satan's fiery arrows

[PowerPoint 7-Shield]

The shield referred to here - is a shield that covers the whole body - not a small round shield

So the picture Paul wants to paint here

Is that Satan is throwing everything he can at us to derail us and turns us away from Jesus and cause us to give up

He throws false teaching, temptation, lies, deceit, lust, persecution

And we have this massive shield that covers our whole being

And that shield is our faith in Jesus

Our faith that says Jesus has defeated Satan

Our faith that says Jesus has forgiven us

Our faith that says Jesus has us saved for all eternity

Our faith that says Jesus loves us

Our faith that God promises us he'll never leave us nor forsake us

Our faith in God's word that we may have to undergo all kinds of trials in this world - to prove the genuineness of a faith (1 Peter 1:6-7)

So our shield of faith blocks Satan's arrows - time and time again

Friends, have you got your shield covering your body or is it down by your side - letting Satan's arrows get through

Next we have the **Helmet of Salvation**

[PowerPoint 8-Helmet]

Most armies have distinct helmets - that usually tell you what army they belong to

God's Army is no different

God's helmet says - SALVATION

It means to be part of His army - you have to be saved

Saved from your sin -

Saved by Jesus

So having a helmet of salvation

Gives us eternal hope - a certain hope - that we are saved and going to Heaven

The helmet of salvation covers the head which includes the brain and it protects our minds against things like despair and fear and doubt and anxiety

It's a certain hope

Perhaps you're someone here this morning

Who's full of despair, or fear or doubt or anxiety?

Well perhaps you've left your helmet off

Like a soldier going out to battle without his helmet on - you're putting yourself in danger - and letting Satan get a foothold on your thinking

Put the helmet of salvation on

Jesus has saved us

Heaven is certain

And Jesus is coming back for us - guaranteed!

[PowerPoint 9-Sword of Spirit]

The last piece of the armour is the **Sword of the Spirit** which is the **Word of God**

So far the armour has been defensive and for protection

Now we have a piece of the armour which is also an "offensive" weapon

Hebrews 4:12 says this:

**<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**

With this sword - which has the Word of God working in conjunction with God's Holy Spirit - it is possible for God's Word to "cut to the heart" those who hear the Word of God

Jesus used God's Word when Satan tempted him for 40 days

Note it's not our job to cut people to the heart with God's Word

We just say God's Word - and the Spirit and the Word does the cutting

It's the most powerful weapon

But we have to read it and know it - and tell it - to ourselves and to others - for it to be effective

The Word of God has the power

To both encourage those who are struggling

And to convict those who are over-confident and arrogant and full of pride

Friends, honestly ask yourself - how much you read, use and know God's Word?

(pause)

There's one more thing we can add to our Christian armoury

## [PowerPoint 10-Prayer]

And that's prayer - in v18

Given that Paul has spoken about the armour of God here

Prayer is meant to be a way of us being prepared and watchful for any attacks that Satan might send our way in this Spiritual warfare

So notice Paul's instructions:

Pray **in the Spirit** - which means ask the Holy Spirit to guide and teach and show us what's going on

Pray on **ALL occasions** - not just when we are in trouble

With **ALL KINDS** of prayers - adoration, confession, thanks and help

How often? Always **keep on** praying!

For whom? All **God's people**

Paul's given another protection mechanism for Christians - it's prayer

So friends, again, honestly

How's our prayer life

Are we asking the Spirit to show us?

Are we praying on all occasions?

What type of prayers are we focusing on? Always the help me ones!

How often are we praying?

Who do we pray for - just ourselves? Our family? Or all God's people?

## Conclusion

## [PowerPoint 11-Armour]

When we arm ourselves with such qualities as...

- a. Truth
- b. Righteousness
- c. The Gospel
- d. Faith
- e. The hope of salvation
- f. The Word of God
- g. And Prayer

...then we are "strong in the Lord and in His mighty power"! (v10)

With such strength, we are able to resist and stand firm against anything Satan might throw against us

- a. But the choice to "put on the full armor of God" is up to us...
- b. Are we taking care to clothe ourselves with this wonderful armour?

Let's pray...