TITLE: Being Fully Dressed?

TEXT: 1st Pet. 5:8; Ephe. 6:10-18; Jn. 14:6; 1st Pet. 3:15; Heb. 11:1 & 7:25; Phil 2:5; 1st Co. 2:16; 2nd Co. 10:5; 2nd Tim. 2:15

INTRODUCTION: When you got up this morning how many of you got fully dressed before leaving the house?

 Let’s take an inventory and see….everyone got all your undergarments on? Your socks or stockings? Your shirt or blouse? Your pants or dress? Your shoes or sandals?

 Is everyone fully dressed?

 How about your belt, your breastplate, your shield, your helmet? Did you think to put your sword on before you left the house?

 Let me tell you that no matter how nice you all may look this morning (and you all look very good by the way), that if you didn’t put on your belt, your breastplate, your shield, your helmet and your sword then you lift home half naked?

 Now, there may be some of you thinking, “What do I need to put my armor on for this morning? This is Sunday! I am at Church for heaven’s sake! The Devil don’t go to no Church on Sunday! As a matter of fact I think that he takes Sunday’s off!

 RIGHT! And if you buy that one I have some swampland in southern Florida that I would like to sell you ---just see me after Church this morning…

 How many know that the devil is a workaholic and that he works 24-7? If I were an employer he is probably the kind of employee I would want to hire because of his work ethic. He is always on the job. He is 100% dedicated to his work.

 The problem is that his work, his sole purpose in life is to destroy us!

That is why Scripture tells us in:

1Pet 5:8 (NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

 As a matter of fact I think that the devil works overtime on Sunday!

 Example: Have you ever left for Church on Sunday morning and on the drive out something happens that causes contention or strife.

 Maybe you even find yourself in an argument with your husband of wife about something that you normally wouldn’t argue about.

 And when you do get to Church you find yourself far from being in a mood that is receptive to anything from the Lord..

 Maybe you are even so agitated or irritable that you feel like maybe you should just turn around and go back home… Feeling like you are unworthy to even come into Gods house feeling like you do.

 Does it surprise you when something like that happens?

 I mean, I am headed for Church for crying out loud!

 We can disagree, we can argue anytime, but why now?

 Because Satan doesn’t take Sundays off! The fact is he works doubly hard on Sunday! He wants you to turn around and go back home! Or if you do come he wants you to not be in a frame of mind to receive anything from the Lord..

 Or maybe you have come to a place in your personal walk with the Lord where you have committed or recommitted an area of your life to Christ that has been a real struggle for you in the past….

 Maybe you wives have been convicted by the Lord that you aren’t as submissive to your husband’s within the home as you know God wants you to be, or as husband, we may be convicted by the Lord that we aren’t loving our wives with the sacrificial love of Christ that we have been called to, and so we make a commitment to the Lord that we are going to really try to do better.

 And then it seems like when we do really put forth an extended effort to do better that our mate will say or do something that really makes our effort seem futile. We may feel like why do I even try?

 You may wonder why, when I try to do what I know God wants me to do, something always seems to happen to keep me from doing it or making it extremely difficult for me to do it.

 Why does this always seem to happen?

 Because our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

 It is when we truly try to be obedient to God in our life that we become a real threat to the enemy’s plan of destruction.

 He doesn’t want you to come to Church and be blessed by the fellowship of the saints, so often he will try to rob you of your peace before you even get here.

 He doesn’t want you to have peace in your family whereby you can be an effective witness for Jesus Christ within your household and to those whom you come into contact with outside of your home, so when you try to please God the hardest and strive to become the Christian Husband or wife that God wants you to be, you come under his attack.

That is why scripture gives us this admonition…

**Ephe 6:10 (NIV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.**

First, we are to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power!

 Whenever we fall to an attack of the enemy it is most often because we have tried to stand against him in our own strength and power.

 If we try to stand against the devil in our own strength and power we will almost always fail! Fall flat on our face! Feel like for every step we take forward spiritually we take two steps backwards.

 But we don’t have to stand against the enemy in our own strength and power.

 As Christians God has availed His strength and His power to us!

 And His strength and Power are always going to be sufficient to help us stand our ground when we come up against the enemy’s attacks..

**Ephe 6:10 (NIV) … be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.**

**11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.**

12 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.

 Here we find two important truths that are essential for us to understand if we are to live a successful, victorious life in Christ as a Christian.

 The second one first……. 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.

 Our real struggle is not against flesh and blood.

(Everyone say that)

 Our struggle is not against one another!

 Ladies real your struggle is not with your husband or your children..

 Men your real struggle is not with your wife or your kids..

 Your real struggle is not with your over-expecting or unfair boss…

 Your real struggle is not with any of the hard people in our life..

 Our real struggle is … against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

 Our real struggle is against the great destroyer and deceiver of mankind! Our real struggle is against the devil and his spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms!

 A place in Turkey called Aqaba, in 1917 seemed impregnable. Any enemy vessel approaching the port city would have to face the battery of huge naval guns above the town. Behind Aqaba in every direction lay barren, waterless, inhospitable desert.

To the east lay the deadly "anvil of the sun." The Turks believed Aqaba to be safe from any attack. But they were wrong.

 Lawrence of Arabia led a force of irregular Arab cavalry across the "anvil of the sun." Together, they rallied support among the local people. On July 6, 1917, the Arab forces swept into Aqaba from the north, from the blind side.

 A climactic moment of the film Lawrence of Arabia is the long, panning shot of the Arabs on their camels and horses, with Lawrence at their head, galloping past the gigantic naval guns that are completely powerless to stop them. The guns were facing in the wrong direction. Aqaba fell, and the Turkish hold on Palestine was broken, to be replaced by the British mandate and eventually by the State of Israel.

 The Turks failed to defend Aqaba because they made two fatal mistakes. They did not know their enemy, and they did not have the right weapons.

 We must be careful not to make the same mistakes in our life as a Christians as was made in Aqaba.

 Ephesians 6:12 makes it very clear who our enemy is:

"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.

 And if our real struggle is not against flesh and blood, our fellow man, but against the devil and his spiritual forces of evil, then if we are going to fight the battle and be successful, first we need to know who our enemy is, knowing his schemes, and then we need to arm ourselves accordingly!

 If it is a spiritual battle that we are facing then we need to get our guns pointed in the right direction. We need to arm ourselves with spiritual weapons.

 Which brings us to first important truth that we need to glean from this portion of Scripture;

 Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

 The first thing that we need to do as a Christian is to put on the full armor of God so that we can take our stand against the devil’s schemes.

Folks the best defense has always been to have a good offense!

 If our offense is strong it will be a deterrent from having to fight defensively.

Example: Arms race… In the nuclear age US policy has been to show a strong offense so that it would lessen the chance of having to come to a place of defense.

 In other words if you have all the right weapons pointed in the right direction the enemy will be less likely to attack you.

 The same is true with us spiritually!

 As we equip ourselves offensively it will actually lesson the times that we come under attack by the enemy.

 Our advisory the devil is no fool. He is a very wise strategist. He will not attack where he knows he can not break through. He will always look for the weak spots in our armor and attack there.

 That is why we need to have a strong offense..

 Jesus Christ is our offense. He has supplied us with a whole battery of offensive weaponry. He has supplied us with every spiritual weapon that we will ever need to fight and win these spiritual battles that the enemy will rage against us.

 But before the armor that the Lord has provided will do us any good we need to first put it on.

 Scripture goes on to say….

**13 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.**

The simple promise of God’s Word here is that if we put on the “full armor of God” that we will stand against any attack that the enemy may bring against us.

He goes on…

**14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,**

**15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

**16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

**17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**18 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.**

Paul here uses the parts of a Romans soldier’s armor as an example of the spiritual armor that we are to put on as a Christian.

First is the belt of truth. The belt was an important part of a soldier’s armor. It wasn’t what held his pants up but what he attached his weapons to.

**14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist**!

 Truth is what all the rest of our armor rests upon as a Christian. It is the first thing that we need to put on.

 **John 14:6 (NIV) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

 Just as Jesus is truth we are to put on truth. His truth! If we have not put on truth then none of the rest of the armor is going to fit.

 Being men or women of truth is an essential part of our spiritual armor.

Example ( My Dad): Trip when we were kids.

 A few years ago I went into the grocery store to pick up something for dinner. Coming from a grocery retail background I subliminally add my purchases up in my head as I go along. When I get to the checkout I know about what the bill should be.

 On this particular trip when the cashier told me the amount it hit me that I was undercharged by almost 10.00. I gave her the money and got the receipt and quickly looked and saw that the meat was wrung up for one dollar instead of ten dollars.

 There was a temptation to just pick up my bags and leave. I mean what is the big deal it wasn’t my fault.

 The big deal is without truth we lose all credibility and so will our witness of Christ. In clothing ourselves with Christ we are to be clothing ourselves with truth because He is the embodiment of truth.

 I told the cashier I thought she must have made a mistake. I think she first thought that I was saying that she had overcharged me. It really seemed to throw her that I was objecting to being undercharged.

 We are to also stand firm then **with the breastplate of righteousness in place.**

The breastplate was what shielded and protected the soldier’s vital organs such as his heart much like a bullet proof vest police and soldiers wear today.

 Our breastplate, that which guards our heart is righteousness, the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

 When we come to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and ask Him to come into our heart to be the Lord and savior of our life God takes our sin and gives us His righteousness.

 And then He commands us …**be holy because I Am Holy says the Lord!**

The word used for Holy here is Hag-ee-os and it means to set apart for God. Set apart for His purpose. Make available for His use.

 Setting ourselves apart for Christ to be used by Him in our daily lives is a part of our spiritual armor. Separating ourselves unto God by striving to live a Christ-like life is what will protect our most vital area, our heart.

 **And our feet need to be fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

Even the shoes, the sandals were a vital part of the Roman soldier’s armor.

 He would often have to fight on rocky, rough terrain and having good footing was essential in battle.

 The Gospel is what we stand on as a Christian. The Gospel is our sure footing in doing battle with the enemy.

 Our feet need to be fitted with the readiness of it.

 That is what Scripture means when it says …

Be prepared in season and out of season;

1Pet 3:15 (NIV) 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.

 We need to be ready to share the gospel, share our testimony of it, how it has impacted our lives, at a moment’s notice.

**16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

The shield was a very important part of a soldier’s armor.

Example: Movie 300…Spartans shields were held up as arrows were coming in upon them..

 Our faith is what will shield us from all the flaming arrows of the devil. And not just shield us but will actually extinguish his flaming arrows.

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

Our faith is our **expressed** confidence in Jesus Christ!

(Say that)

Hebr 7:25 (NIV) Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

 Our confidence in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our life is our shield of faith that will extinguish all the flaming arrows that the enemy may fling against us.

 Our expressed confidence that no matter what may come against us, that Jesus still sits on the throne and is Lord of Lords and King of all Kings, and that I am entirely safe in His hands.

 That even if the enemy destroys my body my soul is safe and secure in Jesus.

Next…we are to

**17 Take the helmet of salvation!**

The helmet was the part of the armor that protected the head of a soldier.

 How many know that our heads need protected from the attacks of the enemy?

 The devil will try to get at our head or in our head. Strike a blow against our mind.

 He may try to implant the thought…Are you really saved? Does Jesus really care about you? You have tried and failed Him so many times before…you are worthless to God; He can never use someone like you?

 These are all attacks the enemy uses against our head, our minds.

 That is why we need to take up the helmet of salvation.

 What is the helmet of salvation?

 Jesus is!

 That is why Scripture says:

**Phil 2:5 (NKJV) Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**!

1Cor 2:16 (NKJV) For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

 We take up the helmet of salvation by putting on the mind of Christ.

 How do we put on the mind of Christ?

2Cor 10:5 (NIV) We 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 Christ.

 We take up the helmet of salvation by putting on the mind of Christ and we put on the mind of Christ by taking every thought captive and making it obedient to Christ.

So when the devil tries to remind us of our past and tries to get us to question our salvation or our use to God, we need to take that thought captive and make it obedient to Christ! We need to take the thought captive, isolate it in our mind, and then bring it into subjection to the Word of God!

 When Satan reminds you of your past just remind Him of His future and go on in the victory that Christ has already secured for you in Him.

 **Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

The sword was both an offensive and defensive weapon.

 The better that you became with it offensively the less likely you would need to use it defensively..

 If you became really good at using your sword your enemy would leave you alone..

 We need to become skilled as a Christian with our sword!

 We need to become skilled with the Word of God!

 That is what Scripture means when it says…

2Tim 2:15 (KJS) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

 Jesus was an excellent swordsman!

 Jesus had been fasting out in the wilderness for 40 days and nights when the enemy came to attack Him…

 Jesus was hungry so the devil said…If you are the Son of God tell these stones to become bread..

 What did Jesus do? He picks up the sword of the spirit, the word of God! "It is written: `Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

So the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

**"If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:**

**"`He will command his angels concerning you,**

**and they will lift you up in their hands,**

**so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"**

 What does Jesus do? Whips out His sword!

**7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: `Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"**

 So, again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

**"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."**

 What does Jesus do? Takes up His sword!

 Jesus said to him, **"Away from me, Satan! For it is written:** `**Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"**

Do you know what happened next?

It says ….**Then the devil left him!**

Why did the devil give up? Because Jesus was fully armed! Jesus was prepared! The devil had no option but to leave…

 Scripture says…**resist the devil and he will flee from you!**

 We resist the devil by fully arming ourselves with the spiritual weapons that Christ has provided us with.

 Christ has provided the armor, the weapons that we need, but we need to take them up, we need to put them on!

 There is one more part of the armor that is listed here that is possibly the most important and the most powerful…

18 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.

 Prayer is our communication line with our commander and chief!

 If we are to be fully armed against the enemy then we need to take up the weapon of prayer.

 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.

 Prayer is what unleashes the power of God in our life.

 We need to always keep on praying for all the saints.

 Maybe you have found yourself under the attack of the enemy? Does that surprise you? It shouldn’t?

 Scripture tells us that our adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

 Just the fact that you may be under attack, have drawn the enemies attention, may be an indicator that you are growing in your relationship with God or that God is about to do something big, use you in some great way.

 But the point is we do not need fear the enemy or his attacks! Because God has provided us with the armor and every weapon that we need to fight and win the battles

 But we need to put it on, to arm ourselves with it if is to do us any good!

 When you get up in the morning do you get fully dressed?

 Do you go into the day prepared?

Do you put on the full armor of God so that you can stand your ground against this enemy that roams the earth seeking to destroy?

**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, (you will) stand.**