

# “Get Dressed and Get Out There” // Eph 6:10–18 // *The Unseen Enemy* #3<sup>1</sup>

As you’ve heard, we are celebrating Christmas at the DPAC again this year. For a while we did that every year, but then we took a couple years off, and then COVID happened and we just got out of the habit and NOBODY was more upset about that than the Greear children. In fact, true story--here’s a PIC from 2 years ago when I told my kids we were not going to be at the DPAC that year--Allie staged a protest and said she and the others were going to lie like this until we brought the DPAC back. Well, Allie, you can get up ‘cause it’s back this year!

**Now, important info: Tickets will be available starting tomorrow, December 4, at noon.** Tickets are free, but you need one to attend. We like to say it’s like going to heaven--it’s completely free, but you have to personally RSVP. Now, you don’t have to panic and rearrange your day and crash our website at noon like it’s a Taylor Swift concert, because we’ll be releasing different batches of **tickets throughout the day**. There are lots of time slots and lots of seats, but you will need to go online and get your tickets. Again, this starts tomorrow, Monday, Dec 4, at high noon. Any info you need is on **our website: [christmasatdpac.com](http://christmasatdpac.com)**.

One more thing, on Tuesday of this week my newest book, *12 Truths and a Lie*, releases. This book comes out of a podcast I’ve done for years here for our church called Ask Me Anything where I just answer the questions I get asked. Well, K-Love, our positive and encouraging friends at the syndicated Christian music station, approached us with the idea of taking the most popular of those questions and turning them into a book. Questions like, “How can I know God’s will for my life?” and “Why does it feel like God is not answering my prayers?” and “Why does God care so much about someone’s sex life?”--and even some thorny ones like “Isn’t the Old Testament God A moral monster?” and “How Should Christians Think About Politics?” And a few others--those are the 12 truths. **You say, “What’s the lie?”** I’m not going to tell you--you have to get the book and find out. I’ve always said that anything I write is first and foremost for our church, and that’s true of this book. If it will help you with these questions--or maybe you know someone in your life who struggles with them, I hope you’ll pick one up. **The book doesn’t release until Tuesday, but we have copies available for you today at the Next Steps area at all our campuses for 40% off.** And, as always, I remind you that nothing we sell here brings personal profit back to me or any of our pastors. **All money goes right back into the church.**

## Introduction

ALRIGHT... I know many of you are expecting me to start a Christmas series today, and I was planning to. BUT. After the response to the first couple of spiritual warfare messages, I just really sensed the Holy Spirit wanted us to spend one more week on this. **So, Ephesians 6 if**

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<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted: Sam Storms, *Practicing the Power*; Karl Payne, *Spiritual Warfare*; Leonard Ravenhill, *Why Revival Tarries*. Tyler Staton, *Praying Like Monks*,

*Living Like Fools*. And others as noted throughout. See also [J.D. Greear, “This is War,” Eph 6:10–24](#) from *Love Incorruptible* series (2017) for other sources.

**you have your Bibles. (One of the most well-known spiritual warfare passages in the Bible, and Paul's final words to the Ephesians.)**

*Final words are important. Several years ago I had my wisdom teeth removed, and evidently, in the consultation leading up to the operation, the **last thing** they told me was that I should not eat or drink anything in the 12 hours leading up to the surgery. Well, that morning, when I woke up, I completely forgot what they'd told me, and I drank two sips of hot tea and took one bite of a piece of sausage and then I remembered what they said. Literally 2 sips and 1 bite. Well, in the little pre-op consult before the surgery, they asked me if I'd eaten or drunk anything, and I dutifully said 'yes,' thinking for that small amount I'd get a disapproving glance and that would be it, like when I tell the dentist I don't floss enough, but they went into the back room to whisper with each other and came out and told me, "You can't be put under anesthesia for this surgery; if you want to go forward with the surgery, you'll have to do it wide awake, using local anesthesia." I thought, "Well, I definitely don't want to put this off any longer, and, I mean, how bad could it be?" Short answer: very bad. They numbed my gums, but that dentist had his pliers in my mouth pulling and yanking and I'm hearing bone and teeth cracking and his hands are pushing all up on my face for leverage... It was one of the worst experiences of my life. If you're a dentist here today, I don't hate you anymore. But for a long time I did.*

*Just kidding. Last **instructions** are important, especially if you are headed into danger--so, we should take it really seriously when Paul ends his letter to the Ephesians with instructions about **spiritual warfare**. **Finally** (Paul says in vs 10, "finally"), **be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12]***

**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.**

**[13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

- We saw in our first week that almost every New Testament writer puts spiritual warfare right at the center of the Christian life. The NT books of **Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, Jude** and **Revelation** all present the Christian life as a struggle, warfare, against forces of darkness. *Jesus went so far as to summarize his whole ministry as "proclaiming liberty to captives"--freeing them from spiritual BONDAGE to the demonic.*
- And so it shouldn't surprise us that in these final verses of Ephesians, *Paul warns the Ephesians that their real struggle is not against flesh and blood, but 'cosmic powers over this present darkness and spiritual forces of evil in high places.'*

In **vs. 11** Paul says these powers are ("**schemes**") scheming against, a word that implies intentionality. You have someone literally thinking about YOU and your weaknesses and plotting against YOU. How many of you have read C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*? One of the things I love about that book is it shows you what that scheming might look like.

Write this down if you're taking notes: **The Bible teaches that the power of evil in our world exists in a 3-fold cord, an unholy trinity: the world, flesh and devil. An external, an internal, and an infernal foe.**

- **The power of sin comes first from our FLESH:** Ever since the Garden of Eden, we have fallen natures that desire evil. It's not the devil's fault I sin--I desire it; I choose it.

- **But, we are also, secondly, part of a WORLD system that cultivates and facilitates evil** in us. Injustice and idolatry and blasphemy are built into the very systems and rhythms of our world--into our economic systems; our educational systems; our entertainment and political systems--these hum with the rhythms of sin so that sin feels inescapable and holiness feels impossible.
- **Thirdly, the devil: we have an ENEMY scheming against us**, using the corruption of our natures and the pressures of the world to trap us in sin.
- **The world, the flesh, and the devil.** A 3-fold cord you can't easily untangle.
- **Or**, think of your **sinful heart** like a **MATCH**; **the world** is like the little **glass/phosphorous STRIP on the side of the matchbox** that you strike the match on, **and Satan** is like...(Hairspray aerosol). Satan is not responsible for the evil in our lives; but he can magnify and multiply it into destruction.

(In contemporary American society, we only ever think about the first two--the flesh and the world. If you've got a problem, then get counseling for your head (that's the flesh); and separate yourself from bad influences (that's the world). But we don't really even consider the demonic. And that's because our Western, post-Enlightenment worldview was shaped by people like Immanuel Kant, who said, "All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason." We think there is nothing higher than our senses and our reason. So, if we're doing battle, we focus all our attention on those. But the Bible says there is a higher, and more sinister force we are dealing with.)

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<sup>2</sup> John Chrysostom described the moment as "scorning the devil's snares."

**And so Paul ends his letter by giving us instructions about how to battle against these forces.**

- **Did you know, Baptism in the early church included the question:** "Do you renounce Satan and all his works?" They recognized that struggling against the demonic would characterize the whole Christian life.<sup>2</sup>

He's going to give us **SIX pieces of armor** to put on, but let me give you a preliminary comment before we go through them that will keep you from misinterpreting them (like we usually do): **Paul is not giving us new content right here at the end of Ephesians.** Paul has spent 6 chapters in Ephesians talking about the importance of saturating our lives with the gospel and being filled with the Spirit. He doesn't take a hard turn right at the end and say, "Oh yeah, these random pieces of spiritual armor are important, too!" No, these pieces of armor are just another way of saying, "Submit every part of you to the gospel and be filled with the Spirit."

- **You see, I say this because when I grew up**, I learned about "spiritual armor" by means of **flannel graph discipleship**. Anybody else grow up like this? And for the spiritual armor we had little images (**PIC**) made of flannel that Mrs. Thomas would put on a board--and so I thought of spiritual armor as strange, mystical things that you used to ward off demons like they were *Horcruxes* or an *Expecto Patronus* charm.
- But **these 6 pieces of armor are simply a way of applying the gospel.** Jesus is every piece of the spiritual armor.
- In fact, here's something fascinating: **Most people think that Paul took his inspiration for these pieces of armor from what the**

Roman soldiers of his day wore--but Paul's MAIN source of inspiration for these weapons was what Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah himself would wear:

- Speaking of the coming Messiah, Isaiah said: [5] Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.... He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal. (Isa 11:4-5; 59:17)
- Each of these pieces are what Jesus himself wears, and when you get filled with him, you get all the weapons. Jesus is every piece of the spiritual armor, and **Simply being filled with the Spirit is the way you engage in spiritual warfare.**
- And this is super important when we think about spiritual warfare. You see, a lot of people, when they talk about this stuff, get into all kinds of weird ideas: they talk about identifying evil spirits and naming them and praying against them; I've been in places where maps came out talking about what demons had influence in what neighborhoods; or figuring out ancestral curses you need to break; anointing sinful places with holy oil, performing exorcisms--oh, I could tell you some stories! And I'm not saying there's no place for any of that--certainly we see exorcism in the Bible, just that Paul doesn't emphasize any of that when he talks about spiritual warfare here. He basically says, "Make Jesus the Lord of your mind, your heart, your habits and your feet; know his Word and saturate yourself with his gospel, and you'll have victory over the demonic."

**OK, let's take a brief look at each of the pieces: Vs. 13**, our first piece: **"Take up... the belt of truth"**.

- A war belt, in those days, did more than hold your pants up. It **protected your midsection--your stomach and kidneys--the most**

vulnerable and exposed parts of your body. Surround these things, Paul says, with TRUTH.

- Do you remember in the first week of this series I compared your life to a house with a lot of rooms--and I explained that rather than thinking of demonic possession as an all-or-nothing thing, that it was more biblical to say that a demon can take over whatever rooms in your life you fail to submit to God? Yes, as a believer, you can never be totally demon possessed, but you can be *DEMONIZED*--meaning a demon can take over whatever part of your life is not submitted to God, or in whatever room of your life you have yet to believe God's word.
- Satan's 1st line of attack in the Garden of Eden was, **"Did God actually say...?" (Gen 3:1)** a lie he's been repeating ever since.
- **So, the question for you: How do you determine what is true and right in your life?** For the vast majority of people, they rely on some internal moral compass--What feels right? Listen, when you're a pastor, people say truly crazy things to you sometimes. "Well, we're sleeping together and I feel like God's cool with it." I'm like, "Really, were those his exact words to you, 'I'm cool with it?'" Because weirdly, you know, he said in 1 Thessalonians: *'This is the will of God, that you keep yourselves from sexual immorality,'* and in Hebrews, *'God will not hold guiltless those who defile the sanctity of marriage,'* and that sounds like the opposite of the "I'm cool with it" feeling you got from him.
- When you have an area of your life not built on God's word, you allow the demonic an entry point. It could be your dating life. Your career. Your sense of self-worth. How you think about money. How you respond when others wrong you. He takes over the room!
- **So, the question is: Have you fortified every room in your life with God's word?** Does the belt of truth *surround* all of you?

**Honestly, for most of us, the problem will not be that we have some area** where we outright reject God's word; for most of us the problem will be that we've just not taken time to learn what he says. We have to be zealous about training our minds to think according to God's truth.

- Let me give you a disturbing image (even more disturbing than a hairspray flamethrower). This summer my kids and I swam in this lake and when I got out I had all of these little things attached to me. I had to pick them off one by one. Leeches. I'd just been standing in that water for a long time and they attached themselves to me. Now, here was the thing, most of my kids didn't have them, because if you just jumped in and swam from point A to point B, they wouldn't have time to attach to you. But if you just stood there, like I did, soaking in that lake, they came.
- Do you see where I'm going with this? Swimming in the waters of our culture for long periods of time, absorbing its thinking and soaking in its values, allows demons to attach to you like leeches.
- Which means some of you parents need to get serious about helping your kids see their world through the lens of Scripture; otherwise the demonic can set up camp in parts of their thinking and use those places for staging operations of destruction.
- **Listen:** My family is not one that only listens to Christian music or only watches Christian entertainment. It's not like K-Love is on non-stop in our house or *The Chosen* plays on repeat on our TV's. We watch "secular" stuff, too. But, we also try to take time to discuss what we watch. I'll ask questions like, "What is this movie glorifying? What does this movie present as our primary problem and what does it point to as the primary savior? Recently I did this for the Barbie movie and the Taylor Swift ERAS tour. (You say, "Pastor, I'm questioning

your entertainment choices." Look, I have 3 girls...stop judging me.) But we asked those questions--

- How does Taylor Swift see the world? What does she think is important? Who or what does she glorify?
- What does the Barbie movie say is wrong with the world? What's the solution?
- What do these movies and entertainers get *right*? Where does the Bible present a different truth?
- You may think that's too overbearing as a parent; but see, I know the schemes of the enemy. He presents falsehood in creative, fun, lighthearted, whimsical ways. And when you swim in it, uncritically, his demonic leeches attach themselves.
- So, beware his schemes and cover your life, and your family, with the belt of truth.

#### **The second piece of armor... "the breastplate of righteousness"**

- (Now, when I read that I ask, "Is Paul here meaning the righteousness of Christ that we apply to ourselves (as in, he's telling us to cover ourselves with Christ's salvation, Christ's righteousness given to us as a gift); or is Paul talking about our righteous acts?")
- Biblically, you see, the word "righteousness" can mean either, but I think in context here, it's best to read this as "our righteous acts." (I say that because in a minute he's going to tell us to put on the helmet of salvation, so it makes more sense that he'd be saying something different here and not just repeating himself).
- I believe Paul is telling us to cover our lives in righteous behaviors so there is nowhere the demonic can penetrate, because the demonic will use whatever part of you that is not surrendered to God as their entry point.

- Let me say it again: Anything you haven't given to God becomes open season for the demonic. Maybe that's a bad habit you have that you know is sinful but just won't break; a temptation you can't say no to; some sinful fantasy you love to entertain; some a relationship or part of your life that you just won't break off--not breaking that habit allows the demonic to attach to you like a leech. Through that sinful practice you are "giving place to the devil" (Paul's words in Eph 4); giving him a foothold; an ENTRY point into ur life.
- **Let me make this really personal:** Over the past few months there's been some anger and jealousy I've let fester in my heart. And I knew it was wrong to think hateful thoughts about this person, or these people, or to delight in their misfortune, but honestly it just felt so good and satisfying to let my anger simmer. It felt good to despise them, to feel superior to them. And so I never really dealt with it. But then recently, as I was talking with Veronica, I noticed that my outlook on certain things related to these people was getting darker and darker. My anger and hateful feelings about them were starting to bleed out into how I felt about others. I was becoming more and more of a hateful, bitter person. The demonic had the place I had given them and was magnifying it into destruction. (MATCH?)
- Friend, whatever area is not brought under obedience to God's word will be the demonic's focal point of attack in your life.

**Third piece of armor: "As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace."**

- **Your feet are what carry you forward into battle.** Paul tells us to cover them with the "readiness given by the gospel" of peace. **It means we're engaged in the mission.**

- For Roman soldiers, the shoes they wore only had real armor on the front, and that's because Roman soldiers were never supposed to be running away with their backs to the enemy. The only way they'd be protected is if they were going FORWARD.
- The important thing to see here is that the battle against the demonic is not just defensive, it requires being on offense.
- The only way to be truly victorious over the demonic is to get active in Jesus' mission. (**We saw this in 2 Samuel:** one of the reasons King David got tempted with Bathsheba was he had disengaged from the battle. While all of Israel's armies went out to war, David stayed behind in leisure. My grandma was right, idle hands are the tools of the devil. We have a lot of people here whose lives are being infiltrated by the demonic because they are not active in the mission. A lot of men whose lives are infiltrated by the demonic because your lives are more about hobbies and golf and watching sports and not about leading your family or serving in the Kingdom of God. You'll never overcome Satan when you're on the sidelines; you can only overcome him when you're in the battle.)
- (And can I pause here real quick for a commercial? College students: you've probably been hearing about "**City Project.**" It's a 10 week program here at the church that involves a lot of discipleship, theological training, mission work, and several trips. We do it because we know that regardless of what God has called you to in the future, he wants you to be engaged in his mission. Here's why I share that here: City Project is how you can put the readiness of the gospel of peace on your feet so you live a life of active involvement in God's kingdom in whatever field he sends you into.)

**Fourth piece of armor: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, by which we extinguish the fiery darts of the wicked one..."** Above all!

That means this one is important.

- **A Roman shield was this oblong slab**--about 4 foot by 2 foot, made of two layers of wood glued together then lined with linen and leather, and bound at the top and bottom with iron. One of its most important uses was to shield the soldier from these flaming arrows that were dipped in this explosive fuel.
- Our enemy takes lies, lights them on fire, and hurls them into your consciousness. That's such an accurate and helpful image to me. I told you that one of my favorite descriptions of a demonic lie is "a thought with a will behind it." A lie, or a temptation, that seems to force its way into your consciousness. It's like an invasive thought you can't get rid of. A fiery dart.
  - Often these thoughts don't make any sense, but they just press their way in and fill you with confusion and darkness and despair.
    - "You are ugly." "You're so unattractive." "You'll never have any friends." "You're a failure."
    - "No one respects you." "You don't matter to anyone." "What you do doesn't matter."
    - "You've been completely overlooked. Everybody else has received their good things, but you've been forgotten."
    - "Nobody is concerned whether you live or die."
  - Or maybe these invasive, destructive thoughts are about God:
    - "He doesn't care. He's forgotten about you."
    - "He's not even there."
    - "You're not really saved. You can't be saved. You're too broken. Too dirty. You're not predestined."
    - Do you have thoughts like these?

- I told you the first week the way to recognize these is by the feelings of despair and condemnation and confusion that come along with them.
  - **You see, Jesus said in John 10:** "My sheep hear my voice and they recognize it!" We can tell the difference between his voice and the voice of a false shepherd. **When one of the demonic realm** speaks to you, it feels like chaos and condemnation and despair. They point out your failures and make you feel hopeless about them. Or you're not sure what you're supposed to change. You feel trapped. Defeated, like giving up. That's not the voice of your shepherd. That's just not how Jesus speaks and you need to learn to recognize his voice.
  - When Jesus speaks to you about your sin, it's in the context of unconditional love, and hope, and forgiveness.
  - I told you to think of it like **a scene in a movie** where you see things happening **on the screen**, but the way you know what's really going down is by what the soundtrack is doing in the background: A family is playing in the shallows at the beach; the kids are throwing the football... (cue Soundtrack Swift's, "Shake it Off") If Taylor Swift is playing in the background, it's probably all good. But if the music shifts to (cue ominous music--the Jaws theme), somebody's getting eaten.
  - When our Enemy speaks, it carries the soundtrack of death, defeat, confusion and despair. Any voice creating those things in you is not your Shepherd's voice, even if it is using valid facts. And you need to learn to say, "That's not my shepherd! My shepherd wouldn't speak like that. When my shepherd convicts me of sin, he draws me toward himself in love and assurance. He speaks to me with encouragement and invitation and hope.
- **Can I ask, "Are these lies coming at you right now?"** These feelings of "nobody likes you" and "you have no point" and "you'll never be good enough" or "you're not saved"? **Listen: You can't**

**fight Satan's lies with logic. I know, I've tried.** All you can do is hide from them under the shield of faith.

- **"You are ugly. Unattractive. No one will ever love you":**  
(Raise the shield): "No, I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and my heavenly Father rejoices over me and dances over me with singing. I know the plans he has for me, to give me a future and a hope. To use me as a blessing to others."
- **"You have no friends."** No, I am precious to him. And he made me a special part of his body, to love and be loved by others. I have worth and value to him, which means I have worth and value to others."
- **"God has forgotten you."** No, "for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' I could no more forget you than a new mother could forget her nursing child. Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."
- **"You've been abandoned."** No. For you have said, Jer 32:40, "I will make with you an everlasting covenant, And I will never turn away from doing good to you." Where could I flee from your presence? If I made my bed in hell, behold, you'd be there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me."  
"Nothing can separate me from your love--neither height nor depth, nor principality or power, nor things present nor things to come, nor anything in all creation can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus."
- **"This situation will never change."** Oh no, but my God says that he will never stop doing good to me (Jer 32:40); that his mercies are new every morning (Lam 3:24), and that the Lord fights for those who fear him, for those who hope in his steadfast love (Ps 147:11).

- **Again: Don't argue with the lies of Satan. Don't reason with him.** Run into what the gospel tells you is true about God, and hide behind it. (Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.)

**Let me pause here and talk about one specific lie that we, your pastors,** hear a lot more frequently than you might realize. A lot of people have these moments where a cloud of darkness comes over them and they have this overwhelming feeling that the world would be better off without them, or that the only way out of some situation they're in is to take their own life. Often it comes out of nowhere--a darkness and despair that just invades you. And if you don't recognize it for what it is, your enemy can use that to lead you down a path of destruction you won't come back from. Some of you have heard that voice this week. Friend, that's not the voice of your Shepherd! Recognize it for what it is. It's the voice of one intent to kill, steal and destroy. Resist it. Flee to the hope of the gospel.

#### **Piece 5: "Take up... the helmet of salvation"**

- You think, "OK, I've accepted Christ, I'm good on this one." This is not what Paul is saying. He assumes you're already saved. He's talking about living with the assurance that salvation brings.
  - Listen, in almost every spiritual battle I've been familiar with, the Enemy makes someone question their salvation. It's where he starts.
  - This is what Paul says: Satan's battlefield is the mind, and he starts by making you doubt your salvation.
  - Friend, listen: the gospel is that Jesus has done everything necessary to save you. All you have to do is believe that, and rest in it, and acknowledge Jesus as the Lord of your life, and there is nothing more to be done. If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God

has raised him from the dead, you *shall be saved*. Not *might be saved*, or *could be saved*, but *shall be saved*.

- When I was in college, and doubting my salvation, Mike Calhoun, who is now on our staff, took me to John 3:36 where it says that “he who believes on the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe will never see life.” And Mike said, “How many categories of people do you see in that verse?” I said, “Two.” He said, “What are they?” I said, “Those who believe on Jesus and those who don’t.” “Which group are you in?” he said. “I believe on Jesus,” I said. “Then put on this helmet of salvation and let’s get out there.” That’s what some of you need to do. Put on that helmet of salvation and stop listening to Satan. And listen, if you’re confused by all this, come down here and talk to us as soon as the service is over. You’ll never be able to have victory over the demonic until you’re assured of your salvation.
- And then, after **you put this helmet on, we are to start to see your world through its lens.**
  - Everything in my life I see through the lens of “God loves me and he is working for me.” I recently saw a study by a **neurologist at Stanford University that claimed that the average person thinks 60K thoughts every day.** 60K! Some of you didn’t know you were that smart! Those range from the mundane to the profound. Thoughts about you, about your environment, about others. Here was the astounding thing: of those 60K, this study showed, **45K of those thoughts are negative.**<sup>3</sup> **And here’s the other thing: they say 90% of those 60K are repetitive. You have one thought and it comes back to you again and again.**

- **I don’t know about you, but I want my first thoughts, my foundational thoughts every day, my thoughts that will be repeated, to be about the gospel. So, every morning, I try to saturate my mind in the truth of the gospel before I start each day. And I tell myself something like this: “Because I am In Christ, there is nothing I could do that would make you love me anymore; nothing I have done that would make you love me any less. (And) You are all I need for everlasting joy.”**
- Your love for me is assured and it is enough. That’s how I put on the helmet of salvation every day.
- **Practically, can I ask you, is spending time in God’s word the first thing you do?** A morning what we call “quiet time” with God is not some kind of ritual to bring God’s blessing onto your day. But it is probably the most essential Christian practice for having a successful Christian life that I know of. If the first thing you look at when you get up is your phone, then the foundation of your whole day are going to be the demands others have of you, all that needs to be done, what social media thinks about you, all that you’re missing out on, how you measure up, or what some scientists in China or Seattle want you to be thinking about. I want Jesus, not Mark Zuckerberg or Elon Musk or Xi Jinping shaping my thoughts. My rules: No social media before Scripture, and Bible before breakfast.
- I want that helmet on my head first thing every morning because those fiery darts come quickly.

OK, Last piece...**“And taking the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, [18] praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer**

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Fred Luskin of Stanford University

**and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”**

- The only truly offensive weapon we have is the Sword of the Spirit, and it has two components: the Word of God and prayer.
- You have to know the Word to do battle with the demonic. You have to. It’s how Jesus himself did battle. It’s what silences the enemy and cuts him off.
- **OK, you are in for a treat today. Many of you ask... WHERE DOES THE NIC CAGE THING COME FROM?** There’s an old movie with Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage... **THE ROCK (get the word in your heart)**

**The other component of the Sword of the Spirit is prayer,** because in order for the word to be effective in our lives, it has to be accompanied by the power of the Spirit--the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit--and the Spirit’s power is released through prayer. So, Paul tells us, **“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.”**

Samuel Chadwick said, **“The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray... Prayer turns ordinary mortals into men of power...It brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God. There is no power like that of prevailing prayer.”**

We find at least 17 scenes of Jesus at prayer in the Gospels.<sup>4</sup> The disciples recognized it as the source of his power, which is why they asked him, “Teach us to pray.” They didn’t say “teach us to preach” or

“teach us to raise money” or “teach us to build crowds” but “teach us to pray.”

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*“The one concern of the devil is to keep the saints from prayer. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion.... Prayer brings fire. It brings rain. It brings life. It brings God. There is no power like that of prevailing prayer.”*

So, **“take up the Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.” (6:17–18)**

We’ve done 3 weeks on the demonic, because there is no way to read our Bibles and not see this is an active part of our lives, and we ignore it at our peril. It’s affecting some of you right now. Paul’s counsel is not to get weird with spiritism or superstition or exorcisms--he tells you to be filled with Jesus.

**Jesus is every piece of the armor.** Paul started this whole section, **vs 10**, with **“Be strong IN THE LORD...”** IOW, put on Jesus. All these weapons of warfare are just his presence. Put him on, surrender every part of your life to him, be filled with his Spirit, and he’ll bring his weapons with him, and the demonic won’t be able to touch you.

**So, that’s the invitation today: Where do you need to get covered with Jesus?**

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<sup>4</sup> Tyler Staton, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, p 194.

- Maybe there's an area you need to surrender: you can come down to the altar to pray, maybe you and your girlfriend or a friend. If it would help to pray with one of us, we're here.
- Maybe you have questions about your salvation: come and ask one of us
- Maybe you just need to decide to devote yourself much more seriously to knowing the Word. To get involved in a small group. To get your kids into student ministry.
- Maybe you are feeling that darkness and despair I mentioned, and have even been considering harming yourself; you've thought about this week. We want you to know your value and to reject those dark thoughts as lies. Come, talk to us, and let's pray together.
- Maybe you are struggling and you need prayers for deliverance: I'm gonna ask our Elders to be on the side...