Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Believer's Armor, Part 6: The Helmet of Salvation, Part 2
Scripture: Ephesians 6:17
Code: 1960

This morning again we have the privilege of coming to the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Ephesians, chapter 6, and we're continuing the armor of the Christian. I'm sure aware by now that we haven't hurried a lot through this. And the reason is because it's so packed with great and wonderful truth for us, and we count it a tremendous privilege given us by the Lord to have the opportunity to share it with you, since it may be a long time that you will get back to Ephesians 6, again, if ever in the Lord's timing, we wanted to do it as thoroughly as possible.

We're looking at Ephesians 6, verses 13-17. And, as we wrap up the book of Ephesians, we're examining the warfare of the believer and the resources that he has for victory. By way of introduction this morning, I want to respond to a question that arises always when you get into a discussion like we've been in the last few weeks. We have been discussing, quite at length, the subject of commitment. We've been discussing the dedication, the commitment, the sort of selling out of ourselves to obedience to fulfill God's will in our lives. We've talked about the matter of disciplining ourselves, controlling our desires and coming into conformity and coming into the standards of Christ. We've talked about really being a soldier, a warrior and giving our best effort for his sake.

Now, this immediately introduces to us another perspective that is often held regarding this area of Christian living. There are some people who believe that all of this exercise and all of this discipline and all of this struggle and all of this effort is really not what God is after at all. And since that question is posed, I felt like, for a moment or two this morning, on how to answer it. There's a statement in the Old Testament made in reference to king Jehoshaphat that says the battle is not yours, it is the Lord's. Now, that statement has become byword for a group of people who have been called quietists. It is the movement that, basically, says the way to live the Christian life is not through self-discipline and through effort and through commitment, but rather through surrender. And you may have been exposed in your youth or in some other time or through reading or whatever to this concept of "Let go and let God." There is currently a television program on Christian station called "Let go and let God." There is a song called "Let go and let God have his wonderful way." We hear a lot about the subject of yielding of resting, of abiding in Christ, of handing it all over to the Lord. I know there's a temporary song that says, "Turn it all over to Jesus." And you hear people say, "Stop struggling and stop striving and yield and surrender, totally surrender, completely surrender. And I remember, as a young person, hearing this quite a lot. I remember going to camps and conferences, and in the particular college I attended, there were constant calls to come to the altar, and students were like yo-yos going up and down, up and down, trying to get surrendered.

In fact, we found that there were a lot of us that were willing to be, willing to surrender. We just weren't sure how. And it would seem like you'd just to get to the point where the tears would begin to flow, you'd hit your knees at the altar, and you'd surrender. Three days later you would sin, and then you'd say, "Well, I surrendered, Lord. Who's fault is this?" And so it became very difficult. The people who have advocated this viewpoint use an illustration. They say there's a dark room. There's no light in the room. It's pitch black, and there's a person in there, fumbling around, kicking the chairs and tripping over the lamps and all of this kind of thing, trying to do what he's doing. And the reason it's dark in there is because it has those blinds that completely darken a room, and they're pulled down. And outside is complete sunlight, and the sun is shining brightly, but the guy is stumbling all over the place in the dark room, when all he needs to do is lift the blinds, and the sunlight automatically floods the room, and he can see where he's going. And they say this is how it is in living the Christian life. The Lord doesn't want you stumbling and fumbling and bumbling all over the place in the dark. Just pull the shade. Sit down and rest, and everything will be made clear. There are people who take John 15, the concept of abiding in Christ, not to refer to that act of being saved but the idea of surrendering, the idea of yielding. You, perhaps, when you were a kid went to a camp service, and you heard somebody speak, and maybe they exhorted people to surrender to Jesus and give their all to the Lord, full surrender, and you sang songs about it, and they got emotion, they went on verse after verse. I remember being at a convention with 2000 people, where they sang at least 25 verses of a hymn, talking about people getting surrendered. You've had that experience. I've had it. I've gone to a camp, and I saw a kid who was so frustrated by the end of the week. We heard so many messages on surrender, and this poor guy was so totally frustrated trying to figure out how to surrender. He decided that the best way was to surrender his time to the Lord. And so they used to throw a stick in the fire, the emblem of a surrendered life. And he got up there, and he said, "I want to give the Lord my time. And he took his watch off and threw it in the fire. And you could just see the frustration. You know, that's not smart. That's bad steward ship, to throw your watch in the fire. That isn't what you do to surrender. But he was at the point where he was frustrated. He'd heard about dedication, rededication, consecration, re-consecration, and he was working awful hard at it.

It's amazing how much misunderstanding there is about those terms. I remember when we were over in the Family Center, before we had this auditorium. The choir was singing, and I had stepped to the back because somebody wanted me to listen to a new microphone system or something. And I was standing by the back door, and just during the choir song, a lady came in the door with a doing on a leash, which doesn't happen too often. We don't have a rule about that because it's rather uncommon. But the usher just stood there, and I saw this happening. And the dog, I admit, was properly dressed, had a sweater and a rhinestone collar on and a little fancy leash and came in the door. And I just thought I'd stand there and see how the usher handled the situation. Well, it was obvious from the beginning that the woman didn't, you know, have everything going for her. You know, there were a view things missing that were rather vital. But, anyway, she came in with the dog on the leash, and the usher just did a double take, you know, and looked at her and, finally, walked

over and said, "You can't bring your dog in, lady." To which she very gingerly replied, "It's all right, sir. It's perfectly all right. We're going to the prayer room because he's just rededicated his life." And, of course, my smile turned to a gasp. And, of course, as a former Baptist, you know, I was raised in a Baptist church, my first reaction was, "How do you know the dog was ever saved to begin with," You know. but, anyway, the point is, I mean, the lady, obviously, you know, didn't have everything going for her. But the point is here's a word, "Rededicate" that has no more meaning to that woman than something you do with your dog, taking your dog to the prayer room. I don't know how she got that in her mind. But that's a rather bizarre illustration of the misconception of the term.

Maybe you're like some people that I know who went up and down aisles all their childhood years and in their youth, trying to get surrendered. Well, that's not uncommon, not uncommon at all. In fact, there used to be an old hymn that went something like this, "Holiness by faith in Jesus, not by effort of my own." Well, "Let go and let God" means just kinda cool whatever you're doing, sort of flake out, do nothing. C.H.A. Trumbull, who used to defend this system said that "When you are fully surrendered" — get this— "you'll never even experience temptation because it will be defeated by Christ before it has time to draw you into a fight." Well, if that's true, then how do you ever, when you sin, whose fault is it? It must be Christ's fault, which is kinda scary to think about because that would not be true. Surrender is perhaps aptly illustrated in a book called "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life," written by Hannah Smith. In that book, she says this, "What can be said about man's part in this great work but that he must continually surrender himself and continually? But when we come to God's side of the question, what is there that may not be said as to the manifold and wonderful ways in which he accomplishes the work entrusted to him? It is here that the growing comes in." In other words, what she's saying is if you want to grow spiritually, do nothing but surrender and let him do it all. She illustrates it, "The lump of clay could never grow to a beautiful vessel if it stayed in the clay pit for thousands of years. But when it's put into the hands of a skillful potter, it grows rapidly under his fashioning into the vessel he intends it to be. And, in the same way, the soul abandoned to the working of the heavenly potter is made into a vessel underwater, sanctified and meet for the master's use." Now it all sounds good. But if you're nothing but a piece of clay in a potter's hand, and he's making you into what he wants you to be, how in the world do you get out of there to sin? Does the clay all of a sudden say, "Look, I'm finish with this deal," hop out of the potter's hand, form itself into what it wants to be and do its own thing? It's a little hard on the illustration frankly. One moment, Hannah Smith has the Christian a piece of soft clay and the next moment the clay has jumped out of the potter's hands and is doing whatever it wants. Some clay.

But the point is this. There must be more to the Christian life than just a do-nothing approach. The Bible never teaches this approach. The Bible doesn't simply teach that all you have to do at some point in your life is surrender. The Bible doesn't teach that at all. There are many, many Christians who have tried and tried and tried and tried. I'll never forget the illustration of a guy who said to me he was in a church where they were calling for people to do this and do this and do this. And he came forward, down the aisle, he knelt at the front of the aisle, and he started to pray and pray for surrender

and pray for surrender and pray for surrender. And the pastor watched him going through all his gyrations. And, finally, said to him, "Pray it through, brother. Pray it through. Pray it through." And everyone in the audience, folks, let's uphold him, so he can pray it through." And, finally, the fellow stood up and turned around and said out loud, "Hell, I can't get through" and walked right out the back door. Well, that's a lot of frustration. I don't know what they were trying to get him through, but that's the kind of a frustration that comes when you try to surrender, and you don't understand there's some other things involved.

Now, I agree that we must depend upon the resource of God. I agree that we must depend upon God's energy and God's power and God's strength, but it is unbiblical to think that all we do is just sit there. And so, as some people maybe have had a problem with the emphasis I've been making on commitment, on self-discipline and the Christian life, on subjecting your flesh for the strength of God. But you shouldn't because that's what the Bible teaches.

For example, verse 10. Let's go back to our text. See if you find the word "surrender" here. You're in a battle with the enemy. "Finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places, wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand. Stand therefore having your loins girded about with truthfulness, having on the breastplate of righteousness and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of piece, above all, taking the yield of faith with which he shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God."

Now, you don't read anything in there about surrender. What you read about there is discipline. What you read about that is commitment. That's the idea. The Christian life is a war, and if you were to go to Hebrews, chapter 12, you'd find the Christian life say race. And if you were to go to 1 Corinthians 9, you'd find that the Christian life is a fight. We must be, says Titus 3:8, "Careful to apply ourselves to good deeds." James 4 and 1 Peter 5, "We must resist the devil." 1 Corinthians 9, "We must beat our body to bring it into subjection." Ephesians, chapter 5, "We must look carefully how we walk." Philippians chapter 3, "We must press onto the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." 2 Corinthians 7:1 "We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Now, listen, it is way too simplistic to say that all that is needed in the Christian life is some kind of belly flop, to just kinda fall over in a dead faint and say, "All right, God, you do it." That is way too simplest. On the one hand, that's what the quietists were saying. They were countered by a group called the pietists, who were the legalist, saying you got to do it all in the flesh, and the balance is in the middle. Yes, we depend on the strength of God. Yes, we rest in his power. Yes, we abide in the

vine. Yes, we count on a divine resource. Yes, it is not I but Christ. But, on the other hand, there must be brought to bear in the Christian life a tremendous level of commitment, a tremendous level of self-control and self-discipline. There must be in the Christian life a dedication of our lives on a day-to-day basis to fight Satan with all the energy we have. It's way too simple to just say surrender and that's it.

Let me show you the balance, by having you look with me at 2 Peter 1. In 2 Peter 1, in verse 3, we read this, "According as his divine power had given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue." Now, listen, God has called us to glory and virtue. And in order to equip us for that, his divine power has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. Listen, as a Christian, you do not lack any needed resource. You have all things that pertain to life and godliness. Where did you get it? Through the knowledge of him. When you came to know him in salvation, God gave you everything you need. So divine resource is there. He calls it divine power in verse 3. We have divine power. We have that available. Now, through that divine power, verse 4 says, "We are giving exceedingly great and precious promises, tremendous promises, tremendous power. And then we become partakers. We have power, promise and a partaking of the very divine nature itself. Now, this is God's part. God says, "Here's my power, here's my promise. Partake of my very nature." Tremendous magnanimous resource for living the Christian life. Do we just say, "Amen, and, now, I'm just going to surrender to that. I'm going to let go and let God. Turn it all over to Jesus. Do nothing"? No. Because you come to verse 5 immediately. And verse 5 says, "And beside this, beside this, you give all diligence," get at it, man. Get with it. Be diligent, be disciplined to add to your God-given faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. In other words, you get on the job. And, beloved, it is not as simple as walking an aisle and making an act of surrender. That is part of it in your life. There must be a commitment to the Lordship of Christ. There must be an acknowledging of his power and resource in your life. But it doesn't end there. It begins there.

In Romans 6, there is a yielding of yourselves, yes. There is a yielding of yourselves in Romans 6, but there is also a mortifying or a killing of the deeds the flesh. So it isn't all as simple as that, and that's why we make no hesitation for proclaiming the truths of Ephesians 6. There's balance. Go back, if you will, for a moment to Philippians chapter 2, and you'll see the balance again. In Philippians chapter 2, verse 12, "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." And the word "obey" is the keyword in the verse. You work out your salvation if a life of obedience. For verse 13 says, "it is God who works in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." You have God working in you his will and you work it out in your obedience. That's the idea. God works in you with his will, you work it out by obedience. There's the balance. God is at work and you're at work. Look at Colossians chapter 1, verse 29, maybe the most definitive verse of all, Colossians 1:29 beautifully shows this perfect balance. "For this I also labor. Paul says, "I work hard, striving according to his working, which works in me mightily." You see? I work and God works. That's why I say it's far too

simplistic to just be banging the drum for the concept of surrender. There must be a commitment in my life to self-discipline, diligent obedience. In fact, you see if you take the view that it's all just "Let go and let God," what are you going to be with all the New Testament exhortations? What do they mean there? If it's all the Lord, then they should have been directed at him, not me.

No, no. There's a balance between a yieldedness to the Lordship of Christ and a total discipline and commitment in my own life to follow through in obedience. Now, in 2 Corinthians, just one other word to show you, chapter 6, verse, 4, "But in all things, commending ourselves as the ministers of God," all we want to do is to commend ourselves or demonstrate that we are God's ministers. We want the world to know, in much patience, in affliction, necessities, distresses, imprisonments, stripes, tumults, laborers, watchings, fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. And you notice something wonderful about this? There's a phenomenal blending of things. Patience, that's personal attitude. Affliction, necessity, distress, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labor, hard work, watching, fasting, pureness, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness. Those are all things that I must produce in my life, but I must see those things. And what's the source? By the Holy Spirit, by divine love unfeigned, by the word of the truth, which is the Bible and by the power of God and by the armor of righteousness. Those are all things that God gives us. The perfect blending of the two. And so we depend on God and give our all. That's the idea.

Now, let's come back to Ephesians 6, with that in mind. What I'm trying to say, beloved, is that Ephesians 6 doesn't contradict the Bible anywhere else. And the people who have, perhaps, taught you in your background that all you needed to do is surrender missed the point. There's far more to this Christian life than that. You know, they used to actually say that the only way to grow through your Christian life is through this total surrender where you just flop back and do nothing, where the Bible says that you grow by acting in an obedient fashion, in a self-disciplined commitment to Jesus Christ that is a matter of everyday effort. You don't grow by no effort. You grow by maximum effort.

Now, let's look at the armor again. And so we're not hesitant now to put it on. I hope that's clarified that issue. We are in a battle and a battle to be won demands our greatest output and our greatest effort. And so we must first have the belt of truthfulness and then the breastplate of righteousness and then the shoes of the gospel of peace and then the shield of faith. And then in verse 17, "We must take the helmet of salvation." And that's where we stopped last time.

What does it mean? What is the helmet of salvation? We told you last time it doesn't mean getting saved. Listen, you wouldn't have the belt of truth, and you wouldn't have the breastplate of righteousness, and you wouldn't have the shoes of the gospel of piece, and you wouldn't have the shield of faith if you weren't saved. I heard a guy speaking on this on television this week. And he said, "The helmet of salvation means getting saved." It does not mean getting saved. You don't get saved fifth. You get saved first. And, as I said, last week, we were saved in chapter 2. This is chapter

6. We've been saved for four chapters. The helmet of salvation is something other than just the simple act of saving grace. We're already in the army. That assumes that we're saved. What is it? I told you that salvation has three dimensions, past, present, future. Now, listen to me. That is the only definition of salvation that the Bible understands. There is no other kind of salvation than a three-dimensional salvation, past, present, future. The Bible knows nothing of a salvation only valid in the past. The Bible knows nothing of a salvation only valid in the present. The Bible knows nothing of a salvation for which you have to wait to find out if you get it in the future. The Bible only knows a three-dimensional salvation, past, present, future. We have been saved, are being saved and will be saved. The past justification, which results in sanctification and promises glorification. Salvation is only seen biblically in those three terms, all gathered into one. The past, we're saved from the penalty of sin; the present, we're saved from the power of sin; in the future, we will be saved from the presence of sin. And so you must see salvation in those three dimensions.

Now, the dimension of it to which Paul specifically alludes here is the future. The helmet of salvation is not something dealing with the past. It's not something even dealing with the present in a sense. It is something dealing with the future, and this is what essaying. You can be sure of your salvation in the future, shall and that becomes a protection against the broad sort that Satan weilds.

And I told you last time that he has a big broad sword, a *rhomphaia*, the Greek word, and it has two edges. One edge is discouragement, and the other edge is doubt, and Satan wants to clobber you with discouragement and doubt. And the protection you have is the helmet of salvation. When you get discouraged, remember there's coming a great glorious day. When you get discouraged, remember there's coming of victory celebration. When you get discouraged and you want to be weary in well-doing, remember you reap if you faint not. Remember that someday, there's going to be a reward. Someday there's going to be a crowning day. Someday Jesus is going to face you and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And remember that day is coming. And when Satan wants to belt you with discouragement because the battle gets wearying, because you get tired, because the struggle is endless, remember there's coming of victory day. There is a finish line. There is a final gun. The clock will run out, and we'll stand face-to-face with Jesus Christ in that glorious moment.

And so it is then at the helmet of salvation, confidence in the future. As Paul calls it in 1 Thessalonians 5, "The helmet of the hope of salvation." But the helmet in the future gives us strength to go on in the present. It gives us strength to go on in the present even when things get tough. There is a finish line. There's a glorious reward. There is an end in view. There is coming a coronation day. There is going to be that time when we leave this veil of tears and enter into the presence of Jesus Christ and our flesh falls aside and no more sin and no more struggle and no more warfare and no more battle. We'll live in a glorious new universe. It's coming, and it's going to be fully enjoyed on the basis of the fullest of commitment now. So you're saying when Satan wants to hit you with discouragement in the battle, realize there's coming a victory day and don't bail out. Having done all, stand.

And I tried to share with you last week that if there was no future element to salvation, the other two parts would be meaningless. If I was saved and being saved, but there's no future, why should I keep doing this? Why should I fight so hard if there's no future? If there's no hope of a fullness and a final element of salvation, why all this effort? Let me illustrate that to you in 1 Corinthians 15: 32. And this is very apt from the experience of Paul. And Paul says in this verse, 1 Corinthians 15:32, "If, after the manner of men or in a strictly human way, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Listen, folks, if there's no future in this, forget it. If I have to go into Ephesus, and it gets so bad there, and the persecution is to severe that I have to fight with wild beasts, what is it going to profit me if there's no resurrection? What kind of a salvation is it that goes nowhere? You think I'm going to lay my life on the line for a bunch of wild animals? You think I'm going to confront a bunch of hostile pagans with Christ gospel if there's no resurrection, if there's no future element of salvation? I would give up right now, throw in the towel, throw down the gauntlet, walk away and say it's over. That's the idea. Essaying what kind of a salvation would there be that didn't have a future? It would have absolutely no power to cause me to fight the battle today.

Look at it Corinthians, chapter 4:6, "God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Now, what that verse means is that God has made us the lights of the world. God has put Christ in our hearts to radiate him to the world. And, therefore, verse 7 says, "We have this treasure." What is the treasure? It's the light of God, the light of Christ in our lives. We have it in these earthen vessels, these bodies. And the excellency of the power is of God, not us. We have divine power in the in dwelling Christ. And what happens? All right. We take Christ to the world. We've got the power and the light is there. We move out. And what are the results? Verse 8. "We are trouble on every side, yet not distressed. Perplexed, not in despair. Per persecuted but not forsaken. We are cast down but not destroyed. We are always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

Look at verse 11, "We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." Now, look at that. He says, "Here's how it is to minister for Christ." Great career to go into, right? Everywhere we go, distress, persecution, cast down, bear in our body the dying of the Lord, always on the edge of death, somebody always wanting to take our lives. This is how we live. Day in, day out, day in, day out, confronting a Godless hostile world. You might say, "Well, well, why do you bother, Paul? Why do you back and forth?" Verse 14 tells you why he bothers. "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus." Now, listen, the thing that sustained Paul in the level of commitment that he had was that someday he would be raised to glory with Christ, you see. So that the future dimension of salvation becomes a powerful force in the living of life right now. Hey, you know, I'm going to stand face-to-face with Jesus Christ someday. I'm going to stand face-to-face with a record of what I've done to serve him. And I love him enough, and I have enough desire to know the fullness of eternal life and all that it can give to want to give everything I can give as long as God gives me

breath in this little tiny breath of tears, this little life that only is a vapor that appears for a little time and vanishes away. I want to maximize these few short years so that I can experience the fullness of glorification in eternity with Christ forever. And the reason I don't want to grow weary in welldoing is because I know I'll reap a glorious reward if I faint not here. That's the helmet of salvation. So when Satan comes against me and wants to discourage me and tells me, "Why don't you quit preaching for a while and rest? Take some time off. Oh, don't give it so much study. You know, just think of few things, tell them funny stories. They'll never know the difference. Just have an easy time of it." I get sometimes distressed with the things that I even work hard at, and Satan says, "Oh, it's very discouraging in ministry. People don't appreciate you. You know, the church isn't the way you want it to be, or it's not doing the things you want it to do. You know, just give up on it." And you hang in there because, you know, that coronation day is coming. You know that day of accountability is coming. You know that day when you're going to be like Jesus Christ, and you want to maximize all that that can be for all' certainty. That's what moved Paul on. That's what ought to move us. He said, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith." Why, Paul? Because henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give to me and not to me only but to all them that love his appearing. I do it because I know what's coming. And so when Satan comes with the sword of discouragement and the edge of discouragement against our lives, we hold fast, and we are protected by the confidence that the salvation God promised will come to past.

There's a second thing. And that is that Satan has another edge on his sword. It isn't discouragement. It's doubt. And maybe doubt is the ultimate discouragement. Do you know that Satan wants you to doubt your salvation. Well, he's really good at that. Most people suffer from that at some point in their Christian life, early on. Now, you'll grow in the Lord and get to the place where you perhaps don't, although, none of us is totally invulnerable to Satan's temptations along that line. But Satan wants to come just after you've done something that's sinful and say, "You're not a Christian. You couldn't be a Christian. Why would the Lord ever save you? You're not good enough. You don't deserve to be saved. How do you know you meant it when you did it. Better try it, again, see if it works any better." Satan really comes after people in that area. And there are people, you know, who go to certain churches that teach you can lose your salvation. They live in constant—people say, "Do you live in eternal security?" In a sense, that's what the Bible is saying here. The one thing I don't believe is eternal insecurity. But there are some people who live in that all the time. They just live in a constant state of insecurity. And some people are told, "You'll never know whether you've made it until you face the Lord." Oh, can you imagine living, that way? All your life, oh, see, am I going to make it? Oh, it's getting close. Am I going to make it?" What a horrible existence. That'd be anything but "These things are written unto you that your joy may be full." You'd have to say the New Testament would say, "These things are written unto you that you might be miserable." You could never be happy knowing that kind of thing was a guessing game. Then there are other people who think every time you sin, you lose your salvation. I'll never forget the guy on television, Channel 40, he was being asked questions. And somebody called up and said, "If you sin a sin and you're a Christian, and you

forget to confess it before the rapture, you sin the sin, the rapture comes, you haven't had time to confess, what happens?" He said, "You go to hell." Now, can you imagine living under that kind of fear?" Satan wants us to be afraid we don't have salvation. He wants us to doubt salvation. You know, why? Because he wants us to doubt the promise of God. He wants us to believe God doesn't keep his word. He wants us to believe that salvation isn't forever. That God can't hold onto us. He wants us to deny God's power, to deny God's resource, to deny that God can hold us, to deny that God speaks the truth. And all of these things are simply denials of that. And so Satan comes against us, making us doubt. How do we react to that? The helmet of salvation is that if you a past salvation, brother, sister, if you have a past salvation, you also have a future one, right? Because there's no other kind of salvation seen in the Bible, see. There is no other kind. But the fullness of that which involves justification, sanctification, glorification. Whom he called, he justified. Whom he justified, he glorified. There's nobody in the gaps.

Now, let me show you this, as we go backwards in this Bible to John, chapter 6. I just want to make this point, and then I'll let you go. And we'll get to the sword next time. But in John, chapter 6, a very, very important passage in verse 37. All that the father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Now, what the Lord says is if you come to him, he will in no wise cast you out. And no wise means under no circumstances. There are no circumstances in existence in the universe whereby Christ would cast out somebody who came to him. That's what he's saying. You come to him, under no circumstance, under no condition, in no case, in no wise would he cast you out. Why? Because the only ones who come are the ones, the father gives, you see. And if God gives you to Christ, then you have the decree of God to eternal salvation, and you have the response of Christ to eternal salvation, and there is no way to lose. The father then, just to give you an illustration of what he's saying is, "The father is like rewarding the son. The son has done well in going to the cross and accomplishing redemption. So the father gives him gifts, and the gifts are very lovely. They are the souls of men. You and I who know Christ are gifts from the father to the son, tokens of the father's love. And the father loves the son so much, he gives these kinds of gifts. And, conversely, the son loves the father so much that he holds title to such precious gifts." All that the father gifts shall come, and when they come, under no circumstance would I turn them away. Why? It isn't because of you. It isn't because of you at all. You're not even the picture here. It's because the son loves the father too much to ever lose anybody that was a love gift from the father to the son. You see? It's all wrapped up in the trinity, folks.

Now look at the next verse, 38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me." This was the father's plan all along he was saying. The whole plan of the father was to redeem some people, give them to the son and have the son keep them. That's the whole plan. And this is the father's will who have sent me. What is his will? That of all that he have given me, I should lose none but should raise him up again at the last day." How many does Jesus lose? None. None. None. None. There is no loss between the decree of the father, the gift to the son and the resolution of the last day. So that you have justification, sanctification, glorification; past, present,

future, without loss. And so does the Bible teach that God has a council that cannot be changed, a calling that cannot be revoked, an inheritance that cannot be defiled, a foundation that cannot be broken, a seal that cannot be shaken, a life that cannot perish.

Now go over to John 10 for a moment, verse 27. Now, here there are seven strands in the rope that bind us eternally to Christ. Seven great reasons why you maintain salvation. Seven great truths. Number one, verse 27, "My sheep," my sheep. Stop right there. Who's sheep are you. You're Christ's sheep. Now, listen, if you are Christ's sheep, it is his duty as shepherd to care for you and protect you. If he loses you, that is, in effect, a slur against his own ability as a shepherd. You get that? If you are his sheep, and the shepherd is to care for the sheep, then for someone to be lost, reflects upon the character and quality of the Shepherd. There's a second strand that binds us to Christ. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Listen, they follow Christ, his sheep do, no exceptions. They will not listen to strangers. They listen only to him. True Christians then are kept by the power of the great Shepherd, that's strand number one. Secondly, they will follow. That's what he says, "They will follow." They may stumble in sin, but they'll be there. Thirdly, I give, verse 28, under them, eternal life. Now, eternal life lasts how long? Forever. It is eternal life. To speak of it as ending is a contradiction in terms. Eternal life is eternal. So we are bound by the character of the Shepherd. We are bound by the character of the sheep as they follow. We are bound by the very definition of the gift of eternal life. It is forever. Further, it is a gift. "I give unto them eternal life." You didn't do anything to earn it. You can't do anything to keep it. It's a gift. Fifthly, another strand that binds us to Christ is he says, "They shall never perish." If one Christian ever did, they Christ didn't tell the truth. If Christ didn't tell the truth, throw away your Bible, forget Christianity. It's all wrong. Further, it says, "No man is able to pluck them out of my father's hand." There is no power in the universe stronger than God. And if God wants to hold on, that's the way it's going to be. Nobody can take us out of the father's hand. And further, he adds, verse 29, "My father who gave them to me is greater than all," and no man's able to pluck them out of my father's hand."

Notice in verse 28, he says "my hand," in verse 29, "my father's hand." Double protection. Now, what I'm trying to show you in these two passages in John that Jesus himself, by his own words, confirms the fact that a past salvation includes a future one as with me. That eternal life is just that. They never perish. They never fail. He never loses any of them. That's the way Jesus spoke of it. No wonder when you come to Romans 8 and verse 38, the apostle Paul says, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Paul is saying there is nothing in the universe now or in the future that could ever separate a believer from Christ.

In Philippians, chapter 1, verse 6, it says, "Being confident of this very thing that he who has begun a good work" — that's the past part of salvation. He begun it. "will perform" — that's the present — "until the day of Jesus Christ." That's the future. All three elements of salvation bound up in the same

verse.

And I want to close our study this morning by having you look at the book of Jude, the next to the last book in the New Testament. And I want to share with you just two verses here that are tremendously powerful verses. Let me just say this by way of a general look at the book of Jude. The book of Jude is written to deal with apostasy or a departure from the faith. It is primarily concerned with the vile character of false prophets and falls teachers. It talks about, in verse 4, "certain people creeping in who are, basically, ordained to condemnation, ungodly men, who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness." It talks about filthy dreamers in verse 8. It talks about the prophets who prophesy for greed in verse 11, "The scabs"—they're called scabs in verse 12, "wells without water, clouds without water rather, trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, wandering stars, to who is reserved the blackness of darkness forever, murmurers, complainers" and just horrible, sensual, ungodly, lusting beings. These are the apostates, and here's the little group of Christians, as it were, sort of in the midst of an apostate age, not unlike us today. In fact, I'm just right now working on a book on "How to Survive in the Days of Apostasy." And it's based on Jude. But the concept here is that right in the midst of vile, evil, false teaching, the corruption of the church, the rotting of the foundations, as it were. There's a little group of believers who might be saying to themselves, "Man, you know, we're liable to get swept us in this whole deal. What's going to happen to us?" They see everything going down the drain like in our society, liberalism neo-orthodoxy and all the garbage that's coming along in the name of Christianity seems to be selling us right down the river. And we say, "Well, what about us? Are we going to fall by the wayside in this deal?" And so at the beginning of Jude, verse 1, at the end of Jude, verses 24 and 25, Jude reiterates the fact that we don't have to fear. No matter how bad the day gets, no matter how vile the world around us, we're okay. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, "to them that are set apart by God, the Father, and kept in Jesus Christ." Better to translate it, "Kept by Jesus Christ" in the dative case. He says, "In the midst of all the rot around you, you will be set apart by God and kept by Jesus Christ. *Tre* is the Greek verb. It means to watch, to guard, to keep and to preserve. It's even been used outside the Bible to speak of something being guaranteed. When you were saved, you were given a guild-edge guarantee. The Bible talks about the fact that we've been given the earnest of the spirit. And the earnest it means engagement ring, down payment, guarantee. When you were saved, God gave you the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that someday you'd be glorified in the presence of God, even in the toughest times. You know, Jesus prayed, "Father, I pray that you will keep them, which I have given you, that you'll keep them from the evil one," John 17:11 and 15, and Jesus prayer will be answered. The Father will keep the believer. And that's what he's saying here. You are not only sanctified. You are kept by Jesus Christ. That's the helmet of salvation. You don't need to listen to Satan's doubts, "Oh, you better make sure you're really a Christian to start with." If you're shaky on that ground, you can't have any confidence. If you don't have any confidence, number one, you may not be a Christian at all. But, number two, you may be a Christian who's being severely buffeted by Satan, and you better get back on the helmet of salvation.

Go to verse 24 of Jude. And here it is, the same thing, again, only at greater length. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling." Isn't that great? The word able dynamite, power. He is powerful enough to keep you from falling. It isn't just that Christ doesn't want you to fall, it's that he's able to prevent it, you see. He's able to prevent it. And he's able to present you *ammos*, without a spot, without a blemish, faultless. And, by the way, *ammos* is used in 1 Peter 1:18 and 19, to refer to Christ. He is able to keep you from stumbling, keep you from falling and present you as pure as Christ is pure, someday in the presence of God the Father. That's the keeping power of Christ. Tremendous security. Tremendous. And the word here, talking about keep you is not *tre*, the same word as the earlier one of watch, guard, keep. But it's *phulass*, which means to secure in the midst of an attack. So no matter what all the hosts of hell throw against you, Christ is powerful enough to keep you from falling and present you *ammos*, as spotless as Jesus Christ in the presence of God. No wonder the Psalmist said surely, confidently, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." He knew it. And, "Ultimately, I will dwell"— where? — "In the house of the Lord forever."

See, he knew that the salvation God gave you was a past, present, future salvation. "Surely," he said, "goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and, ultimately, I'll dwell in the house of the Lord forever." In 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 23, Paul says, "In a glorious benediction, the very God of peace sanctify you holy and your whole spirit and soul and body preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And I love this, "Faithful is he that called you who also will do it." What a great thing. Paul says, "This great benediction, preserved blameless and faithful is he who called you who will do it." No. We do not accept the blows of doubt that Satan casts against us. Our armor is the confidence that salvation is future, as well as present and past. And Christ holds us in the power of his own hand.

In Hebrews 6:16-19, the Bible says there are two things, two immutable things, two unchanging things. The promise of Christ and the oath of Christ, that anchor the believer's soul forever. Hebrews 6:16-19, and so it is that confidence that makes us defend ourselves against Satan's blows. Beloved when he comes with discouragement, when he comes with doubt, be assured there's a glory day coming. There's a victory day coming. Fight the good fight, have confidence in the salvation God gave you and know that you'll be there for that crowing day. And wonderful hymn, the church's one foundation, the writer says, "amid toil and tribulation and tumult of her wars, she waits the consummation of peace forever more, till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blessed and the great church victorious becomes the church at rest." Someday there's coming a rest. Not now. We're in the battle. We got to fight the battle. The rest comes later when the victory has been ours. Another hymn, and, you know, it well, says, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus. The strife will not be long. This day, the noise of battle, but next, the victor's song, to him that overcometh the crown of life shall be he with the king of glory shall reign eternally. And I end with the words of John Bunyan, "Hobgoblin nor foul fiend can daunt his spirit. He knows he at the end shall life inherit. Then fancies fly away. He'll fear not what men say. He'll labor night and day to be a soldier." Dear John Bunyan was thrown

in the Bedford jail, and it was there that he determined that he'd fight and never grow weary. He wouldn't feel the blows of discouragement and doubt. And in that time in the jails, he looked to the day he'd be with Jesus Christ. In the worst of circumstances, he produced the greatest thing he ever did in his life, pilgrim's progress. Don't give up. Don't let Satan victimize you with discouragement and doubt because you're going to win in the end. Keep the helmet on now.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for our time this morning. Speak to all of our hearts. While your heads are bowed for just a moment, to my right in the front is our prayer room. And while you're just meditating, perhaps God is calling you to a commitment of some kind. Maybe you don't know Christ, maybe you do, but you're not living for him. Maybe you're looking for a church. Maybe you have questions that need answers. Instead of leaving after we pray in just a few seconds, come to the front to my right through the double wooden doors and let a counselor pray with you. There's free material, someone to talk to, to pray with. Your life can be changed today. We'll be waiting for you up front here and encourage you to come.

Father, we pray that you'll draw those that you'd have come this morning and, Lord, bring tonight those that need to hear your word on the subject of divorce as well. Thank you for this great day. Oh, Lord, help us to fight the battle will faithfully, that the victory may be yours and the glory and the honor, in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you.

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