

The Armor of God: The Helmet of Salvation

Scripture: Ephesians 6:17

Code: 90-367

Ephesians chapter 6 is our text tonight and we're looking at the believer's armor. There are so many things that have come and gone in my life time in terms of Christian emphases. It's good that some of them are fading away and have almost disappeared. It's sort of like the offshoot of the Amish many years ago. It was a quirky kind of cult and they believed that marriage was...and cohabitation sinful. It didn't last very long. They all died and there was nobody left to carry it on. That was a good thing.

There are other things that have come and tried to have a life and sometimes lasted quite a while before they died. One of them, basically, was inimitable to the Quaker Movement and I guess you could call it sort of historic quietism. That's a label that really does define the Quaker approach to spiritual life which was to say what you need to do is surrender yourself. They had phrases like "hand it over to the Lord," "let Him do it." Or their most famous one, "Let go and let God." Stop struggling. Stop striving. Abide. Rest. And all that kind of benign quiet language. They said, one writer, it's like a man in a room, there's brilliant sunshine outside but the room is in darkness, that's because the blinds are drawn and the man is fumbling around in the darkness. All he needs to do is open the blind and the light will flood him. This is the quietistic view. It took a firm footing in England and America in a movement called Keswick. Keswick Movement was this kind of movement, die to self, self-crucifixion. Books were written by people like Major Ian Thomas and others. And the whole idea was that if you want to live a successful Christian life, you simply surrender. They would say things like, "Holiness is by faith in Jesus, not by any effort of my own." We supply the surrender, God supplies the power. Not I, but Christ. Another famous book along that line was *The Christian Secret to a Happy Life* by Hannah Smith, a book that isn't nearly as popular as it once was, but shows up now and then.

But this Movement has died away, thankfully, because it does not reflect a biblical approach to spiritual life. It is not benign. It doesn't call for you to surrender and to yield and to sit back and to rest and to abide and to feel you're responsible for nothing but some kind of self-surrender. That is really opposite what Scripture teaches. Particularly what we're learning in the passage before us which says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." Verse 10, "Put on the full armor of God that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil for our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand

firm.”

Hebrews chapter 12 tells us the Christian life is a race. First Corinthians 9 tells us the Christian life is a boxing match. And Ephesians 6 tells us the Christian life is a war. In Titus we are told in chapter 3 and verse 8 to apply ourselves to good deeds. In fact, to be diligent to do that.

We are told by James and by Peter that we are to resist our enemy, the devil, to be sober and vigilant. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 9 we are told by Paul’s example to beat our bodies into subjection.

We are told here in the epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 5 and verse 15, to be careful how we walk. We’re told in Philippians 3:14 to press on. He said in 2 Corinthians 7:1 we are told that we are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Peter tells us that while we have been given, 2 Peter 1:4, precious and magnificent promises, we must apply all diligence in your faith supply moral excellence; in your moral excellence, knowledge; in your knowledge, self-control; in your self-control, perseverance; in your perseverance, godliness; in your godliness, brotherly kindness; in your brotherly kindness, love. Peter reminds us that we are to be diligent because we don’t know how long we’re going to be here. In his first epistle, chapter 1, he says, “Gird your minds for action.” Verse 13, “Keep sober in spirit. Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought you at the revelation of Jesus Christ as obedient children.” We are called to obedience.

Philippians 2:12 and 13 says, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” God has put it in you, work it out, make it visible, demonstrative.

Ephesians chapter 4 to the end is all about this. Back in chapter 4 verse 1, “I therefore the prisoner of the Lord entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you’ve been called.” And then he goes on, chapter 4, chapter 5, chapter 6 to tell you how to walk. It demands aggression. It demands wisdom. It demands obedience. It demands perseverance. It demands faithfulness. It demands holiness, purity. And it recognizes that we’re engaged in a war.

The Christian life is anything but passive. Yes God is our strength, and as Jehoshaphat said, “The battle is the Lord’s and we must be wary of trusting in our own strength.” But even though the strength is His and the battle is His, we are called to obedience, to commitment, to diligence, to self-discipline in order to be victorious.

Certainly the Apostle Paul understood how hard it was to be a Christian. You could never accuse him of some kind of benign surrender. He was a warrior. His life is lived in lists like this: endurance, affliction, hardship, distress, beatings, imprisonment, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, hunger. He says to the Colossians that “It is his commitment to admonish every man, teach every man with all wisdom

to present every man complete in Christ and for this purpose I work to the point of exhaustion, striving according to His power which mightily works within me.” That’s the perfect Parallel. His power working in Me and my total commitment.

You depend on God, and you give your all. It is a war.

I’m so glad that wrong notion has faded away. I don’t hear people talk about it at all anymore. When I was young, it was a dominating paradigm for spiritual life.

Now that we’re in Ephesians chapter 6, let’s return to Paul’s discussion of how you arm yourself for this aggression, for this battle, for this effort. And you will notice that there are six pieces of armor that are mentioned, beginning in verse 14. And the first three are introduced by the verb having...having girded your loins, having put on the breastplate, having shod your feet. It presupposes that those are the permanent things. You have your belt on, you have your breastplate on, you have your shoes on. And even if you’re not engaging in the battle at the moment, those remain in place because at all times you must be marked by readiness.

But in addition to that, or on top of that, verse 16 says, “In addition to that,” the verb changes, “taking up the shield of faith.” Verse 17, “Take the helmet of salvation and, implied, take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.” So at all times commitment, at all times holiness, at all times confidence in the presence and power of God. That’s what those first three mean as we already know.

We live then committed to victory, pulling in the loose ends of our life as indicated by the belt of truth, truthfulness. We live in purity and sanctification and godliness and holiness with our breastplate on at all times. We live with our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace which is to say that we’re confident God is on our side. And we live in that constant preparedness...commitment, holiness, confidences. We take up, when the battle comes, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

Now last time we talked about the shoes of the gospel of peace and we talked about the shield of faith. We could say a lot about those things. But I think we said enough last time to establish in your mind what we’re talking about.

Just a word or two about the shield of faith which was the one we ended up with last Sunday night. To say that the shield of faith is that which...with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one is to say that the shield of faith is what protects you from devastating temptation. The arrows of Satan, the flaming missiles of the evil one you extinguish, you extinguish by faith, it’s your protection.

What do you mean by that? Trust in the Lord. It is faith, that overcomes the world. It is faith that overcomes Satan. Satan works through the world system. Your overcoming temptation has to do with you believing God and not believing Satan. It comes down to that as we learned in the garden of Eden. Either you believe God or you believe Satan. Eve decided to believe Satan. She fell. She told her husband. He decided to go along with her, the whole human race fell. If you sin, you believed Satan. You have believed his lie about where fulfillment lies, where satisfaction lies, where real joy lies. If you deny sin and if you follow the path of holiness, you're believing God. You're saying I believe satisfaction, fulfillment, blessing, joy, all of that is found in obedience to God so that what shields you from succumbing to temptation, what extinguishes the arrows of Satan is simply your trust in God.

Every time you sin, mark it down. You have believed the lie. You have believed that you can find real peace, that you can find real joy, real fulfillment, real satisfaction, something better than what you now have in sin. That's the lie. Satan is the father of lies and speaks only lies.

If you reject the temptation and you follow the path of holiness, you have said I believe God. I believe God, I trust Him. I trust Him that fulfillment, satisfaction, joy, blessing is found in obeying Him. It's that simple.

Now that brings us to the fifth piece of armor and it takes some time to kind of work through this because it opens up a doctrine for us. "Take also...verse 17...the helmet of salvation," the helmet of salvation.

Now Roman soldiers wore helmets. They knew that blows to the chest could be fatal because their vital organs are there, so they wore a breastplate. They also knew that a blow in the head could be fatal. And so they protected their heads with a helmet. Some helmets in ancient times were leather with metal pieces fastened on to the leather. Others were solid cast metal, very much like their breastplates so there were breastplates of leather with metal riveted to it, as well as those that were molded, pounded metal. The purpose was to protect the head.

From what? Really from the broad swords that were being wielded. In battles in ancient times there were small little daggers called machaira, could be foot long, shorter. They were used in hand-to-hand combat to inflict a fatal blow. But there were also rhomphaia, a massive sword that would be as long as three feet or four feet, double edged. A handle would be gripped in both hands. The soldier would raise his sword high over his head and endeavor to bring down a crushing blow on the head of his enemy, splitting open his skull. A soldier had to be alert because a blow like that if it found its place in the right point of the head, even if you had a helmet, could be a crushing, devastating blow. So you would have to be aware of that. But once you moved, it would deflect that deadly blow.

The helmet, as far as our army is concerned, is the helmet of salvation. Now somebody might think well that means you don't want to go into this battle unless you're saved. But you wouldn't even have this armor unless you were saved. This is not talking about salvation in the sense that we immediately think of it, past salvation. Not even talking about present salvation. To understand what it is actually talking about, you go to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. First Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 8. "But since we are of the day, not the night, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation...the hope of salvation."

Paul is not saying to us you need to be a Christian. We're already believers. You wouldn't have the shield of faith, you wouldn't have the shoes of the gospel of peace, you wouldn't have the breastplate of righteousness, you wouldn't have the belt of truth.

What is he talking about here? He's talking about salvation in its future aspect. There are three aspects of salvation...past, present and future. At the time you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you were saved from the penalty of sin. That's what happened. That's called the doctrine of justification. You were saved from the penalty of sin. You are now in the second phase of your salvation and you are being saved continually from the power of sin, in the sense that sin longer has dominion over you. That's the current phase, that's sanctification.

So the first phase is justification, salvation from the penalty of sin. The second phase is sanctification, salvation from the dominating power of sin. But there's a third phase of salvation and that is to be freed from the presence of sin. And that speaks of your glorification, justification, sanctification and glorification, past, present and future. The term "salvation" includes all three of those. From the moment you receive Christ to the time you enter into heaven, your salvation is secure. Salvation has happened to you, it is happening to you, and it will happen to you.

The writer of Hebrews says, "You have this hope of a future fulfillment, the final aspect of your salvation." And the writer of Hebrews tells us, "It is an anchor of the soul...it is an anchor of the soul."

What I mentioned to you earlier about what Peter said is a good place to understand that. Second Peter chapter 1, "We have by His divine power been granted everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence, for by these He's granted to us His precious and magnificent promises in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

You have been great and precious promises of a future final escape. In 1 Peter he puts it this way, again in the opening chapter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, will not fade

away, reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God...listen...through faith for a salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” You have been saved, you are being saved, you will be saved. We’ve all been given these great and precious promises about future glory. In the words of Paul to the Galatians he says in chapter 5 verse 5, “You essentially are awaiting for the hope of righteousness...the hope of glory.”

In fact, like the creation, Romans 8 says, “We groan, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies.” In Romans chapter 13 Paul says, “Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed.” What could he be talking about? What do you mean your salvation is nearer than when you believed? When you believed, you did receive salvation, yes in its first phase. And you are receiving salvation in its second phase and yet you are nearer to the fullness of your salvation than when you believed. The final phase, glorification.

So what are we talking about when we talk about the helmet? Back to our text. We’re talking about the confidence in a full final, total salvation when we will be glorified. How is this part of our armor? I’m convinced that if you believe you can lose your salvation, you are ill equipped to engage in the battle. If you’re not sure you can win, you very likely will be tempted to turn in to some kind of a monk who flees from any threat at all. It makes a huge difference...a huge difference. You can’t lose. That is the promise of Scripture.

You are promised triumph, 2 Corinthians 2, God causes us always to triumph in Christ. If you’re under some erroneous theology that tells you one slip and you’ve lost your salvation, you are not equipped to engage in the spiritual struggle. You are not equipped to reach into the fire and snatch brands from the burning. You’re not equipped to get close to the enemy because you are motivated by fear. You’re threatened. You don’t have the heart of a victor, one who knows triumph and victory is absolutely sure.

Consequently you can be motivated by doubt, motivated by fear, and every tiny little problem becomes a horrendous discouragement to you. So know this, and this is the good word of the helmet that protects you from any fatal blow, all blows attempting to, as it were, crush your head, obliterating your salvation, will be deflected by the truth which is your confidence that nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

I don’t know that I could do ministry and at the same time worry that I could take a step in one direction and lose my salvation. I don’t know that I could confront the issues in the world if I lived in mortal fear that every time I put myself in such a position, Satan could enter my life, or enter my hope, or enter my family or wreak havoc all over the place and the end of it all I could end up in hell.

A lot of people believe that. But you can engage yourself in the battle, you can engage yourself in the struggle, fully confident...fully confident that you will not be defeated. You have the promise of eternal

heaven.

We've covered that in prior messages on the doctrine of eternal security and the doctrines of assurance. I did a whole series of them, so I won't go into all the little detail on that. But when you have that kind of promised invincibility, it changes the way you approach the battle. People who are confident in the end, confident in the victory, confident in the securing power of Christ, confident in the promises...and we'll look a little more at those promises in a moment...approach things differently. They sacrifice their whole life without fear.

You know, somebody who thought somewhere along the line he might lose his salvation might want to mix in a little worldly fun just so that he didn't make too many sacrifices and end up in hell anyway and have nothing to show for it. We need to be so crystal clear about our eternal home, so confident and assured that's where we're going that we would sacrifice anything and everything in this life for the advancement of the Kingdom against all opposition, fearlessly, triumphantly. We don't need to grab any of this world's goodies on the way because there's so much more waiting for us in glory.

I think this effects your attitude and I think it effects how you labor, how you work. Discouraged people, people who think the devil might be more powerful than God, people who think the devil can mess up everything and people who fear that they might lose their salvation, just don't bring the right confidence and the right passion to the battle. Luke 18:1, Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." We're to stay at it, living in the constant hope of glory, never fainting, never giving up, never growing weary, knowing that the victory in the end will be ours.

We understand what Peter meant, going back to him, 1 Peter 2, "For such is the will of God...verse 15...that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men." Doing right in the face of foolish men may silence them, but it's also very likely to agitate them. And so Peter also reminds us that in the process of doing what is right in the face of ungodly men, you may suffer...you may suffer. First Peter 3:17, "But it's better if God should will it so that while you're putting the ignorance of evil men to flight, in a sense, you also are suffering for doing what is right, rather than for doing what is wrong, that's best." In fact, that even honors God. Chapter 4 verse 19, "Let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

When Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy chapter 1, he talks about the fact that there are people who use the Law but the Law is not made for a righteous man but those who are lawless and rebellious, the ungodly and sinners and unholy and profane, those who kill their fathers or mothers, murderers, immoral men, homosexuals, kidnappers, liars, perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching. That's how the world lives. That's how the world acts. The Law of God does not come to us the way it comes to them. It comes to them to inflict its mortal wound on them and drive them to the cross. But for us, the Law of God is life and joy and blessing and hope.

We like soldiers, 2 Timothy 2, we talked a little about that last time, are willing to suffer hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, not actively entangling ourselves in the affairs of every day life, but rather pleasing the one who called us to be a soldier, our commander in chief. We don't need to suck anything out of this world. We can wait for what is ours to come because it's guaranteed. We don't have any doubts about that. The message is to hang in there.

Sometime sit down and read the second and third chapters of Revelation and in those chapters you will read about all the churches. I wish we had time...some time we may do another series on the churches of the book of Revelation. But in each of those letters that He wrote to churches that were beleaguered by sin and persecution, His message to them is always the same. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Trust the Word of God. Trust the Word of God to him who...what?...overcomes...to him who overcomes, to him who overcomes I'll grant to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God."

To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna, a white stone, a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it. To him who overcomes, keeps My deeds to the end, I will give authority over the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of a potter are broken to pieces as I also have received authority from My Father and I'll give him the morning star.

To him who overcomes, he'll be clothed in white garments and I will not erase his name from the book of life even though they did that in cities when they didn't like you anymore. I'll never do that. I'll confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

To him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of My God. He'll not go out from it anymore and I'll write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven from My God and My new name. And to one who overcomes I will grant him to sit down with Me on My throne as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

These promises to the churches, they were beleaguered by sin and persecution of God's way of saying Hang in there, be faithful to the end and believe me, you will be everlastingly rewarded.

I think when you understand the greatness of your salvation, when you understand the permanence of your salvation, when you understand the eternity of your salvation, when you understand the love of your Savior, it anchors you in the middle of the battle. You don't get discouraged. You are not defeated before you ever engage the enemy.

But if that's in question, you've got some serious problems. You'll be so busy battling your own emotions that you can rarely engage the real struggle. But when you know the end, "Beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." And you have all promises all through the New Testament, don't you? About reward, reward, reward, a crown of life, a crown of rejoicing, a crown of righteousness.

That's what moved the Apostle Paul to be able to say in the middle of all the suffering that he went through which just never let up, "We're inflicted in every way but not crushed. Perplexed but not despairing." Second Corinthians 4. "Persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus that the life of Jesus may be manifest in our body." We take it all because we know what's ahead of us.

And then he sums it up. "We do not lose heart." Why? "Though our outer man is decaying, our inner man is being renewed day by day. And momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparisons. So we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. The things that are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal."

Let it come, he said. My vision is on that which is eternal. In fact, the message is this, that whatever you suffer in this life will be the cause of your reward in the next life. So the suffering is a plus. You bear it now, your rewarded for it then.

Admittedly the activities of Satan are relentless, they never stop. But we labor and toil and fight and war for the cause of the Kingdom and against sin because we know in the end we will triumph. And the helmet of salvation is that absolute confidence in the saving, keeping power of God's sovereign grace.

I just want to show you a couple of passages that will help seal this in your mind. And two of them are in John's gospel, chapter 6, a beloved and familiar text of Scripture, as well as extremely important. John 6:37, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not reject, or cast out. For I've come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me that of all that He is given Me, I lose none, but raise him up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." That is a great promise...a great promise.

The Father has given us to the Son. The Son receives us. The Son keeps us. The Son raises us. This, I think, is one of the greatest, most comforting doctrines in all holy Scripture. We have a calling that cannot be revoked. We have an inheritance that cannot be defiled. We have a foundation that cannot be shaken. We have a seal that cannot be broken. We have a life that cannot perish.

In John 10 and verse 27, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me and I give eternal life to them and they shall never perish. And no one shall snatch them out of My hand, My father who has given them to Me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Now there is some security.

There are a number of strands in this divine rope that binds us to God. We are Christ's sheep and it is His duty as the divine Shepherd to care for us and to protect us. And to suggest that any of Christ's sheep may be lost is to blaspheme the Great Shepherd.

Furthermore, those who are Christ's sheep, according to this passage, follow Christ. And they do not listen to strangers. They hear His voice. And furthermore, to the sheep who belong to Christ and who follow Christ is given eternal life. To speak of it as ending is a contradiction in terms. How could eternal anything end?

Furthermore, this eternal life is given to them. "I give eternal life to them," verse 28. They didn't invent it. They didn't merit it. They didn't earn it. Consequently they can't do anything to forfeit it.

Furthermore, they shall never perish. That's the negative side of saying I give them eternal life. That's obvious. They shall never perish. If one person who is Christ's sheep goes to hell, Christ is a liar.

Furthermore, from the Shepherd's hand, no one is able to pluck them. Not even the devil. Furthermore, Christ and God together hold on to His sheep. And that is why...you can turn to Romans 8....Romans 8 says what it says. "If God is for us, who's against us?" Verse 35, "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword." In fact, no. In verse 37 he says, "And all things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. We conquer not because of our own merit. We conquer through the one who sovereignly loved us. Not death, not life, not angels, not principalities, things present, things to come, powers, height, depth, any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Or, in the language of Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ." God finishes what He begins. Or in the language of Paul to the Ephesians, "To the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory."

This is the promise of Scripture. O my, what a promise it is.

Turn to Jude for a moment, the little letter of Jude. The first and the last verse. Verse 1 and verse 25 sum it up. Jude, a slave, literally, *doulos*, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father and...what's the next word?...kept...kept, preserved in Jesus Christ, or preserved for Jesus Christ, *tereo*, to watch, stand guard over, keep, preserve, protect." The word "stress" is watchful care, vigil which never lets up. Passive voice indicates the agent is Christ, literally. That's why by is best, use of *votive* in the Greek is *dative*. Christ never relaxes His care, never relaxes His hold. He and the Father holding us in, as it were, in their divine omnipotent hands.

One use of this verb *tereo* was ancient times as a way to express a guarantee. When a guarantee was made, this would be the verb that was used. So it could read this way. Guaranteed by Jesus Christ. Our future salvation is secure.

It's a perfect tense, *tereo*, meaning past action with permanent results. Every Christian then has been permanently established in the keeping of Jesus who never lets go. By the way, that's the whole theme of Jude, survival in the days of apostasy. Tough times, toughest of times. And we're facing the highest degree of satanic impact that the world has ever known because it's cumulative. And yet we are kept, we are protected, we are secure.

It reminds me of John 17 where Jesus prays to the Father, "Father, keep them." And the Father hears and answers that prayer. Jude closes this way, "To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever, amen." That is a great doxology. But why is that doxology there? Why does this little book end with such praise? Because of verse 24, "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy, to that God, to that Savior be glory, majesty, dominion and authority forever."

In between those two great statements about our protection and preservation is the reality that the world is full of very dangerous persons. Verse 3 talks about persons who come into the church, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness. It talks about them further as the false teachers who are defiled, who reject authority, verse 8, revile angelic majesties. It talks about them as if they were unreasoning animals in verse 10, those that have gone the way of Cain, rushed into the air of Balaam, perished in the rebellion of Korah. They're hidden wreaths in your love feasts, caring only for themselves. They're clouds without water, carried along by winds. Autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted. Wild waves of the sea casting up their own shame like foam. Wandering stars for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever, and so forth and so forth.

Very dangerous and they're all around you and they're among you. Verse 16 says they follow their own lusts, speak arrogantly, flatter people for the sake of gaining an advantage. They cause

divisions, verse 19, worldly minded, devoid of the Spirit.

So we are surrounded by this kind of danger and all of that is reflective of the spiritual kingdom darkness that assaults and attacks us against which we struggle. It would be a threatening, terrifying battle were it not for our confidence in the security of our salvation. No wonder at the end Jude praises God for His keeping power. He will present us faultless.

In the words of the famous twenty-third Psalm, our Good Shepherd will bring us to the banquet table which is the picture of heaven.

In the battle then, we are protected from doubt, discouragement, dread, fear, that engaging in the spiritual war we may be overcome and forfeit our salvation by confidence in the hope of salvation given us in Christ. Hebrews 6 says that we have two immutable things, the promise and the pledge of Christ which anchor our eternal hope.

And so, we can engage in this great struggle without fear. The belt, commitment. The breastplate, purity, holiness. The shoes, confidence in the presence and power of the One with whom we have made peace. The shield, faith, trusting God. And the helmet, security, assurance, the hope of victory and triumph. That leaves us with one more and then a second message to wrap it up on the importance of prayer as Paul ends the passage. And next time we'll look at the Sword of the Spirit.

Father, we thank You for the way in which the Scripture is consistent everywhere you go, it comes through that there is only one author, there is only one stream of truth, there are no deviating tributaries that go off into some strange and irregular and inconsistent area. Stream flows in tact with pure truth and all those truths are cohesive. And as we examine Scripture from front to back, as we dig down into the intricacies of the text, and the details, the consistency of what You teach us is always there. We're never shocked because there's some aberration that's inexplicable. Clearly this is Your Word and we see it as such and we know it to be. Lord, give us the strength to battle effectively for the cause of Christ, in His honor we pray. Amen.

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