

CHRISTIANS ON CAMPUS

Session 10 - The Whole Armor of God

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:13-24

Ep 6:13 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.

Ep 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness

Ep 6:15 And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;

Ep 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.

Ep 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God,

Ep 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Ep 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Ep 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ep 6:21 But that you also may know the things concerning me, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you.

Ep 6:22 Him I have sent to you for this very thing, that you may know the things concerning us and that he may comfort your hearts.

Ep 6:23 Peace to the brothers and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ep 6:24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility.

Today's Reading

In verse 17 Paul also speaks of “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.” Among the six items of God’s armor, this is the only one for attacking the enemy. With the sword we cut the enemy to pieces. However, we do not take up the sword first. Rather, we must firstly put on the girdle, the breastplate, and the shoes, and then take up the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation. Then, when we are entirely protected and have salvation as our portion, we may receive the sword of the Spirit.

The Word is the Bible. But if this Word is only printed letters, it is neither the Spirit nor the sword. The Greek for word in verse 17 is *rhema*, the instant word spoken at the moment by the Spirit in any situation. When the *logos*, the constant word in the Bible, becomes the instant *rhema*, this *rhema* will be the Spirit. This *rhema*, which becomes the Spirit, is the sword that cuts the enemy to pieces. For example, we may read a particular verse again and again, only to have it remain the *logos*, a word in letters. Such a word cannot kill anything. But one day this verse becomes the *rhema* to us, the present, instant, living speaking. At that time this *rhema* becomes the Spirit. For this reason, in John 6:63 the Lord Jesus said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.” Here the Greek text also uses *rhema*. The instant, present word is the Spirit. This kind of word is the sword. Therefore, the sword, the Spirit, and the word are three that are one. Furthermore, we, not the Spirit, are the ones to use this sword to kill the enemy.

In our Christian experience, the Word and the Spirit must always be one. It is an utter falsehood to say that we take the Spirit without taking the Word. Without taking the Word, we cannot have the Spirit. In my experience, I receive the Spirit mostly through the Word. As I contact the Word in a living way, it becomes the Spirit to me. However, some take the Bible without the Spirit. This also is wrong. Those who wish to grow flowers need both the seeds and the life contained in the seeds. It is impossible to separate the life within the seeds from the seeds themselves. In order to have the life, we must take the seeds. The relationship between the Word and the Spirit is like that between the seeds and the life. We must have both. The Lord Jesus is both the Spirit and the Word. He is not the Spirit without being the Word, nor the Word without being the Spirit.

Because He is both the Word and the Spirit, He created us with a mind to understand and a spirit to receive. When we come to the Bible, we should exercise both our mind and our spirit. We exercise our mind by reading and our spirit by praying. Since we need both to read and to pray, we should pray-read the Word. I can testify that through pray-reading my spirit becomes strong and ready to devour the enemy. I not only exercise my spirit, but I also exercise my mind to consider the Word.

Verse 18 says, "By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit, and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints." The phrase "by means of all prayer and petition" modifies the word "receive" in verse 17. By prayer we receive both the helmet of salvation and the word of God. This indicates that we need to receive the word of God by means of all prayer and petition. We need to pray as we are receiving the word of God. We have seen that the whole armor of God is composed of six items. Prayer may be considered the seventh. It is the means by which we apply the other items.

The modifier "by means of all prayer and petition" in verse 18 is related to all six items of the armor covered in verses 14 through 17. It is by means of all prayer and petition that we gird our loins with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, and have our feet shod with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace. Furthermore, it is by prayer that we take up the shield of faith and receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Whenever we are about to put on the armor or to take up any item of the armor, we need to pray. We cannot and we should not attempt to use any part of God's armor without prayer. Prayer is the unique way to apply the armor of God. It is prayer that makes the armor available to us in a practical way. For example, we may have the helmet of salvation, but it is prayer that makes this helmet available and prevailing. Therefore, prayer is crucial and vital.

In prayer, the main faculty we should use is our spirit. If our mind is overactive or if our emotion is not under control, we shall find it difficult to pray. When we pray, our mind should be at rest, and our emotion should be regulated, neither too hot nor too cold. According to my experience, I easily become distracted in prayer when my mind is preoccupied with other things. Likewise, when my emotion is not properly regulated, I find it difficult to utter something from my spirit in prayer. Hence, in order to pray in spirit, we need to be adjusted in our mind and balanced in our emotion. This requires a great deal of inward exercise.

A Christian must be a praying person. It is a sin not to pray. If you fail to pray for others, the saints or those in your family, you are sinning. However, not many Christians regard the lack of prayer as sin. We need to exercise our will to be people of prayer. For the sake of a proper prayer life, our mind must be sober, our emotion must be regulated, and our will must be strengthened. Then we shall be able to pray at every time in spirit.