**The Panoply of God** *(Ephesians 6:10-20)*

**Introduction**

1. Up to the point of our text, the apostle Paul has given information concerning the church, and her responsibilities on a whole level, and an individual level.
   1. Spiritual blessings in Christ.
   2. The way in which we were redeemed.
   3. The way in which the mystery was revealed.
   4. The call to unity, and the structure of the church for edification.
   5. The walk of the new man – righteousness and holiness.
      1. Walk in love.
      2. Walk in light.
      3. Christ’s love for the church, and her call to submit.
      4. Children to parents, and parents to children.
      5. Bondservants to masters, and masters to bondservants.
2. **It is then that Paul gives instruction concerning the conflict all will experience as they seek to do the will of the Father.**
3. We have an adversary – the devil – who seeks our destruction. We must be ***“able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (v. 13).*** 🡪
4. The Nature of the Conflict
5. Spiritual, not Physical
   1. **Ephesians 6:12** – the conflict is not physical, but spiritual.
      1. ***“flesh and blood”*** – physical men, and forces.
      2. **Principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness** – these all refer the devil and those under his rule.
      3. ***“the prince of the power of the air” (2:2)*** – Satan – rules with limited authority in ***“the power of darkness” (Colossians 1:13).***
   2. In the defense of his apostleship, and against the opposition of the ***“false apostles”*** in Corinth, Paul spoke of this spiritual conflict (**cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6).**
      1. Notice: ***“arguments”*** – in this context considers false doctrine.
      2. This struggle consists of the inner man – the heart – against the outer man.
      3. It is the struggle between the spirit and the flesh that Paul alludes to elsewhere – ***“For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (Galatians 5:17).***
      4. **Included are deceptive arguments of false doctrines, but also any fleshly lure that appeals to the appetite of the flesh – all temptations, and trials, and tribulations.**
      5. These all come from ***“spiritual hosts”*** and are spiritual in nature – higher than our physical composition. **Thus, we can only appropriate the necessary weapons for this battle from a Higher Source.**
      6. ***“the weapons of our warfare are…mighty IN GOD” (v. 4)***.
6. Spiritual Equipment from God (Both specific articles of equipment, and the state of being equipped.)
   1. **Ephesians 6:10** – the strength we need only comes from God.
      1. **We cannot win this battle by ourselves.**
      2. ***“for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13)***.
      3. **Cf. Romans 7:21-25a** – Paul considering himself before coming to Christ – under the Law without Christ.
   2. **Ephesians 6:11, 13** – God equips us with spiritual armor.
      1. ***“armor”*** – *panoplia*; from a compound of 3956 and 3696; full armor (“panoply”): — all (whole) armour.
      2. **Panoply** – a transliteration of the Greek, *panoplia*.
      3. **The armor is not lacking – it is a FULL ARMOR.**
         1. Paul was ***“an ambassador in chains”*** for Christ.
         2. **He was imprisoned in Rome, and could observe the Roman soldiers and their panoply daily.**
         3. He was also familiar with the OT references to armor – **cf. Isaiah 59:15-20** (Concerning the redeemer of Zion)
   3. God supplies this for us graciously, all we need to do is put it on, **AND PUT IT ON WE MUST – WE HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY.**
7. The Panoply of God
8. Girdle of Truth
   1. *The* ***girdle, or belt****, of the soldier was of great importance, as it bound the rest of his ensemble together, and supported him in actions of battle.*
   2. **The girdle of the spiritual panoply which binds the uniform together, and provides support in battle is the *“truth.”***
      1. This is not to be differentiated in substance from the ***“gospel of peace,”*** and the ***“word of God.”***
      2. Substantively, Paul deals with the same thing, but at different angles and actions of use.
   3. ***“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).***
      1. The world operates on the premise of relative truth – there is no objective truth.
      2. **The Christian operates on the foundation of spiritual fact revealed by God.**
   4. All that the Christian must be, and all that holds him together is the ***“truth.”***
   5. ***“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (John 17:17).***
   6. However, the truth requires our interaction with it for it to affect us positively.
      1. **The sanctification spoken of by Jesus is the effect the truth has on a person, but only on the person who gives himself to the truth – which is the word of God.**
      2. **Deuteronomy 6:1-9** – Instructions concerning the Law given to the Israelites.
         1. **(vv. 1-3)** – To be prosperous in the Canaan land, the Israelites had to know, and observe the commandments of God – the truth.
         2. **(vv. 4-7)** – It was necessary that they give time to teaching their children the truth. IT IS THE FIRST OF THE ARMOR OF GOD WE PUT ON, AND SETS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE REST.
         3. **(vv. 8-9)** – They were to have the truth ever before them, and on their mind.
            1. “As these words are figurative, and denote an undeviating observance of the divine commands, so also the commandment which follows, viz., to write the words upon the door-posts of the house, and also upon the gates, are to be understood spiritually.” (Keil & Delitzsch)
            2. The Pharisees took this literally and actually wore phylacteries to show themselves more spiritual than others – **the problem was that they did not actually abide in the truth with their whole heart.**
   7. **The truth is of great importance. We must be able to know the truth, and have it ready in our hearts in order to defeat the adversary!**
9. Breastplate of Righteousness
   1. *The* ***breastplate*** *was the piece which covered the torso, and thus, shielded the vital organs, most notably the heart, from harm.*
      1. ***thōrax***; of uncertain affinity; the chest (“thorax”), i.e. (by implication) a corslet: — breast-plate.
      2. **It is that which covers the human thorax.**
   2. **So, the breastplate of righteousness is a vital piece of our armor which protects our heart from corruption and sin.**
   3. The Christian must have a mindset toward righteousness – **maintaining moral rightness in character and action – a commitment.**
   4. **Romans 6:1, 12-13** – Our baptism was the point in which our bodies were revived to work righteousness, and the point at which we committed to doing so.
   5. **Romans 12:1-2** – Our lives are dedicated to righteous and holy living before God.
   6. ***“My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live” (Job 27:6).***
      1. **In all that Job went through, he did not sin**.
      2. **The Devil was sure that Job would turn against God, but Job had on the breastplate of righteousness**.
   7. **Our commitment to doing that which is righteous keeps us from that which is offered by the adversary that is unrighteous.**
   8. However, just as was the case with the truth, so righteousness is determined by God.
      1. ***“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne” (Psalm 89:14)***.
      2. To know how to be righteous we must turn to God.
      3. **HE SUPPLIES US WITH THE ARMOR, AND WE PUT IT ON.**
10. Feet Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace
    1. *The* ***shoes*** *of the Roman soldier gave him proper footing and grip in the forces of battle. They also protected his feet from the harmful path on which he trod.*
    2. **So, the preparation of the Gospel of peace allows us to be ready against the enemy, and protects us on the narrow and difficult path to heaven.**
    3. The point is PREPARATION of the gospel:
       1. **1 Peter 3:15** – We must always be ready to give a defense.
       2. **This should be a natural thing. We are consistently prepared with the knowledge of the gospel, that when a person asks us a question, or an opportunity arises, we can teach the truth.**
       3. **Acts 18:24-28** – Aquila and Priscilla did not know they would come upon Apollos that day, but they did what they needed to do because they were prepared with the knowledge of the gospel.
          1. **That day was a victory for the cause of Christ, and a defeat for Satan.**
          2. A soul was won because of a preparedness of the gospel.
    4. **Furthermore, it is a preparedness in the sense of a willing heart to receive and do the things the gospel says.**
    5. The result of such is PEACE – between you and God.
       1. **Ephesians 2:14-18** – The gospel promotes peace, not just between men, but MORE IMPORTANTLY BETWEEN MAN AND GOD.
       2. **This preparedness to do as the gospel says, and as such have peace with God, readies us for life lived for God.**
       3. **Hebrews 12:12-13** – Our proper footing is a result of being at peace with God. We will not stumble on the way because we are prepared being right with God – at peace with Him.
          1. Context of the discipline of God.
          2. **The pilgrimage of a Christian is many times difficult. We must have preparation of path and proper footing to travel the difficult path.**

**Part 2 – P.M.**

1. Shield of Faith
   1. *The* ***shield*** *of the soldier was no small thing, but covered the full body, and was made often of metal, or some other solid material.*
   2. **The shield of faith the Christian has is capable of not only deflecting the darts of the wicked one, but quenching the fire!**
   3. **Romans 10:17** – We see the connections all these pieces have with the gospel. We must study to produce faith.
   4. **This is steady, and firm conviction in undeniable fact, that thus produces unwavering trust.**
   5. **Hebrews 11:6** – We believe that He is, and that He will reward us.
      1. **Noah’s fiery darts** were those who undoubtedly mocked him as he built the ark for 120 yrs.
      2. **Abraham’s fiery darts** was the temptation to stay with what he knew was there, rather than going to the unknown, as well as the temptation to spare his son instead of concluding God could raise him up.
      3. **Moses’ fiery darts** were the temptations to stay with luxury and sin instead of suffering for righteousness sake.
      4. **Their understanding of facts from God, and thus trust in Him led them to avoid temptation to sin, and heartache which the devil tried to trigger.**
      5. **The Israelites did not have the shield of faith, and the fiery dart of doubt in God, and fear of enemies prevented them from entering the promised land. (When they sent the spies in…)**
      6. **NOTE: The shield of faith is armor in addition to the breastplate. Even though a soldier had a breastplate, he had a shield as extra protection. If we try to be righteous, but have not the necessary faith, we will lack what we need.**
   6. **James 2:14-18** – The shield of faith prevents us from failing to do as God commands.
      1. The faith that saves is faith that does.
      2. **The Devil tries to influence us to do wrong, or not do what is right, but we have the shield of faith to deflect his darts.**
      3. ***“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).***
2. Helmet of Salvation
   1. *The* ***helmet*** *protected a most important part of the body from blows, debris, and objects – the head.*
   2. **The helmet of salvation allows us to rise from the crouched and cowering position in boldness, knowing nothing can harm us for our salvation is secured.**
   3. **1 Thessalonians 5:8** – Paul speaks of the HOPE of salvation as a helmet.
   4. Because we have hope for salvation, we are willing to do what is right no matter what comes our way.
   5. **Revelation 2:8-11** – The church in Smyrna was experiencing persecution, and was promised by Jesus that they would have to endure more.
      1. How were they to be faithful in such trouble?
      2. **They had the promise of the crown of life, and as such could put their necks out for the Lord knowing they were protected.**
   6. ***“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28)***.
      1. We who have the hope of salvation have no reason to fear mankind.
      2. We know God has the power to destroy and save, and He will save us if we do what is right – ***“There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy” (James 4:12).***
   7. Our hope of salvation equips us to do what is right in any circumstance, no matter the heat it may bring upon us from opposing forces – ***Jesus “committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Peter 2:23)*** *knowing He would not be condemned, but rewarded.*
3. Sword of the Spirit
   1. *The* ***sword*** *was both a defensive and offensive weapon. It blocked, but also penetrated.*
   2. **The sword of the Spirit – the word of God – can be used as a defense, and as a offensive weapon against Satan. It can parry the blows of the Devil, but more importantly, it can strike, penetrate, and drive the Devil away.**
   3. ***“the gospel of Christ…is the power of God to salvation” (Romans 1:16).***
      1. This weapon, like the others, comes from God.
      2. **As such, it holds the power of the almighty.**
      3. ***“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12).***
   4. The Devil is helpless when opposed with the word of God – **Matthew 4:1-11**:
      1. **(vv. 1-4) –** Jesus had fasted, and was hungry, so the Devil tempted Him with His power to bring forth food.
         1. Jesus did not appeal to His deity to get Him through the temptation.
         2. He, in His humanity, put His trust in God.
         3. Quote from Deuteronomy 8:3 – Why did God give the Israelites manna?
         4. Jesus trusted in God to provide, and furthermore, understood it was more important to obey His word than to satisfy hunger.
      2. **(vv. 5-7) –** Now the Devil tries to use scripture.
         1. **The person who is familiar with his weapon – the sword of the Spirit – will understand when it is being misused.**
         2. To those who are well practiced, the Devil cannot use God’s word against us.
         3. Devil quotes **Psalm 91:11-12** – context is, trust in God, follow Him, and He will protect you in life with His providence.
         4. **Satan abused this to tempt Jesus to SHOW A LACK OF TRUST IN GOD.**
            1. ***“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust’” (Psalm 91:1-2).***
            2. *To throw Himself down would be to test God, and to show doubt, rather than trust.*
            3. ***“His truth shall be your shield and buckler” (Psalm 91:4b)*** – To forsake His truth by succumbing to temptation would be to forfeit His care for you.
         5. Jesus quotes **Deuteronomy 6:16** – When the Israelites tested God as they complained for lack of water – Is God with us? Does He care that we thirst?
      3. **(vv. 8-10)** – The Devil tempted Jesus with an easier path to being a ruler.
         1. Jesus came to be a king in His Kingdom, but the path would be difficult.
         2. **The Devil, at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, offered Jesus an easier path if He would only worship him.**
         3. Jesus quotes from **Deuteronomy 6:13** – Israelites were to remember who provided for them, and gave them the Canaan land, and worship Him, not other Gods.
      4. **(v. 11)** – Satan fled from Jesus because of Jesus’ impressive use of the Sword of the Spirit.
   5. ***“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).***
4. The armor necessary to defeat the adversary has been provided us by God. It is a panoply – FULL ARMOR – and we must put it on in order to ***“withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13).***
5. Praying Always **(Ephesians 6:18-20)**
   1. **While prayer is not mentioned by Paul as a part of the armor of God in his illustration, we understand it is still a vital part of our being Christians.**
   2. In addition to the armor of God discussed before, we need to continue with these things in prayer:
      1. **(v. 18)** – This warfare being waged is not one we are waging alone.
         1. We must pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ so that they may be strengthened in the battle.
         2. **We help each other greatly by praying for each other.**
      2. **(vv. 19-20)** – Furthermore, just as Paul asked for them to pray for him in the area of preaching, so we must pray for those who seek to preach and stand for the gospel.
         1. Those who dedicate their life to the preaching of the gospel need prayers from the saints so that they can be successful in their work, and the gospel may be spread effectively.
         2. **Also, the general desire to have God’s word furthered should lead us to pray for opportunities for it to be preached and heard.**

**Conclusion** – We need to heed the exhortation from the apostle Paul to the Ephesians to put on the panoply of God in order to defeat Satan in this spiritual war.