From time to time I will have someone request that I preach a sermon on a particular passage of scripture or on a particular topic. Now I confess I don’t always get around to doing that.

But some time ago one of our brothers here in the Church asked me if I would preach a message on “Putting On The Armor of God.” So this morning I would like to do that.

If you would, please turn with me to Ephesians chapter six.

READ: EPHESIANS 6:10-18

PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION

The following story is told by LEROY EIMS about the time when he was serving in the Marines in the South Pacific during World War II.

Eims says, “Shortly after we hit the beach our armored amphibious tank took two artillery shells broadside. We immediately evacuated our disabled vehicle and darted from one hole to another moving toward the enemy airstrip we were to take.

The sergeant began to check on us to make sure we were OK. He crawled over to me and asked, “You alright Eims?” I answered, “Yeah, I’m OK Sarge!”

He looked at me and asked, “Eims, where is your helmet?” I felt the top of my head and answered, “It must be in the tank, Sarge.” “Where’s your duty belt?” Our duty belts carried ammunition for our rifles, a canteen of water and a bayonet. “Must be in the tank, Sarge.”

“As a matter of fact, where’s your rifle Eims?” He looked at me with disgust and pity. Because of our hasty departure from the amphibious tank, I was dressed about the same way I would be dressed for a game of volleyball.

This true story reveals the truth about the modern Church. Many Christians have forgotten that the Christian life is not a playground, but a battlefield! And as a result, many Christians are ill-equipped for battle!
In our scripture text, the apostle Paul gives us three critical pieces of information we need to know to be prepared for spiritual battle.

First of all, let’s consider....

I. **Our ENEMY In The Battle** (vs. 11, 12)

1. It has been said, “*The first step to victory is to know your enemy.*”

2. Let’s see what we can learn about our enemy in verses 11, 12

   **READ:** Verses 11, 12 again

3. There are three things we learn about our enemy in these verses.

   (A) First, we learn **OUR ENEMY’S NAME:** **DEVIL**

   In vs. 11 Paul calls him the **devil**.

   The Greek term used here is the word *diabolus* from which we get our English word **diabolical**. If someone is diabolical it means they are extremely **evil** and **cruel**. Well that certainly describes the **devil** doesn’t it?

   But just like the **criminal** he is, the devil has many “aliases.” Here’s just a few other names he is known by in the Bible.

   **MARK 1:13** refers to him as **SATAN**

   **I PETER 5:8** calls him our **ADVERSARY** and **A ROARING LION**

   **REVELATION 12:10** names him **THE ACCUSER OF THE BRETHREN**

   **REVELATION 9:11** calls him **APOLLYON** which means “**destroyer.**”

   **II CORINTHIANS 11:3** names him “**THE DECEIVER.**”

   **JOHN 8:44** Jesus calls the devil **A LIAR and THE FATHER OF LIARS and MURDERER.**

   **II CORINTHIANS 6:15** calls our enemy **BELIAL** which means “**wicked one.**”

   **ISAIAH 14:12** calls him **LUCIFER.**

   **MATTHEW 12:24** refers to him as **BEELZEBUB** “**lord of the flies.**”
(B) Secondly, we learn OUR ENEMY’S NATURE: DECEPTION

v. 12 Put on the full armor of GOD so that you can take your stand against the devil’s SCHEMES.

SCHEMES = “To do something secretive or cunning with the intent of causing HARM or DAMAGE.”

The New King James uses the term “WILES” instead of schemes.

WILES = “To use TRICKERY or DECEPTION” or to be “CRAFTY.”

Satan promises one thing, but gives another……..

- He promises the BEST but pays with the WORST.
- He promises PLEASURE but pays with PAIN.
- He promises HONOR but pays with DISGRACE.
- He promises PROFIT but pays with LOSS.
- He promises HAPPINESS but pays with UNHAPPINESS.
- He promises LIFE but pays with DEATH.

Make no mistake! Nothing would please Satan more than to destroy your marriage….your children……
your career……your reputation……your happiness….your faith……and your Christian witness.

But here’s some important things you need to know about your enemy:

- Satan is not omniscient. In other words he is not all-knowing. GOD IS! But Satan isn’t. We tend to give Satan a whole lot more credit than he’s due when it comes to how much he knows about us.

- Neither is Satan omnipotent. In other words, Satan is not all-powerful. GOD IS! But Satan isn’t! Satan is powerful, but his power is limited by God. Satan must submit to God’s power.

- And neither is Satan omnipresent. In other words, Satan is not all-present. He can’t be everywhere at one time.
If Satan were all-knowing, all-powerful and all-present that would make him equal with God wouldn’t it! But Satan is none of those things! As much as Satan desires to be worshiped, he is NOT GOD!

-We have learned OUR ENEMY’S NAME........THE DEVIL
-We have learned OUR ENEMY’S NATURE.....DECEPTION

(C) Thirdly, we learn about OUR ENEMY HAS A NUMBERLESS ARMY OF DEMONS.

v. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Paul is telling us two things about our “struggle” in this verse.

(1) Paul tells us who our struggle is NOT with:

v. 12 a “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.”

Think of the people whom you consider to be your enemies. I’m talking about those people you can’t stand to be around.....those people who get under your skin.....those people who “push your buttons”.....those people you don’t like.....and perhaps even hate.

Guess what? Those people are NOT your real enemy. They are the people Satan is using to distract you, discourage you and defeat you. Your real struggle is not with people. Our struggle is NOT with flesh and blood. Our struggle is not with those who are visible.

(2) But then in the last part of verse 12 Paul tells us who our struggle IS WITH.

v. 12 b For our struggle is NOT against flesh and blood, but against THE RULERS, against the AUTHORITIES, against the POWERS of this dark world and against the SPIRITUAL FORCES OF EVIL in the heavenly realms.
Behind every WAR.....every MURDER.....every RAPE.....
every ROBBERY.....every CHILD MOLESTATION....every
ALCOHOL SALE.....every DRUG DEAL.....every ADULTEROUS
RELATIONSHIP.....every DIVORCE.....every WIFE BEATING
......every CROOKED BUSINESS DEAL......every POLITICAL
SCANDAL......and even every CHURCH SPLIT.......there is
a highly organized army of demons at work.

AND THAT IS WHO OUR REAL STRUGGLE IS WITH!

Well we have learned several things about OUR ENEMY IN THE BATTLE

OUR ENEMY’S NAME IS THE DEVIL.
OUR ENEMY’S NATURE IS DECEPTION.
And OUR ENEMY HAS A NUMBERLESS ARMY OF DEMONS.

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In our scripture text, Paul also tells us about........

II. Our ENERGY In The Battle (v. 10)

READ----Verse 10

1. Listen very carefully! There is a huge difference between
being STRONG and being STRONG in the LORD.

2. One of the biggest mistakes many Christians make is that we try to
do battle with Satan with our own human

Perhaps over the years you have battled a sinful habit in your
life. And perhaps you have tried to give up that sinful habit
a number of times and failed. And perhaps you have promised
God a thousand times or more that you were never going back
to that sinful habit again, but you did! You broke your promise!

Why did you fail? Why did Satan defeat you? In all likelihood it was
because you were relying on your own strength, your own
will power, and your own determination.
3. Paul is telling us if we want to truly be strong in the battle we must be strong in the LORD.

Now what does that mean? It means the more serious you are about your relationship with the Lord, the stronger you will be in the battle against Satan. If you are serious about prayer. If you are serious about studying the Bible. If you are serious about obeying the Lord’s commands. If you are really serious about wanting to live the Christian life, the stronger you will be for battle. BE STRONG IN THE LORD.

4. But not only are we to be strong in the Lord, Paul also says, “and in His mighty power.”

Now what does that mean? It means we have the mighty power of God within us. And that mighty power is the Holy Spirit.

Those who are the strongest in battle are those who rely on the mighty power of the Holy Spirit to overcome Satan’s temptations.

5. OUR ENERGY IN THE BATTLE COMES FROM A STRONG, ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD.

Paul has told us about OUR ENEMY IN THE BATTLE and OUR ENERGY IN THE BATTLE.

Finally Paul tells us about…..

III. Our EQUIPMENT In The Battle

Illustration: Every year our lawmakers allot billions of dollars in Defense spending to assure that our American soldiers are the best equipped soldiers in the world.

The premise is, a soldier is no better than his equipment.

1. Do you realize as SOLDIERS IN THE LORD’S ARMY the Lord has made absolutely sure that we are the BEST EQUIPPED ARMY in history?

2. Remember, we are fighting a SPIRITUAL BATTLE and a spiritual battle requires SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT.
3. In Paul’s day **Roman soldiers** were stationed all around the world. Seeing Roman soldiers walking the streets of Ephesus would have been a very familiar sight to the Christians in Ephesus. So the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use the Roman Soldier’s equipment as an analogy of the Christian Soldier’s equipment. As you will see in verses 13-18, there are two kinds of equipment we have for battle. Weapons of **DEFENSE** and weapons of **OFFENSE**

(A) First of all let’s look at **OUR WEAPONS OF DEFENSE**

1. Our first weapon of defense is the **BELT** of **TRUTH**

   **READ:** vs. 13-14 a

   THE BELT was used to hold the soldier’s clothing next to his body. It kept his uniform from flapping around and restricting him in battle.

   THE BELT was usually made of thick leather, thus it also protected the soldier’s abdominal region.

   TRUTH is vitally important in our battle with Satan. Remember Satan is “a liar” and “the father of all liars.” We live in a world where “lies” abound. This is why it is absolutely critical that we protect ourselves with the TRUTH.

   How do we do that? We do that by TRUSTING and BELIEVING that JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE and that there is no other way to heaven except through Christ.

   We also put on THE BELT OF TRUTH by believing that the BIBLE is the only source of ABSOLUTE TRUTH. You can’t find the truth in the Book of Mormon. You can’t find the truth in the **Quran** of the Muslems. You can’t find the truth in **The Vedas** of the Hindus. You can’t find the truth in numerous writings of **The New Age philosophes**. YOU CAN ONLY FIND THE TRUTH IN THE WORD OF GOD. Jesus said in John 8:32, “And you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.”

2. Our second weapon of defense is the **BREASTPLATE** of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

   **READ:** verse 14

   THE BREASTPLATE covered the body of the soldier from the neck down to the thighs. But its primary function was to protect the heart.

   OUR HEART is very important to LORD. The greatest command says that we are to “Love the LORD, OUR GOD, with all our HEART, all our soul and all our mind. (Matthew 22:37)
OUR HEART is the home of our passions and desires. The LORD desires that we hunger for RIGHTEOUSNESS rather than unrighteousness. When we set our hearts on the things of GOD rather than the things of this world we PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

3. Our third weapon of defense is the SHOES of the GOSPEL. READ—Verse 15

THE SHOES were extremely important to the Roman soldiers in Paul’s day, just as the BOOTS are to our soldiers today. THE SHOES worn by the Roman soldiers had a thick leather upper to protect the top of the foot and extended upward to just below the knee to protect the calf of the leg. Protruding out of the bottom of the soldiers shoe were nails or cleats. And when the soldier would go into battle he would literally “dig his heels in” or stomp those cleats down into the ground to give him sure footing in the battle.

THAT’S WHAT THE GOSPEL DOES FOR US! It gives us “sure footing.” Notice the emphasis on STANDING in this passage.

v. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your STAND.

v. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to STAND YOUR GROUND, (also in verse 13) and after you have done everything to STAND.

v. 14 STAND FIRM then.

HOW DO I PUT ON THE SHOES OF THE GOSPEL? I stand firm on the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Gospels.

4. Our fourth weapon of defense is the SHIELD of FAITH READ—verse 16

THE SHIELD referred to here is not the small, round shield we normally think of, but rather a much larger oblong shaped shield. I’m sure you have seen movies depicting battles in Medieval times, where one army would fire thousands of flaming arrows into the air at one time and the soldiers in the other army would kneel behind their large shield to form a “wall of protection” from the incoming flaming arrows.

THAT’S WHAT FAITH IN GOD IS TO THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER. Satan is always firing “flaming arrows” to make us question our salvation…..and question our beliefs……and question our worthiness. But when we put all our FAITH in GOD’S PROMISES, that FAITH shields us from all of Satan’s flaming arrows.
5. Our fifth weapon of defense is the **HELMET of SALVATION**.

READ-----VERSE 17a  “Take the helmet of salvation.”

THE HELMET was vitally important to the Roman Soldiers just as it is with our soldiers today. Of course the HELMET protects the head, more specifically the BRAIN. Regardless of how well the rest of the soldier was, a blow to the brain could render the soldier ineffective for battle or even kill him.

OUR MIND is the very first target Satan aims at when he attacks. Satan knows if he can mess with our mind, mess with our thinking, we become very vulnerable.

OUR MINDS are under constant assault! The devil tries to get us to think about money……think about material things……think about sex ……think about pleasure……think about the things of this world.

HOW DO I PUT ON THE HELMET OF SALVATION? Paul tells us in Colossians 3:1,2  “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your MINDS ON THINGS ABOVE, not on earthly things.”

These are our FIVE WEAPONS of “defense.”

(B) Now Paul tells us about two weapons of OFFENSE.

1. Our first weapon of offense is the **SWORD of the SPIRIT**, which is the **WORD of GOD**. We see this in the latter part of verse 17.

THE SWORD used by the Roman Soldiers in battle was usually a short sword rather than the giant “Excalibur” type of sword. The reason is obvious. A soldier can swing a short sword with “lightning swiftness.” He couldn’t do that with a giant sword.

I believe that’s the idea here about “THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.” We need to be well-versed enough in the word of God, that we can swiftly defend ourselves against Satan’s lies and at the same time go on the offensive and put Satan on his heels.

Jesus demonstrates this for us in His own temptation in the wilderness.

Satan tempted Jesus to turn the “stones into bread.” With “lightning swiftness” Jesus responded: “It is written (there’s the sword of God’s word.) …….”It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Then Satan tempted Jesus to “jump from the pinnacle of the temple.” Immediately, Jesus drew His “sword of God’s word,” “It is also written: Do not put the LORD your GOD to the test.”
Satan tempted him a third time to “bow down before him and he would give him the world.” Once again with “lightning swiftness” Jesus drew the sword of God’s word and said, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written, “Worship the LORD your GOD, and serve Him only.”

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS don’t ever underestimate the power of reading, studying and memorizing the word of God. When you and I become well-versed in the word of God we WIELD THE LIGHTNING SWIFT SWORD AGAINST THE DEVIL.

2. Our second weapon of offense is PRAYER.

READ----Verse 18

COMMUNICATION with the COMMANDER has always been extremely important in war. That was true for the ROMAN SOLDIERS in Paul’s time. And it is true for OUR AMERICAN SOLDIERS TODAY.

What does it mean to “PRAY IN THE SPIRIT?” Some people believe that means “getting all worked up emotionally and screaming and hollering and rolling on the floor and speaking in unknown tongues.” That’s not what it means to “pray in the Spirit.”

To “pray in the Spirit” means that through PRAYER we seek to align our lives with the will of GOD. To “pray in the Spirit” means to pray “Not my will but YOURS’ be done.”

And notice Paul says “always”…..”ALWAYS” keep on praying! If you or I “neglect” our prayer life that virtually assures our defeat in spiritual battle. Prayerlessness makes us extremely vulnerable to Satan’s attacks.

Also notice we also have a responsibility to ALWAYS PRAY FOR ALL THE SAINTS. You and I have a responsibility to pray for our fellow soldiers.

After studying this wonderful passage of scripture this morning is there any doubt that God has provided us with everything we could possibly need for victory in battle?
CONCLUSION

During the Korean War as enemy forces advanced, **Baker Company** was **cut off from the rest of their unit**. For several hours no word was heard, even though headquarters repeatedly tried to communicate with the missing troops.

Finally a faint signal was received. Straining to hear, the corpsman asked, *"Baker Company, do you read me?"* "This is Baker Company," came the reply. *"What is your situation?"* asked the corpsman. *"The enemy is to the east of us, the enemy is to the west of us, the enemy is to the north of us, the enemy is to the south of us."*

Then after a brief pause, **the sergeant from Baker Company** said with determination, *"The enemy is not going to get away from us now!"* Although **surrounded** and **outnumbered**, he was **thinking of victory**, not defeat.

There's victory for you over sin and its shame:
Look only to Jesus, there's power in His name.
The devil can't harm you nor cause you to sin;
By trusting the Savior the victory you'll win. --anonymous

**Christian Soldiers, don't ever forget Satan's ploys are no match for the Savior's P-O-W-E-R!!**

*“Put on the FULL ARMOR OF GOD!”*

Lord Jesus, help us to stand firm in the victory You've won for us through Your death on the cross and Your resurrection from the grave. --DJD

*There's victory o'er Satan and freedom from shame;
Look only to Jesus, there's power in His name.
The devil can't harm you nor cause you to sin;
When you trust the Savior, the victory you'll win. --Anon.*