

**SERMON: To The Glory of God's Grace -
Walking with Jesus and Wearing God's Armor**

GOOD Morning OIC & Welcome to Father's House

Today, we will continue in the Book of Ephesians, the Letter inspired by Holy Spirit and written by the Apostle Paul. In my last Message we saw how Paul gave instructions to the Ephesians, therefore, to all Christians, for living the Christian Life “To The Glory of God's Grace- Walking with Jesus in Sweet Submission and with Power.” This week I titled the Message “To The Glory of God's Grace - Walking with Jesus and Wearing God's Armor.” Note: I repeat the Main Theme in Ephesians of Encouragement in each Message title: To The Glory of God's Grace.

Reading (**Ephesians 6.13**) *Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.* Let us look at the close of my last message to see what the “**Therefore**” points to. After I showed the severity of Christians pretending they need not consider Satan in their walk with Jesus by **Takeaway #2, I closed with saying that the Devil cannot take away the sweetness of a Close Walk of obedience with Jesus:**

TAKEAWAY #2 (September 22nd)

Pretending that the Apostle Peter's warning to 1st Century Christians is not also for us is like jogging on a path with Grizzly Bears, without protection. Our daughter carries mace, we have the Sword of the Spirit. Grizzly Bears, like roaring lions, are bigger and stronger than we are. *Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.* But, we have no fear for we walk close to Jesus the Lord of Heaven and Earth. When Jesus returns to earth he will send an angel, not as omnipotent as Himself, to bind Satan for 1000 years. Unlike God, Satan is not infinite. The more Christians fight him, they occupy his limited attention regardless of his cunning, and thus distract him from many sinners that he thinks he has securely in his grasp! The Devil cannot take away the Sweetness of a Close Walk of Obedience with Jesus: Yes, submission to God is sweet, whether in child-raising, in business, clearly fighting the Devil, or in being God's missionary wherever you are. Regardless, we can have God's peace, to the Glory of His Grace!

Now, moving onward. I made it clear that the *Therefore* means that God requires Christians to fight against Satan, and his forces of evil in the heavenly *realms*. Paul now goes into the powerful armor which God provides to His obedient soldiers to guarantee the promised Victory in **(Romans 8.37)**. *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* Paul is not presenting God's Armor as an optional spiritual protection. Its necessity is stated here in **(Ephesians 6.13)***so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

The first piece of God's Armor: **14** *Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH,...* Possibly the Holy Spirit had Paul put this piece of armor first because it protects a Roman soldier's weakest places: the lower abdomen and below, or his loins, or in the original Greek, **ὀσφύς (osphys)**. The Roman Soldier on the screen makes it clear that the protection of his lower abdomen or loins is held by his waist. Paul's teaching on the Body of Christ being all connected and needed includes in **(1 Corinthians 12.22-23)** **22** *On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;* **23** *and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow **more abundant honor**, and our less presentable members become much more presentable,* In warfare, **more abundant honor**, means **more careful protection**. I hear that professional boxing is still popular in Japan and Asia. It was always a foul to punch below the belt or waist. Life and death warfare as the Romans fought had no rules, nor does spiritual warfare against the Devil. He fights "dirty." He picks the weakest most vulnerable thing in your life..and shoots flaming arrows at it. **The Holy Spirit put this first because you need to be praying and memorizing Bible verse TRUTH into the weakest part of your Christian life.** **NOTE: I handed out the Bullets for Your Six Gun Against Satan today in English and Japanese. Please memorize at least a few bullets to shoot with!** The Devil is not stupid. He knows our weaknesses. Be prepared to fight.

(Ephesians 6.14b) *and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Jesus is our *righteousness*. I like to think of His Righteous Presence protecting our hearts, and the demons fleeing from it. Of course, praying it on is often easier than living righteously daily; but, the armor is intended to not only defend against your Enemy, but also to help you walk in righteousness, closer to Jesus.

(Ephesians 6.15) *and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;* Someone once said "That the best defense is a good offense." *THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;* requires memorizing some Bible verses telling the Gospel to sinners, thus your feet are

ready to move forward. Thus this *foot* armor makes the Christian soldier ready to take the offense against the Devil by bringing a sinner closer to the Lord Jesus as in **(1 Peter 3.15)** *but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;* Some Christians will also have the gift to **“not wait to be asked”** *to give an account for the hope that is in them!* That gifting is to know that Holy Spirit is prompting you to speak up about Jesus. In both cases, only feet shod or wearing spiritual shoes with Gospel Bible verses can move forward on the Battlefield. **This is the end purpose of all our armor, all our warfare, as Jesus said in (Luke 19.10) For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” We are His Ambassadors doing as He did.**

TAKEAWAY #1

We are Jesus’ Ambassadors doing as He did, seeking and saving that which was lost. Our personal Warfare against Satan and his messengers, and praying on God's Armor for the ensuing battle, is for that end purpose.

Of course, all good things we receive comes because of Christ's Cross, from God the Father and through Jesus. All the armor is really Jesus. Paul quoted some of the pieces of armor from the Prophet Isaiah who prophesied the “New Branch from Jesse” in Isaiah Chapter 11. This branch is Jesus the Messiah, the Christ: *HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH,* from **(Isaiah 11.5)** ; and *HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,* from **(Isaiah 59.17)** when the LORD put on “His Holy Armor” and intervened to rescue His Chosen people when their nation was very unjust to the righteous in it; and *having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE* from **(Isaiah 52.7):** *How lovely on the mountains, Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace, And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”* **When a soldier in God's Army shares the Gospel with a sinner, he is agreeing with Heaven Above and telling Satan Below: “Jesus, our God Reigns!”**

(Ephesians 6.16) *in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* A shield is primarily a defensive piece of armor. Paul describes how we need to be *taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* The Apostle John also wrote this in **(1 John 4.4)** *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*

You may say, but Pastor Bruce, my faith is so small. How can it defeat the Devil? Yes, for the Bible tells us in **(Romans 12.3)** *For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a **measure of faith**.* This applies to presuming either a “mission” or a “gifting” that Jesus has not made clear to you. **Pastor's Answer:** But since we don't choose to be in spiritual warfare, we have no choice but *to fight*. “Use what you have. God will amaze you when you do!” Like human muscles, an athlete finds that the more he uses it, the more it grows. Remember, only Christians afraid to use their faith, little or great, are in real danger. God promises, because He responds to even the littlest faith, *this is **the victory that has overcome the world—our faith***. It has, and God intends it to continue to, *overcome **the world***.

But also Pastor's Second Answer to: “ my faith is so small. How can it defeat the Devil?”

Join with fellow Warriors in the battle adding your “little faiths” together to the Glory of God's Grace. That concept or idea led Rome to conquer the world!

The Roman Army had an almost unbeatable formation against opposing armies. It was called *the phalanx*. Soldiers stood closely side by side, and a soldier behind held a shield over the head of the soldier ahead of him. The goal was to deflect arrows so hand to hand combat would determine the battle. The Romans excelled in hand to hand combat. Teamwork in the Church will deflect *the flaming arrows of the evil one*. *The phalanx of shields of Faith* applies to Christians in a Local Church who can work closely as teams in service for Jesus. Yes, our individual armor and shield is needed, but, God's Army with faith overlapping faith, is the Body of Christ at its best!

(Ephesians 6.17a) **17** And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION. I am often praying for Jesus' Sheep who seemed to have lost their HELMET OF SALVATION, THEIR *Blessed Assurance*. As in the hymn by Fanny Crosby: **“Blessed assurance Jesus is mine! Oh what a foretaste of Glory Divine.”** Whatever your taste of God's Presence, or Glory Divine you had, when you received Jesus by faith, there was something deep inside you, beyond just the intellectual knowledge. **You knew you met the Lord Jesus.** That deep inside you **knowing** is a taste of God's Glory. There may have been more of an experiential foretaste **of Glory Divine**, on that day you first realized that you were Born Again, or later in time. But *Blessed Assurance* speaks in God's Word in **(1 Peter 1.18-19)** **18** *knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.* You knew...that you knew! So to speak...that Jesus' blood paid it all!

Dear OIC Saints, you losing your *Blessed Assurance* is not Jesus losing you! It is not like losing a set of keys. Whatever trick the Devil played on you, he took away your joy, and then worked at taking away your confidence. Then you began to depend on your self, your failures, and your sins.; AND NOT ON JESUS! Let me ask you one question: Today, do you want to keep being a Christian? If Yes, please let God show you that He still loves you! Remember David said “*He restores my soul*” in **(Psalm 23.3)**

I also would be glad to help you if you make an appointment to visit me in the OIC Office.

TAKEAWAY#2

***Blessed Assurance* is the Helmet of Salvation. Ask God to put it on you in prayer. Holy Spirit will bring to your mind whatever is needed to have that Helmet securely in place. Many Christians play Songs for self-encouragement, and especially some that they first learned when baby Christians. Loosing *Blessed Assurance* does not mean that Jesus lost you!**

(Ephesians 6.17b): *and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* When our sinless, Spirit Anointed and Holy Lord Jesus confronted Satan, it was the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit that was His primary weapon in the Battle. Jesus said to Satan in this confrontation in **(Matthew 4):** **verse 4** *But He answered and said, “It is written”;* **verse 7** *“On the other hand, it is written,”* **verse 10** *“Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’”* Thus Jesus reminded Satan that the eternal Word of God is Universal and unmovable by all! Note that Jesus also used human words of argument in **verse 7** when He said **“On the other hand.”** The Sword is the Word of God, not your words. But do not be afraid to be free as you argue and resist the Devil as a human being with Christ within you. Remember, in the confrontation you are a **Child** and soon to be a **Son of God**, he is not. You have the supremely upper hand, dear saints!

(Ephesians 6.18) *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.* Paul is reminding the Christians how we all need prayer by other Believers for our most victorious Christian Living.

“in the Spirit”.... There are various gifts concerning Holy Spirit's Presence and experiences in Him. Regardless, **“in the Spirit”** implies for all Christians the unction that God adds to prayers beyond just prayers from our mind. As Paul once said in **(Romans 8.26)** *In the same way the*

*Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us {and for those we pray for} with **groanings** too deep for words;*

***for all the saints....** Paul is making our responsibility for each other against Satan and his messengers a high priority in our life in the Body of Christ. This fits with God's emphasis on the Church, here in the Letter to the Ephesians. **(Ephesians 1.22-23)** *22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the Church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* This verse in Chapter One of Ephesians declares the great encouragement of Jesus who was raised from the dead by God and placed above all powers in the spiritual realm and over the Church, His Body. Jesus' position as *head over all things to the church*, is a title of *action* over, and with, the Church to be its Shepherd and source for its Power against evil. And more details on prayer by parts of the Body of Christ are in Paul's Letter to the Corinthians in **(1 Corinthians 12.26)**: *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.* So Paul is requesting prayers in the Church in the context of spiritual warfare, so to *be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints*, as some of the saints may be in a fierce position of spiritual warfare.*

A NOTE on “and having done everything, to stand firm” in **(Ephesians 6.13)**. This sounds discouraging! You may ask: Pastor Bruce, after *having done everything*, the Devil is still battling me fiercely? This Armor of God was not enough against the Devil? Pastor's answer: Ultimately, there are two Bible verses bringing out the answer for this, in the Older and Newer Testaments.

First, the Older Testament verse was concerning Pharaoh's Army, closing in on the Israelites fleeing from Egypt, in: **(Exodus 14.10-14)** *10 As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. 11 Then they said to Moses, “Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” 13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! **Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. 14 The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.**”*

Second, the New Testament Confidence builder by the Apostle John in **(1 John 4.4)** *You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.* Our biggest confidence during all tests and trials on earth in our Pilgrim walk to Glory, is knowing *greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.* Jesus, whose Spirit is inside us, is greater than Satan, who is in the world. This helps us in spiritual warfare. But we must remember the clear context of John's writing here was against heretical teachers that tried to enter the church. It is obvious that the true Christians had confronted these people, the Devils Children, to reject the false teaching. In Truth, heretical teaching can harm the Bride of Christ much more than Satan can. But personal warfare against Satan *feels* more threatening to an individual Believer than *false teaching* usually does! The Evil One's presence should, after all, feel bad to any Holy Child of God. Yet, this verse in **1 John** clearly gives us our confidence with **authority** when we must personally war against Satan. When we confront him, we do so as Christ's Ambassadors with God's power inside us. But **(1 John 4.4)** does not mean we do not have to fight the Devil personally.

Some Christians use what the Lord told Moses to say to Israel to conclude that we don't have to personally fight the Devil. We should just trust and know **(Exodus 14.14)** *The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.* These Christians forget that Pharaoh was the personal Devil to Moses! Moses had confronted Pharaoh personally 10 times, with a Plague of God's Anger after each confrontation, the tenth being the Death of the First Born in all of Egypt. There was nothing *being still* at all in Moses's obedience to the Lord in order to get to the Red Sea. So after many confrontations, at the Red Sea, God tells His appointed Leader, Moses, in advance that He would drown Pharaoh's Army in the Red Sea. Then, Moses, after hearing the Word of the Lord, controls the peoples' fears with his two commands to the them: **(Exodus 14.13)** *Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.* And, **(Exodus 14.14)** *The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.*

Pastor Bruce, you may ask, do you mean that **(Exodus 14.14)** cannot help me to fight the Devil? During times of trials and tests **without a personal attack by the Devil**, which is often, this is a verse to teach us to TRUST JESUS. He is fighting for us more than we realize, intervening and overruling in our lives, and with intercessory prayers for us Believers. I also have found singing with confidence a hymn, like *Lead On O King Eternal*, or even just one verse from it, keeps me walking close to Jesus in Victory. Such as verse #3....*Your Cross is lifted over us; We journey in its light: The crown awaits the conquest; Lead on, O God of might.* But, unlike Pharaoh's Army, the

Devil and his messengers, won't be drowned forever until Jesus' Return in the clouds to take us Home!!!

But, the Sixth Chapter of Ephesians, the Handbook for War for Soldiers of Christ, makes it clear that God is teaching us how to fight, when we have personal attacks by the Devil. God does not waste His Time teaching Christians things in the Bible that they do not need to know! **Only after praying on the Whole Armor of God and *fighting the Good Fight*, do we depend on (Exodus 14.14). Christians who put (Exodus 14.14) “The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent,” first, before “and having done everything “ have the Battle Plan backwards.** But, the time to wait in silence is only after a vigorous fight. So that is what Paul means when he says in (Ephesians 6.13)“*and having done everything, to stand firm.*” **Jesus always causes his obedient soldiers to stand firm. You may have to endure more torment by the Evil One before Jesus decides to cause the Devil to flee from you. This is another application of (James 4.7) Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.** Obedient soldiers for Jesus have submitted to pray on God's Armor and fight the Devil. They have *Submitted to God* in Paul's teaching to the Ephesians and all Christians for all time until Jesus returns to Earth.

(Ephesians 6.19-20) and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

The Apostle Paul, with all his Holy Spirit gifts and talents, and His close walk with Jesus, as Jesus had appeared to him from time to time, knew that: *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;* as he wrote in **(2 Corinthians 4.7).** So he thought that it was not strange to request prayers from any Christian. **His calling was focused on the Holy Spirit gift of preaching or proclaiming the Gospel out of his mouth and to speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Paul knew that sensitivity to Holy Spirit n both where, when and what to say, required prayer support.**

Next (Ephesians 6.21-22) 21 *But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.* This shows how Paul avoids sharing his personal life in his inspired Letters, except real battles against men and devils in spreading the Gospel. Here he sends , *Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord* to Ephesus.

Paul's Greetings and Closing of his letters was the standard format of the 1st Century. But his eloquence and inspiration are obvious. After many calls to join God's War against Satan, he closes

with **(Ephesians 6.23-24/KJ21)** *23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.*

Let Us Pray...

REFERENCES

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