

Take Your Stand
The Word of God is Our “Go To” Weapon
Ephesians 6:10-18

March 9, 2014

Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: We are coming to an end in looking at this rich passage in Ephesians 6:10-18. We have learned some rich theology as well as practical application for the spiritual battles that we face. First, we overviewed this passage and simply said that as Christians, we are in a battle. We are in a battle for our convictions, our culture, our children, and our churches. As a result, we are in a battle for our families and our future. We are called to take our stand in this battle. Actually, there are 3 main imperatives in this text: Be strengthened by the LORD, Put on the full armor of God, and stand.

Having given these three imperatives, Paul underscored 7 spiritual weapons that we should avail ourselves to as we carry out these imperatives. We are studying now each of these resources. To this point we have said that truth is the under armor. It is not the most important piece (they are all of equal importance), but it is the first piece. That is, it is the piece that serves as the undergirding of all the other pieces. Then, there is righteousness—the protector of the heart. Then, we looked at the shoes of the Gospel of peace and said that this signifies our readiness to be in the battle by sharing the Gospel. Next in the list is the resource of faith, and we saw that it is the resource that carries with it a wonderful promise. Then, there is the helmet of salvation. We learned that this is not so much the call to salvation, but the assurance of salvation. We only have two lessons left—one on the Word of God and one on prayer.

Text:¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength.¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil.¹² For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens.¹³ This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.¹⁴ Stand, therefore,

with truth like a belt around your waist,
righteousness like armor on your chest,
¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness
for the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In every situation take the shield of faith,
and with it you will be able to extinguish
all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is God’s word.

¹⁸ Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Introduction: As you know, I have purposefully been careful to make sure in this series that we did not elevate one of these resources above the other. I have been tempted almost every week since the start. When I was preparing to speak on truth, I was tempted. I ended up saying this:

Truth may not be the most important piece, because all of the pieces are of equal importance. However, truth must be the first piece. Without accepting truth, we cannot know righteousness. Without being armed with truth, how can we be ready to share the gospel? Without truth, what good is faith? Without accepting the Gospel as truth, we cannot be saved. In that sense, truth, like the belt of the soldier, is the under armor.

Almost every week, my dilemma has been the same and yet I understand the principle that every resource is necessary. After all, we are to put on the “full armor of God.” My temptation this week is equally strong, so I want to offer something of an analogy.

We all have our “go to” things and/or places. For example, baseball season is upon us. I have heard pitchers speak of their “out” pitch. They have different kinds of pitches—fastball, curveball, slider, knuckle-ball. For those of you who don’t know what I’m talking about, just understand that this refers to different ways that the pitcher can make the ball move. The pitcher has all of these pitches, but he has his “out” pitch. When he needs most desperately to get a batter out, he goes to this pitch.

Golfers have their favorite club. When all else is going wrong, the golfer pulls out his “go to” club. Fishermen have their “honey” holes. They fish different places, but when they can’t catch fish anywhere else, they have their “go to” hole.

Though I am less of an expert in this, I suppose women have their “go to” store. How am I doing? Am I making sense to every group here? The list goes on and on: “go to” restaurants, vacation places, customers.

Though every piece of the armor is important, I get the sense in this text that the sword of the spirit—that is the Word of God—is our “go to” resource. Tony Evans described it this way: “When the devil is up on you.” (Has the devil ever been up on you?) There is a sense in which we are always under the attack of the evil one, but there is another sense when at times, he is “up on you.” The temptation is serious and unrelenting. The temptation is personal. These are the days that we need the Word—the sword—for the hand-to-hand combat that we have to do just to survive.

Textually, this can be seen with the use of the word for sword. The word here is a word that specifically implies a short-handled dagger, used in hand-to-hand, one-on-one combat.

Here’s what I want you to hear this morning. You will not survive this spiritual battle without the “full armor of God.” If you do not employ the full armor of God, you are going to be vulnerable somewhere. But, these are by and large defensive weapons. The one exception is when we talked about going on the offensive with the sharing of the Gospel, but in context this is even offense for defensive purposes. This changes with the sword of the spirit. This is our offensive weapon. In this context, even though all resources are of equal importance, the Word of God is our “Go To” Weapon.

With that in mind, I want to take you to several places of Scripture today and see several things.

The Power of the Word of God

We see the power of the Word of God by examining the Word itself. We only have time to mention these things without much elaboration, but the point is to show you (or to remind you) the variety of ways that the Bible is powerful. The Word of God is powerful because...

God is the author

- Proverbs 30:5-6—Every word of God is pure;
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
⁶Don't add to His words,
or He will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.
- 2 Peter 1:20-21--First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from one's own interpretation,²¹ because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Leads Unbelievers to Salvation

- Romans 10:17—So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.
- Isaiah 55:11—So My word that comes from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and will prosper in what I send it to do.

Leads to Conviction in the Life of the Believer

- Hebrews 4:12—For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

Gives Instructions for Life

- Psalm 19:7-11—The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life;
the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy,
making the inexperienced wise.
⁸The precepts of the LORD are right,
making the heart glad;
the command of the LORD is radiant,
making the eyes light up.
⁹The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are reliable
and altogether righteous.
¹⁰They are more desirable than gold—
than an abundance of pure gold;
and sweeter than honey,
which comes from the honeycomb.
¹¹In addition, Your servant is warned by them;
there is great reward in keeping them

- 2 Timothy 3:14-17—But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you,¹⁵ and you know that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness,¹⁷ so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

A Parable about the Word of God (Mark4:3-9, 13-20)

Jesus spoke a parable about the way that we hear the word of God.

“Listen! Consider the sower who went out to sow.⁴ As he sowed, this occurred: Some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn’t have much soil, and it sprang up right away, since it didn’t have deep soil.⁶ When the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it didn’t have a root, it withered.⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it, and it didn’t produce a crop.⁸ Still others fell on good ground and produced a crop that increased 30, 60, and 100 times what was sown.”⁹ Then He said, “Anyone who has ears to hear should listen!”

¹³ Then He said to them: “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any of the parables?¹⁴ The sower sows the word.¹⁵ These are the ones along the path where the word is sown: when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them.¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, immediately they receive it with joy.¹⁷ But they have no root in themselves; they are short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately stumble.¹⁸ Others are sown among thorns; these are the ones who hear the word,¹⁹ but the worries of this age, the seduction of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.²⁰ But the ones sown on good ground are those who hear the word, welcome it, and produce a crop: 30, 60, and 100 times what was sown.”

Usually, this parable is presented in the context of evangelism, but I am convinced that it is not a parable about evangelism. If so, then we would have an issue with the assurance of salvation, because the word was received but then rejected. I then believe that this is a parable about how we hear the Word of God. Some hear the word of God and reject it. Others have joy in hearing it, but then reject it. For others, the worries of the world become larger than the Word. But there is that fourth heart—the surrendered heart. There is only one way to hear the Word—with a surrendered heart

A Picture of the Use of the Word of God (Matthew 4:1-11)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.² After He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was hungry.³ Then the tempter approached Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ But He answered, “It is written:

Man must not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes
from the mouth of God.”

⁵ Then the Devil took Him to the holy city, had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,⁶ and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

He will give His angels orders concerning you,
and they will support you with their hands
so that you will not strike
your foot against a stone.”

⁷ Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God.”

⁸ Again, the Devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ And he said to Him, “I will give You all these things if You will fall down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written:

Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only Him.”

¹¹ Then the Devil left Him, and immediately angels came and began to serve Him.

Three times Jesus is tempted, and three times Jesus used the word of God to resist the temptation. If this was Jesus' plan, don't you think that it ought to be our plan?

Principles about the Word of God (James 1:22-25)

I want to close with one last Scripture passage.

But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.²³ Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror.²⁴ For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.²⁵ But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but one who does good works—this person will be blessed in what he does.

We must...

Read the Word.

Understand the Word.

Obey the Word.

The time to decide to obey the Word is before you read and understand it. There are two things I really want to know. Does God have a word about a matter and what is it?