

Armed with the Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17

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Introduction:

Today we continue on with our study of the Christian armour that the Lord calls us to protect ourselves with in Ephesians 6.

- This armour is necessary because as long as we are in this world,
 - Satan and all who are in league with him will be mustering all their craftiness and strength to destroy us spiritually.
 - Satan does not know who are true believers within the church, but we are told that he goes about seeking whom he may devour...
 - He is constantly looking for opportunities to make churches and individuals fall...
 - And because there are false sons and daughters in the church,
 - his labours are often rewarded with success...
 - Even among Jesus' disciples, there was a Judas who became his minion...
 - and among the churches that were begun during the days of the apostles...
 - there were all sorts of heresies and corruptions that spread into them until there were some that were in danger of losing their lamp-stands.
 - If you have been a Christian for very long,
 - You have seen those who started out with a good profession that are now no longer walking with the Lord...
 - And you have seen churches that once faithfully preached the word of God that are now full of unbelief and corruption.
 - The battle is not an imaginary one!
 - It is real and the dangers are real too!
 - Now I don't mean to say that true believers cannot attain to the full assurance of salvation... they can...
 - But one of the main differences in a true believer is that the true believer understands that he can only stand in the strength of the Lord...
 - He realises that without the armour that God has appointed for him to wear, he will certainly fall.
 - Unlike the false disciple who does often fall away in the evil day,
 - the true disciple hears and heeds the Lord's warnings and meets the enemy with his armour on.

- Nevertheless, this is not to say that true believers may also fall temporarily and bring much harm to themselves and to others.
 - For this reason,
 - in learning about the armour of God,
 - those who love the Lord should be all the more motivated to be sure they are wearing it so that they will be prepared in the day of evil.

So far, we have looked at the first four pieces of this armour.

- The first of these was the belt of truth or sincerity...
- The second was the breastplate of righteousness or blamelessness...
- The third was the gospel of peace—the good news that we have peace with God through Christ...
- And the fourth was the shield of faith with which we quench the fiery darts of Satan.

The fifth piece of armour, which we will consider today, is the helmet of salvation.

- In examining it, we will follow the pattern we have used before...
 - First, we will look at what the helmet of salvation is.
 - Second, at how this helmet will help you in the evil day.
 - And third, at what you need to do to maintain this helmet.

I. What is the helmet of salvation?

- Well you all know what a helmet is...
 - For the Romans it was made of very heavy leather or of metal, and of course was used to protect the head.
 - Nothing more needs to be said about that...

A. But what is the salvation that is spoken of here?

1. Well generally, salvation simply speaks of rescue or deliverance...
 - either from something that has already got you or from something that is only threatening you...
 - You can be saved from fire if you are rescued from a burning house...
 - But you can also be saved from fire if someone puts out the fire before you even see it.
 - Likewise, in war,
 - you can be rescued from the enemy after he has captured you,
 - or you can be saved from him if he is prevented from ever capturing you to start with.
2. God's salvation incorporates both aspects...

- a. On the one hand, we are all by natural generation sinners who are in bondage to sin and death, riddled with damnable guilt...
 - And Jesus Christ came into the world to rescue sinners from this estate...
 - As soon as you turn to Him for salvation, He rescues you from the clutches of sin and from the condemnation of curse...
 - He has authority to do this because He had paid for sin on the cross...
 - And He has the power to do this by the working of the Holy Spirit.

- b. But on the other hand, He saves us from what would come upon us in the future but for His intervention...
 - He delivers us from Hell so that we never have to go there...
 - And He delivers us from the many things that Satan would do to us for all eternity if he could.
 - He will cast him into the Lake of Fire so that he can never disturb us again.

- c. In this you see that for the believer there is a past deliverance so that the believer can say,
 - “The Lord has saved me!”

 - And there is a future deliverance so that the believer can say,
 - “I know that I shall be saved.”

- 3. Now I want you to consider the fullness of this salvation—
 - Just look at some of the things that the Lord promises to save His people from:
 - a. First, He promises to save us from this body of death—
 - “This body of death” refers to the corruption that is still in us when we try to do what is good and find that evil is present with us...

 - This is a tremendous thing!
 - Just imagine it—you will be completely free of **all** corruption—
 - isn’t that absolutely amazing to think about!
 - The day is coming when there will no longer be one corrupt word that will come out of your mouth—
 - not even in the tone!
 - nor one neglected duty...
 - nor one corrupt thought from your heart!
 - All will be pure and holy before the Lord and you will live in the company of others who are just the same.

- b. Secondly, He promises to save you from condemnation...
 - If you are in Christ, He already has!
 - Even though you have enough sin in your very being to condemn you to the Lake of Fire with Satan forever,
 - in Christ every bit of your sin is fully atoned.
 - If you are trusting in Him, the Lord has accepted His suffering in your place as if you have already spent eternity in Hell...
 - and not only that, but Christ's obedience is also imputed to you so that it is as if you had always perfectly served God.
 - You who are worthy to spend eternity in Hell are completely forgiven and declared righteous in God's sight!
 - What a marvellous salvation!
- c. Thirdly, He promises to save you from all of your enemies.
 - Satan is the chief of these, but with him are all others who would lead you away from the Lord...
 - You are helpless against these enemies,
 - but already the Lord has rescued you from their ability to succeed in drawing you away from Him...
 - And eventually, He will completely deliver you from them so that they can no longer even tempt you...
- d. Fourthly, He promises to save you from the curse...
 - From the curse that is fallen on this world because of our sin and that brings us disease and suffering and death...
 - from shortages and disasters and thornes...
 - Already (if you belong to Him in faith) He has removed the stinger from all of these so that they can no longer hurt you...
 - He has, as it were, taken the evil out of them...
 - And His promise is that you will be completely delivered in time so that none of these will ever again trouble you...
 - Mortality will be swallowed up by life.
 - That is salvation from God's curse.
- e. Fifthly, He promises to save all of His people...
 - Every single one that He has chosen will in time come to Him... and be brought at last into the fullness of this salvation...
 - These will be your companions forever and ever...
 - Even though you see the church small and despised in our land...
 - Even though you see it riddled with heresy and division...

- It will not always be so—
 - It is only a matter of time until we are with “the spirits of just men made perfect...”
 - and not much longer again till we are with them in the kingdom of glory where righteousness dwells.
 - The work of evangelism may seem slow and hard,
 - but the Lord promises to deliver all those that are His.
 - He is delivering them and He will deliver them—every one.
- f. Sixthly, He promises to deliver you from all ignorance and misunderstanding of Himself...
- At your conversion, you were radically changed to love Him, but you still do not yet love Him as you should—
 - nor do you see His beauty and glory.
 - Your delight in Him is not yet nearly so full and complete as it will be...
 - But His promise is that you will see His glory!
 - You will see Him as He is!
 - You will be filled with such joy and delight in His company as to fully entertain you forever and ever!
- g. We could break into a thousand details...
- you will be saved from that pain in your leg...
 - you will be saved from that nagging cough...
 - you will be saved from that selfishness...
 - you will be saved from the rejection that you sometimes feel from loved ones...
 - you will be saved from your confusion...
 - the list goes on and on!

TRANS> You see how great the Lord’s salvation is!

B. But how is it that this salvation is compared to armour? to a helmet?

1. How do you “put on” salvation as a defensive weapon?

- It is not so much a piece of armour as it is the Lord coming to rescue us.
- It is obvious that we must call on Him to save us from our enemies.
 - This is what Paul tells us to do in verse 18...
 - But how do you put salvation on as armour?

2. It seems clear that the helmet of salvation refers to the *hope* of salvation.
 - In 1 Thessalonians 5:8,
 - Paul speaks of the helmet believers are to put on as “the hope of salvation,” so it is safe to assume that this is what is implied here.
 - Now the “hope of salvation” is something you can go into battle with for protection in the evil day.
 - If you are armed with the sure hope that God will deliver you in all the ways He has promised, in all the ways I already spoke about...
 - it will do much in helping you to stand when the enemy assaults you.

TRANS> So let us now turn to consider how the hope of salvation can help you...

II. How does this helmet help you in the evil day?

A. First of all, it encourages you to stay the course when the way is difficult.

1. Let me illustrate:

- If you are a student and you enter your programme...
 - Say you are going to study to be an accountant.
 - But then you begin your studies and you find them very hard...
 - What is it that will keep you going?
 - The only thing that will keep you going is the assurance that all the trouble of will be worth it when you reach your goal...
 - and also that you will in fact be able to reach your goal if you stay the course.
 - You will have to look at how badly you really want to be accountant to decide if it is worth it to go on.
2. You can see how this applies to your trek to heaven.
 - a. If you are in Christ, the Lord has promised you that if you continue in His grace, you will not be disappointed...
 - The day will come when you will inherit the promise and your hope will be realised.
 - You will be like Christ, you will see the glory of God, you will be completely free of the curse, you will be in the company of glorified saints, you will be entirely free of sin in thought, word, and deed!
 - How beautiful and how glorious!
 - b. And as long as you keep on your helmet—this hope of salvation—

- There will be no question in your mind as to whether it is worth it to go on—even when the way is hard!
 - When Jacob was required to work for seven years for Rachael,
 - we are told that it seemed like a very short time to him because of his love for her!
 - He believed it to be very worthwhile.
 - If you go into battle with a clear perspective of the hope of salvation,
 - you will be motivated to press on through every difficulty and it will seem small to you...
- c. I am convinced that we don't meditate on the glory of heaven enough!
 - This is a glory that we do not know by nature—it is a glory that must be revealed to us.
 - 1 Cor 2:9-10: “As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.”
 - We spend our days discouraged because we do not look beyond what we can see as worms crawling around on the earth
 - but the Lord calls us to lift up our eyes and see what He has prepared for us—to consider our glorious hope!

B. Let's look at some specific ways this applies when you are in the battle...

1. Suppose it is temptation you are struggling with...

- a. Maybe you see your neighbour who is not following God,
 - and things are going really well for him.
 - He seems to have no trials or troubles and he is prospering in this world.
 - You are struggling to pay the bills,
 - but he is trying to figure out what to do with all of his wealth.
 - As in Psalm 73, you are tempted to envy him and to wonder what use it is to serve God.
 - That's the worm's perspective!
 - But if you have your helmet of salvation on, how will you be able to envy him?
 - If you have clearly before you the fact that you shall see the glory of God—that you will inherit everlasting life in the kingdom of glory—
 - you have nothing left to envy.
 - You can then sing with the psalmist:

- “Whom have I in heaven but you and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!”
- b. This will have the same effect on you when a specific temptation comes—
- Say, the temptation to gossip about Betty because she tried to cheat you...
 - You know how these temptations come...
 - You are going along minding your own business and you happen upon a conversation that catches your ear...
 - It is a conversation about Betty and what a difficult person she is...
 - Temptation comes flooding into your soul!
 - Everything in you wants to join in the conversation and let everyone know what Betty did to you!
 - But if you have the helmet of salvation on,
 - you are mindful that the Lord is bringing you to something far better than a life of gossip...
 - You are mindful that the Lord is able to deal with Betty...to chasten her or whatever needs to be done.
 - You see the beauty of the hope of glory and you want no part of sinful gossip...
 - if you have your helmet on!

TRANS> So that’s how the helmet helps with temptations...

2. Suppose it is just plain weariness under trials and persecution that you are struggling with...
- a. Say you are struggling because of rejection—
- You have been trying to witness of your hope to your parents, to your neighbours, and to people at work...
 - but no one has responded in a positive way...
 - And not only that, but some of these people are starting to speak evil of you—
 - they are starting to criticise you because of your faith.
 - And they are distorting what you believe.
 - Well, what does Jesus say about that?
 - He says:
 - Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- If you are persecuted for righteousness sake,
 - it is something to rejoice in because it shows that you are among the righteous...
 - and it reminds you that even as Christ was rejected and rewarded, so you will be rewarded.
 - As Augustine said,
 - Whatever they take from your name will be added to your crown.

- b. Paul actually emphasises the fact that the suffering you bear now is actually working for you to bring you a greater reward...
 - Look with me for moment at how he presents this hope in 2 Cor 4...

 - He explains in 2 Cor 4:16-18 that affliction is actually delivering to you greater and greater blessings.
 - 2 Cor 4:16-18: Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

- 1) He says that even though trials are flooding in he does not lose heart...
 - and the reason is that because even though the outward man—what he has in this world—is perishing, the inward man is being renewed day by day...
 - God is actually transforming him through the trials—
 - They are actually doing something for him.
 - He has hope that his afflictions are doing him good...

- 2) And you see how he makes a comparison between the affliction and what the affliction is producing...
 - a) first, he compares the weight of the affliction with the glory...
 - He says that the affliction is only light, but the glory it produces is very very weighty (very significant)!
 - He calls it “*an exceeding and eternal weight of glory...*”
 - To fully appreciate this,
 - You need to understand that Paul’s afflictions were not light at all as afflictions go...
 - He was often rejected by men,
 - He was beaten with rods,

- He was stoned with stones,
 - He spent a lot of time in prison,
 - He was rejected by his own family,
 - He was slandered,
 - He was often rejected by other professing Christians,
 - He received the thirty-nine lashes with a scourge,
 - He was shipwrecked, he was often hungry and weary,
 - He had some sort of affliction in his flesh—probably in his eyes,
 - He was sometimes poor and in need.
- But when he compares these afflictions with the glory they are producing, he calls them “light afflictions.”
 - They are nothing compared with the glory that they are producing.

TRANS> With a perspective like that, it is not wonder that he did not lose heart!

- He went into all these afflictions with the helmet of salvation on.
- b) And besides that, he also compares the duration of his afflictions with the duration of the glory he is expecting...
- He says that the afflictions are only momentary while the glory is eternal.
 - What a helpful thing to meditate on.
 - Your trials are all going to end if you are in Christ, but the glory they produce will last forever and ever!
 - It is only a little while!
 - Your life on earth is a mere moment compared to eternity!
 - Do you have this hope?
 - Do you have this eternal perspective?
 - If you don't then get it! believe it!
 - What a difference it will make in the evil day of trials.
 - This is the difference in those who drag along in their discipleship and those who eagerly go forth!

- c) And look, Paul actually says that his affliction is the thing that is **producing** this eternal weight of glory—
 - Somehow, they are working it into him!
 - So my friends, if you are tired of what you are,
 - if you are truly tired of your sin and your lack of love for God...and lack of vision of the glory of God...
 - Be thankful when those trials come...
 - They are given to you to produce glory in you, even as the sufferings of Christ produced glory in the whole church!
 - They draw out and actually produce fresh love for God.
- d) And this is still not all they do...
 - Paul also says that all of his afflictions and persecutions make his ministry fruitful...
 - In 2 Cor 4:10-12, he says that he and his companions in ministry are:
 - “always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.”
 - There is no better way to show your love for Christ than to suffer persecution and rejection and hardship for him...
 - to bear up under your afflictions patiently by the grace of God working in you...
 - He sends that grace to work that new life in you and it causes your testimony to come to others with power...
 - They see that you really mean what you say about the Lord because you are willing to suffer for it!
 - This is a real help to other believes and it is also a powerful testimony to unbelievers!

TRANS> When you have hope in all this...

- That your trials are producing glory in you...
 - It makes the trial seem light and momentary...
 - and that they are benefiting others and helping them see Christ...
 - How it will protect from despair or bitterness...
- But try to face these trials without this hope—
 - and you are sure to be cast down in bitter despair!

- You do not know what trails you may be called to bear in this life before you die...
- So it behoves you to see that you have this helmet of salvation—this assurance of hope—so that you will be ready when the evil days come—ready to stand—ready to go on for the Lord with joyful encouragement.

III. How can you maintain this helmet?

A. First of all, feed it...

1. Feed it with the word...

- a. It is imperative that you renew your hope each day because we cannot see the glory of what God has promised in this world.
 - He has revealed these things to us by His Spirit in the word.
 - And if we do not nourish ourselves regularly in the word, we will soon forget the glory of what He is bringing us too.
- b. We will forget how lovely Jesus is whom we shall see and whom we shall be made like...
 - We need to read God's law that He so perfectly and beautifully obeyed and realise that we will perfectly obey it too—that is what God is bringing us too...
 - And we need to read the gospels that give us the very record of Jesus' life and the epistles that tell us what that life does for those who believe.
 - We must keep on renewing our hope in the word...

2. Feed it also with prayer...

- a. Along with the word, we need to pour our hearts out in prayer,
 - Asking God to show us what he has prepared for us to delight in it and to believe it...
 - And giving thanks for it and pleading His promises to grant us our hope.
 - And asking him to give us more now as a downpayment...
 - more new life...
 - more appreciation for what Christ has done...
 - more assurance of His promises.
- b. And we need to come together with our brothers and sisters to eat the Lord's Supper...
 - remembering the beauty of Jesus who came in the flesh and the complete forgiveness that He accomplished through His self-offering...
 - And looking to Him to actually nourish us when we eat and drink—to

even nourish up our hope and make it stronger by his supernatural working in us.

- B. And not only do you need to feed your hope, you also need to exercise it...
- exercise your hope in the day of battle to make it stronger...
1. This helmet is not at all one that grows weaker with use...
 - Like the bicycle helmets that instruct you to throw them if you ever crash with them...
 - That is how the hope of the world is—it is not a lasting hope—it only protects you for a time and then it is worthless...
 - But the helmet of salvation is actually strengthened with every use...
 2. This is what you are taught in Romans 5 where we are told that tribulation actually produces hope...
 - It produces hope because God shows you, by the Holy Spirit, how much He loves you...
 - He helps you to see His love in Christ like you have never seen it before...
 - And this partly because it is in your time of suffering that you look for it!
 - You see how great that love is that caused God to send His only Son to die for you when you were an unworthy sinner...
 - You see how certain that hope is that is rooted in the reality that Christ died for you and so will give you all things.
 3. You exercise this hope when under trials and temptations,
 - you consciously look up for what God has promised...
 - You earnestly seek to grasp your hope and you do grasp it more than ever.
 - How much you miss if you don't exercise your hope in these times!
 - What a waste to suffer and have no fruit from it!
 - Let that not be the case with you brothers and sisters!
 - Exercise your hope and make it grow stronger than ever.
 4. Joseph did this when his brothers had been brought to the Egypt to spend four hundred years until the time of God's promise to bring them out...
 - a. All the while, Joseph had hope, for when he was old, he made his brothers promised that after the 400 years was over,
 - they would bring his bones to the promised land and bury him there...

- Joseph knew that God was going to keep his promise long after he was dead,
 - and he knew that that promise had to do with his salvation...
 - That even after he was dead, God would remember the promise...
 - That He would bring Israel out and that salvation would come to the world through them...
 - salvation for Joseph who was dying and salvation for his brothers—all the generations that would die in Egypt...
 - and salvation for them after they came out and were given the land of Palistine.
 - Joseph had learned to exercise his hope when he was sold as a slave in Egypt—and then was cast into prison and forgotten...
 - He knew that God had not forgotten him...
 - He knew that God would raise him up and that is why he keep living for God.
 - He kept exercising his hope so that when he died, he died with hope that in 400 years, God would deliver Israel from Egypt to prepare them to bring forth the salvation of the world through the promised seed.
- b. My brothers and sisters, if you exercise your hope in every trial, like Joseph, you will be ready for the next and the next,
- and then you will die in strong and joyful hope...
 - If you want to maintain your hope, exercise it.

C. Thirdly, to maintain your hope, encourage one another in your hope.

1. In Hebrews 10:23-25 you are told:

- Heb 10:23-25: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
- This teaches you that you are both to give and receive hope from one another, reminding your brothers and sisters of what God has promised—
 - encouraging them to go on in His service and receiving encouragement from them.

2. We need each other to keep our hope alive.

- As we saw with Paul, when your brothers and sisters see you suffering all sorts of things for Christ and maintaining your hope,
 - it actually strengthens their hope by proxy—
 - they don't even have to bear the sufferings, but are able to receive benefit from your sufferings—from watching you...
 - and of course you gain the most benefit of all, but to add to your blessing, you get to see others benefited as well.
- And likewise, when you go to encourage the one who is in temptation,
 - you will often find that you yourself are greatly strengthened in your hope!
 - You begin to meditate on God's promises and on all that He is promised to us so that you might encourage the one your brothers and sisters...
 - and then you find that you yourself are encouraged in the process.
 - In telling them how much better Christ is than the sins your are calling on them to forsake,
 - You will come to see how much better He is for you than those sins that you need to forsake...
 - This is the way the Lord works in us as a body.
 - Do not refuse this encouragement—both to give it and to receive it.

Conclusion...

- Oh my brothers and sisters,
 - In many ways this is something we do every week in our Christian assembly...
 - Collectively, as God's people, we come to God's Word and we renew our hope in all that God has prepared for us...
 - Together, we consider the excellencies of Christ and how worthwhile it is to forsake all for Him...
 - And together we consider the salvation that is promised to us...
 - that we shall be like Christ...
 - that the curse will be completely abolished...
 - that all of our enemies will be cast into the outer darkness...
 - that we will see the glory of God...
 - that we will dwell in His house forever and ever where there are pleasures forevermore.
 - This is your helmet!
 - This is the helmet of salvation... the helmet of hope!
 - Do not try to go through life without it—you will never make it to the end.
 - But with it, how joyfully and confidently and helpfully you will go until the promise is realised in all its fullness.