

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, May 18, 2025, at 10:00 am at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and via Zoom.

Title: Never Fight Your Battles Undressed I (The Invisible War – Part 7)

Over the past few months, we have been studying our sermon series, “The Invisible War,” where we’ve explored each of the three invisible enemies we face in spiritual warfare. Whether we realize it or not, as children of God, we are constantly engaged in this battle. Much of the difficulty we experience in life is comes from invisible forces—within us, against us, and around us.

In our modern world, people readily believe in unseen forces like bacteria, viruses, wind, and electricity. Yet when it comes to the existence of Satan and his evil forces, many dismiss them as myths or religious fantasies. However, if we fail to recognize our true enemies—the spiritual ones behind people and circumstances—we risk wasting our energy fighting only what we can see.

We may want to hurt back those who have hurt us or our loved ones. We may harshly criticize others, convinced they will never change. We may even blame ourselves of our environment for our struggles. But who—or what—is truly responsible for the chaos within us, our families, and our world? When we face conflict and brokenness—within ourselves and with those around us—we must consider the reality of the invisible battle and the invisible enemies.

In today’s Scripture, the Apostle Paul clearly speaks to this: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but ...against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). Another translation puts it this way, “We are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood.” In other words, we are not simply battling those around us who may hurt us. We are not just wrestling with our egos, bad habits, or selfish desires. Spiritually speaking, we are fighting against the spirit of the devil.

There is an invisible world. There is an invisible war. And there is an invisible enemy—one we cannot defeat on our own. So, how do we fight this spiritual battle? In our Epistle, Paul gives us the answer: “Put on the full armor of God.” When Paul wrote these words to the believers in Ephesus, he was imprisoned in Rome. In those days, Rome was one of the most powerful empires in the world. Surrounded by Roman soldiers, fully armed and ready for combat, Paul understood what kind of spiritual equipment was needed for warfare.

Even today, Satan continues to attack God’s people. This divine battle will persist until Christ returns as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. But by putting on the armor God provides, we can “stand against the devil’s schemes”(Ephesians 6:10-11) and be more than conquerors in our journey of faith. This Sunday and next, as we conclude our Invisible War series, we will explore the six pieces of spiritual armor described in today’s Epistle. We will discover what each one represents and how we can use this godly armor in our daily battles. This morning, we’ll begin with the first three: the belt, the breastplate, and the shoes.

The first piece of armor that we, as soldiers of Christ, need to put on is “the belt of truth” (Ephesians 6:14). In Paul’s day, a Roman soldier used his belt to secure loose clothing and hold small weapons. When properly tightened, the belt provided stability and strength for duty. Think of how modern weightlifters use a supportive belt when lifting heavy loads—it gives them core strength and balance. In the same way, putting on a soldier’s belt was the first step to being battle-ready.

As Christ's soldiers, we must wear "the belt of truth" buckled around our waist. In this context, the word "truth" refers not only God's revealed truth in Scripture but also to truthfulness and integrity. In other words, it means living in alignment with that truth. Integrity is not just knowing what is right—it's doing what is right. Spiritually speaking, integrity is the foundation; it is the belt that holds everything else together. If we don't live according to God's Word, our lives can fall apart.

We need integrity in every area of life: moral integrity, relational integrity, financial integrity, and integrity in our work. Please understand this: integrity does not mean perfection. It doesn't mean we never make mistakes or always get everything right. If perfection were the requirement for integrity, none of us would have it—because no one is perfect. We all stumble in one way or another.

The word integrity comes from the Latin word "integer," meaning "whole" or "undivided." It means our lives are not a collection of disconnected parts. Sometimes we divide our lives into separate "slices": "This is my church life, this is my home life, this is my work life, and this is my social life." But if we are not living consistently across those areas, we fall short of integrity.

The opposite of integrity is hypocrisy—knowing the truth but not living it. The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek theater, where actors would wear different masks to play different roles. We, too, may fall into that pattern—wearing one "mask" at church and another at home. But God calls us to live with integrity: to be the same person in public and in private, in the spotlight and in the quiet places.

I'm reminded of an article I read years ago on "the importance of daily repentance." The author said that no matter what sermon he preached, he always included an invitation to repentance. I try to do the same. Why? Because repentance is how we make regular spiritual alignment with God. At the beginning of our faith journey, repentance may look like a full 180-degree turn—turning away from sin and toward the God of truth. But as we walk with Christ, we may need smaller adjustments: 30 degrees, 15, 10, 5, or even just a few. As Reformed Christians, we are called to be continually renewed in our minds through God's Word (Romans 12:2). When we wear the belt of the truth by examining ourselves honestly in the mirror of Scripture and adjusting our hearts through daily repentance, we begin to restore the sacred integrity God desires for us. Once again, integrity is more than knowing the truth—it is living the truth. And that, my friends, is the spiritual belt that gives us strength and stability in the invisible war.

The second piece of armor that we, as soldiers of Christ, need to put on is "the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14). In Paul's day, a Roman soldier wore a breastplate to cover and protect his upper body, especially his vital organs. No soldier would enter battle without it. This piece of armor was essential—particularly for protecting the heart, which was central to not only physical survival but, symbolically, to one's spiritual life.

As Christ's soldiers, we are called to wear "the breastplate of righteousness" across our spiritual chest. In this context, righteousness refers to purity of heart—living with right motives, holy desires, and moral passions. Spiritually speaking, the second thing we must put on in our journey of faith is purity. When we wear the breastplate of righteousness, we are essentially saying: "God, I want a pure heart. I want my motives to be clean in Your eyes."

Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). To "see God" in this passage means to experience His presence, to gain a deeper understanding of His purposes for our

lives, and to receive His guidance, power, and wisdom. But to walk in that intimate relationship with God, we must keep our hearts pure. Purity of heart does not mean perfection, as I mentioned earlier. None of us are perfect. But a pure heart is one that desires to do what is right, even when we don't always get it right. Those who have a pure heart feel true regret when they do wrong and earnestly seek to return to God. That is spiritual purity.

Friends, let us ask ourselves: Is our heart pure? We must be aware that in our spiritual warfare, Satan constantly aims to attack us with impurity. He knows that if he can corrupt the heart, he can corrupt the whole person. So he targets our thoughts, our desires, and our moral convictions. He introduces lustful thoughts, impure imaginations, and worldly distractions in many forms—through media, conversations, entertainment, and habits. When we allow anything and everything to enter our minds without discernment, we risk polluting our hearts. And heart pollution is far more dangerous than physical pollution, because our hearts and minds are the control center of our lives. The Bible reminds us, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Proverbs 4:23). That's why the Apostle Paul gives this powerful instruction: “Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8). We must examine ourselves: Are the things we think, say, and do holy before God? Purity and holiness are foundational characteristics of God and His Kingdom. When we were created in God's, and that means we were made to reflect His holiness.

Some may say, “The lustful stuff I watch, hear, say, or read doesn't really bother me anymore.” But that is exactly the danger. If impurity does not disturb us, it means our conscience has already been damaged by the evil one. If our hearts were pure, such things would grieve us. In this invisible war, a pure heart is one of our greatest weapons. Satan fears the person who lives with purity—not the perfect person, but the one who is honestly striving to live rightly before God. That is why Paul emphasizes the importance of putting on the breastplate of righteousness—to guard our hearts and protect our spiritual integrity.

The third piece of equipment that we, as soldiers of Christ, need to put on is a pair of shoes. In Paul's day, Roman soldiers wore a specific kind of footwear. These shoes were often studded with nails or spikes on the soles, giving them better grip on that battlefield. They're similar to cleats worn in sports like soccer, baseball, or golf—sports that are played on slippery grass. These shoes helped soldiers stay grounded and stable during battle.

Have we ever thought about how important our feet are? They carry the entire weight of our bodies. When we walk, run, or hike across pavement, gravel, or rocky trails, our feet absorb the impact. They endure even more pressure during sports that involve jumping or sudden movements. That is why wearing proper shoes is essential—they offer protection and support.

Spiritually speaking, the third thing, as Christ's soldiers, we need in our journey of faith is serenity—a deep, abiding peace. And that peace comes from putting on the shoes Paul calls “the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). In our everyday lives, we are constantly overwhelmed with stress, fear, and conflict. All of these can be summed up in one word: anxiety. Anxiety robs us of peace. Think for a moment—what is troubling our hearts today? What is keeping us up at night? Anxiety likes a snowball. It starts small, but as we dwell on our worries—thinking “What if” or “What's next?”—they grow in size and weight. Often, one worry leads to another, creating a cycle that feels unending. In fact, one study found that 90% of the things people worry about are related to the future—and most

of them never even happen. Even within the remaining 10%, some of those worries never come to pass either. We truly live in an uncertain and anxious world.

So how do we overcome worry and stand firm with the peace of God as our solid ground? The word gospel means good news, and it refers to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Paul defines the gospel clearly: “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” Because of the Cross and the Crown of Christ, those who wear the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness can also receive forgiveness and eternal life. Through faith in Jesus, we can have peace with God, peace within ourselves, and peace with others.

Let us remember once again: overcoming anxiety is not about trying harder or fixing things in our own strength. It requires supernatural peace—a peace that only God can provide. The Apostle Paul describes this in Philippians 4:6–7: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” What a powerful promise! God wants us to wear shoes “fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). That means when we are grounded in the good news of Jesus—when we talk to God in every situation through prayer—we gain a firm stand. His peace keeps us steady, even on life’s most challenging ground.

To conclude: let us ask ourselves a simple but important question. “In what area of my life is God speaking to me—where might I be under spiritual attack right now? When we talk about spiritual warfare and Satan’s activity, we’re not necessarily referring to our bed shaking in the middle of the night or seeing strange things in our homes. You know what it really looks like? It looks like being deceived about God’s goodness. It looks like being falsely condemned—carrying shame and guilt that Jesus already paid for. It looks like worrying over things, even though Christ is with us.

We must become aware of how the enemy attacks—our hearts, our homes, and the people we love. Sometimes spiritual deception shows us in the form of addiction, bitterness, anger, anxiety, or hatred. These are not just emotional or behavioral issues; they are often evidence of a deeper spiritual battle. That is why we must not only put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of the gospel of peace, but also declare God’s victory with courage and confidence: “Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power”(Ephesians 6:10). On our own, we are outmatched by the enemy. Satan and his followers are not intimidated by our strength, our status, or our possessions. But they are terrified of Jesus Christ—the Lord Immanuel—who is with us.

When we put on the full armor of God, we are not just protected—we are empowered. We can stand firm. We can resist the devil’s schemes. And we can walk courageously and confidently with the One who made the heavens and the earth (Psalm 121:1).

**In this sermon, which is part of our Invisible War series, I have used materials and insights from the teachings of Pastor Rick Warren, as well as various messages based on the Scripture passage Ephesians 6:10–18.*