

*Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, May 25, 2025, at 10:00 am at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls, and via Zoom.*

### **Title: Never Fight Your Battles Undressed II (The Invisible War – Part 8)**

Throughout this series, we've learned that as children of God, we are constantly engaged in spiritual warfare. We've examined the three invisible enemies we face: the enemy within us, the enemy against us, and the enemy around us. Last week, we focused on the reality that our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world. To stand firm against these evil forces, we, as soldiers of Christ, are called to put on the full armor of God. We looked at the first three pieces of our God-given, divine equipment: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of the Gospel of peace, as described in Ephesians 6:10-18.

Today, we'll explore the remaining spiritual weapons found in the same passage as we wrap up our Invisible War series. After introducing the first three pieces of armor, the Apostle Paul continues with the phrase: "In addition to all this..." He then describes the rest of God's protective gear. I want to revisit this sacred text to refresh our hearts and minds. Paul writes: "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:16-17).

This morning, we'll reflect on these final components of God's armor and consider how we can actively use them in our spiritual battles. Let us open our hearts to what God is saying as we prepare ourselves for victory in the invisible war.

Firstly, God calls us to "take up the shield of faith" when the evil one fires flaming arrows at us (Ephesians 6:17). In Paul's time, there were two types of shields. One was small and round, typically used by gladiators. But Paul is referring to the second kind—a large, rectangular shield, about four feet high and two and a half feet wide, made of layered wood and sometimes reinforced with metal. Roman soldiers used these large shields for protection as they marched into enemy territory.

Whether we realize it or not, Satan is constantly firing flaming arrows at us in our journey of faith. That means each one of us will face this kind of spiritual attack at some point. Sometimes, these arrows come in the form of sudden and strong temptations—a burning desire to do something we know is wrong. At other times, it may be a wave of ungodly thoughts. Or maybe it's an unexpected feeling of depression. Even when everything seems to be going well, we may suddenly begin to worry about things that may never happen. We may even find ourselves revisiting painful memories from the past, stirred up again for no clear reason.

Over the years in my pastoral ministry, I've noticed how many people—even within the church—carry deep wounds. And I've often asked myself: Who benefits most from this pain? The answer is clear: Satan. He delights in creating division, bitterness, and

brokenness. These are the flaming arrows he sends to damage our peace and disrupt our relationships.

Now, let me be clear: I'm not saying that every broken relationship is caused by Satan. As I've said before, when someone has done real harm, they must take responsibility for their actions—and sometimes face consequences, even legal ones. What I am saying is that there are situations where Satan fans the flames of conflict and causes unnecessary damage among people and organizations—even among believers.

Previously, I shared how many of the enemy's weapons begin with the letter "D": Deception: "Did God really say...? Can you really trust Him?" Discouragement: "You'll never get better. Things will never change." Despair: "Why is this so hard? Why is it taking so long?" Depression: "I just feel like giving up. I can't go on." Doubt: Questioning God's presence, His protection, or His power. These are fiery darts. They target the mind. Satan's strategy is mental, emotional, and spiritual warfare.

When those darts come, we need certainty. And that certainty comes from faith. The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:1). It also tells us where faith comes from: "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17). It is through the Word of God that we are reminded of who God is—our Mighty Father, our Wonderful Counsellor the Holy Spirit, and our loving Saviour, Jesus Christ. By learning more about the Trinity, the three persons of our One God, we grow in our relationship with the Lord.

As we spend time in Scripture and with God, our faith grows—faith in the power of the Father, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the protection of Jesus Christ. So how do we take up the shield of faith? By trusting in the character of our Triune god. By believing His promises. By clinging to His Word. That's how we deflect those flaming darts and stand strong in the spiritual battle. Friends, let's not be caught off guard. Let's be spiritually dressed with the shield of faith.

Secondly, God calls us to take up "the helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17). In Paul's time, a Roman soldier's helmet was designed not only to protect the top of the head but also to cover the back of the neck. It was specifically built to defend against the blow of a sword—a potentially fatal attack. In many ways, the helmet was the most critical part of a soldier's armor.

In the same way, our spiritual enemy targets our minds—our thoughts—with deception, discouragement, despair, and depression. He wants to strike at the very core of our confidence in God and make us doubt our salvation.

Our Old Testament lesson today illustrates this well. Think about Goliath and what he did for forty days during his threats against the armies of Israel? Every morning and evening, he came out from the Philistine camp, fully armed, and shouted insults and intimidations at the Israelites. Interestingly, he didn't physically harm anyone during those days. He

didn't strike them—but he terrified them. His giant status and aggressive words alone were enough to paralyze the soldiers with fear.

Likewise, Satan often does the same with us. He may not physically touch us, but he fills our minds with lies, fear, and doubt. That is often all it takes for us to lose confidence in our identity and destiny in Christ. We begin to question our salvation, especially in times of weakness or failure. Satan loves to whisper: “Are you really saved? God can't possibly forgive you for those terrible things you did. If you truly belonged to Christ, you wouldn't feel this way.”

But God's Word speaks louder. In our Epistle reading, Paul encourages believers—those who belong to the day, to the Light, to Jesus Christ—to “put on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet” (1 Thessalonians 5:8). He reminds us that “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him” (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10).

This scripture introduces one of the most important doctrines in the Christian faith—salvation. As far as I understand, salvation involves a journey made up of three key parts: justification, sanctification, and glorification. First, justification—we are made right with God by grace, through the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross. This happens at the moment of belief. Second, sanctification—after we are justified, we enter into a lifelong process of becoming holy, as we grow in obedience and faith. Third, glorification—this is the final step, when Christ returns and we are fully transformed, sharing in His glory forever.

At the beginning of Revelation, Jesus is called “the Alpha and the Omega” (Revelation 1:8)—the beginning and the end of our salvation. At the end of the book, the Apostle John once again describes Him in this way, saying: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 22:13). And John responds, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:13-20). John understood that glorification—our full and final salvation—will be completed at Christ's return.

This is the hope we wear on our heads like a helmet. Our hope is not in finances, not in other people, not even in our circumstances. Our hope is in Jesus Christ who gave His life to pay the full penalty for our sins and rose again so that we might live. When Satan attacks, we must rely on this God-given piece of armor—the helmet of salvation. And as Paul writes in Philippians 2:12–13, we are to “work out your [our] salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

We do this by renewing our minds—through Scripture, through prayer, through worship, and by reminding ourselves daily of who we are in Christ. That is how we protect ourselves from spiritual head wounds. That is how we stand firm. So friends, let's put on the helmet of salvation. Let's guard our minds with the truth of the Gospel and the unshakable hope we have in Jesus.

Thirdly, God calls us to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). In Paul’s time, Roman soldiers carried a short sword strapped to their side. It was their primary weapon for hand-to-hand combat. While the shield was used for defense, the sword was designed for offense—for striking back.

We remember how Jesus used this weapon during His battle with Satan in the wilderness after forty days of fasting. Three times, the tempted Jesus—trying to make Him question God’s goodness and test His identity. And three times, Jesus responded with the Word of God.

What is remarkable is that Satan himself used Scripture during these temptations—but twisted and misused it. He quoted the Bible out of context, manipulating it to serve his evil purposes. But Jesus did not argue with him. He did not try to reason or debate. Instead, He responded firmly and faithfully, each time declaring, “It is written... It is written... It is written.” With every temptation, Jesus used the truth of Scripture to dismantle the devil’s lies. And Satan was defeated.

The Book of Hebrews 4:12 reminds us of the power of this divine weapon: “The Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” The Word of God is not just ink on a page—it is alive. It is active. It is a supernatural weapon designed by God for His people to use in spiritual battle. And Satan knows this.

Years ago, I read an interesting article that imagined a worldwide convention of demons. In the story, Satan addresses his army and say: “...Keep them busy. If they are too busy, they will not have time to develop that relationship or maintain their spiritual strength...” This is one of Satan’s primary strategies: distraction through busyness. He knows if he can keep us preoccupied, he can keep us powerless—too spiritual fatigued to pick up our sword, the Word of God.

In contrast, consider King David, the author of many of the Psalms, including the one in our reading today. David was a king, a warrior, a leader—he had a full and demanding life. Yet he made time for God’s Word. He loved to meditate on Scripture day and night. Even in the middle of the night, he would rise to reflect on the promises of God. He wrote: “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Psalm 119:103). “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119: 105).

But let’s remember: the Word God does not automatically guide us. It doesn’t empower us unless we read it, meditate on it, and treasure it. We must not just glance at it—we must go deep into it. As we internalize it, it strengthens us. It becomes the sword we use to strike down every lie of the enemy. Friends, when we love this book—when we love God’s living Word with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength—we will be able to stand, fight, and win. So let us take up the sword of the Spirit. Let us sharpen it through study, use it through faith, and trust in its power to defeat the enemy.

Fourthly, God wants us to implement another powerful piece of equipment: prayer. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 6:18, “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests...” This verse shows us a direct and powerful connection between putting on the armour of God and securing victory in spiritual warfare.

We see a clear example of this in our Gospel reading today, when Jesus’ disciples tried to cast out a demon but were unsuccessful. After Jesus healed the boy, restoring his mind and setting him free, the disciples came to Him privately and asked, “Why could not we drive the impure spirit out?” Jesus replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer” (Mark 9:29).

Prayer is not an optional—it is essential. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches His disciples to ask God for deliverance from evil (Matthew 6:13). And when Jesus taught about the prayer, He didn’t say, “If you pray,” but “When you pray” (Luke 12:2). That simple phrase reminds us: prayer is meant to be “a way of life.”

Prayer is how we put on the armor of God. It is not just about knowing what the armor is—it is about applying it to our lives each day. Through prayer, we say: “God, I need integrity today. Help me put on the belt of truth. I need purity—guard my heart with the breastplate of righteousness. I’m anxious—please give me peace through the shoes of the gospel. When doubts come, give me the certainty of faith—let me hold up the shield. Protect my mind with the helmet of salvation. Help me to use Your Word not just for knowledge, but as a sword to fight the spirit of evil.” Prayer is how we fasten each piece of armor in its place. It is how we prepare ourselves, how we engage in the battle, and ultimately, how we win.

Before concluding this message with David and Goliath’s story once more, I want to share one final reflection on spiritual warfare. Sometimes, some of us, including myself, may feel that we are beyond temptation for various reasons. We may think: “Now I’m mature in age, both physically and spiritually. I’ve achieved a lot of remarkable things. I feel God’s presence all the time—I don’t need His armor constantly.” But we must remember that God calls us to fight the good fight of faith until we are called home to be with Him.

Think again about Satan’s attacks on Jesus. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after forty days of fasting and prayer. At the end of His ministry, Jesus was tempted again—to come down from the cross and abandon His mission. Whether Jesus was alone or surrounded by people, whether strong or weak—physically and spiritually—He was still tempted. He was continually attacked, right up until the very end of His time on earth. From Jesus’ example, we learn that temptation does not stop. Every follower of Christ must remain alert—regardless of how long we’ve walked with God or how mature we believe we are. Through daily devotion to God, we must deepen our relationship, seek His direction, and rely on His strength for every spiritual battle we face.

Let me remind you once more of David’s victory over Goliath. In our Old Testament reading, David stood before the giant and said: “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of

the armies of Israel, whom you have defied... For the battle is the Lord's, and He will give all of you into our hands" (1 Samuel 17: 45-47). David understood that the battle belonged to God. And that is still true for us today. Every spiritual battle we face belongs to the Lord. He gives us the strength. He provides wisdom and direction. He equips us with every weapon. Our role is to put it on, stand firm, and fight in His name.

The Lord is the source of every piece of armor we've studied in this series. We didn't invent these weapons—they are divine gifts, crafted by God Himself for His people. God simply asks us to use them in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Let us also remember: When Jesus died on the cross, He crushed Satan's head. When He rose again from the grave, He defeated death forever. Friends, remember this one last time: We do not fight for victory—we fight from victory. And we fight under the leadership of our Captain, Jesus Christ. So, who are we in this invisible war? We are Christian soldiers, marching forward with confidence and courage. We have been given authority and power—not our own, but Christ's—to stand against the real enemy. And through Him, we are more than conquerors!

*\*In this sermon, I have used materials and insights from the biblical teachings of Pastor Rick Warren, Rev. Chip Ingram, and other Scripture-based messages from Psalm 119:97-105; Mark 9:21-29; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11.*