

# Dressed from Head to Toe

Mon, 2/10 8:03PM 41:19

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

paul, christ, god, faith, objective truth, roman soldier, shield, piece, gospel, breastplate, armor, righteousness, christian, life, minds, word, belt, truth, other words, verse

## SPEAKERS

Kevin Schwamb

**K** Kevin Schwamb 00:00

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Published over 300 years ago William girdles the Christian and complete armor remains a very profitable read for anyone who's interested in exactly what is Paul dealing with. Ephesians 6:10 through 20. But I want to share with you something that William Bernal says on the first page of his three volume work. He mentions this the outcome of the battle rests on God's performance and not your skill or strength. The outcome of the battle remains on God's performance, not on your skill or strength. So even as we turn our attention to the subject

of what is this spiritual armor that that Paul lays out for Christians individually, as well as for the church corporately, that ultimately it is not. This is a strategy for us just to conquer everything in our life. But it's a reminder these are resources God has given us as we rest in Him, they become the means for our growth in Christ. So I'd like you to turn to Ephesians chapter six. And last week we looked at verses 10 through 13, which me This is the importance of standing. Now we're going to look at verses 14 through 17. Which explained for us, you need to stand in the armor of God, and what is this armor? And how can we take that and apply it in our lives this week? alone is deliberately I'm not going to have us look at verses 18 through 20 on the subject of prayer, because we'll look at that in two weeks, where I would like to argue that prayer is not a separate piece in the armor. But it's a it's something that kind of undergirds and holds the entire armor together. So we're going to be looking at six pieces of armor that Paul presents in verses 14 through 17. And I don't think it takes long for us to realize that through the Holy Spirit, Paul draws on imagery that may have been facilitated by the fact that He's in a Roman guard in prison, that he has probably nearby outside his cell, a Roman soldier standing. And so that picture of what a soldier looks like, all in the proper attire is used by God now as an illustration of something much richer and deeper when it comes to you, and be in Christ Jesus, and serving God. So let's take a look at this. And what we're going to do is look at the six pieces. But with each piece, I'll give you some historical background that would be helpful to kind of get an image before you then maybe raise a question as to Where's Paul going with this? And then for each piece look at Well, how how might that be applied now, for us in Christ? So let's look at verse 14. And verse 14 simply begins with three important words stand firm that so this is The fourth time since verse 10, that Paul has emphasized the importance of standing, almost as if now this is with a renewed urgency. And I think we could clearly say we know what the city of Ephesus was like. So believers needed to see an urgency there and standing firm in the faith, just like I could say to you, the age in which we live implies that this is urgency today, to stand firm in the faith. But it goes on there and introduces us in verse 14 to the first piece of spiritual armor. And so he goes on and says, stand firm, then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist. So there's the first piece this belt of truth buckled around your waist. So a little historical information here. Roman soldiers would wear some kind of belt around their middle and this belt Sometimes could be used to, to hang other things off it. But more importantly, the belt serve, where one would take that long undergarment that a Roman soldier had. And if you needed to move quickly, you would pull up that garment and tuck it into your belt. So it's a picture of a Roman soldier who in the attempt of moving quickly, this would be a procedure you would do, again, would fit nicely with this thought of an urgency that he's talking about. But notice, it's the belt of truth. So the Roman soldier would have had a leather belt. So where's Paul going with the saying, now as a believer, we have something that's the center of us. That is truth. And there are two different ways we could consider what's truth look like in the Christian life. And the first way is simply objective truth. In

other words, if I were to say to you as a Christian, Your faith is in what you would say to me what's not in my circumstances and not and how I feel that it's in Christ you're displaying. It's an objective truth. It's a truth placed in someone outside yourself. And so it may very well be when Paul says here, that you are to put the belt of truth he saying objectively as a follower of Christ, your faith is placed outside yourself. It is placed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Now, if you would turn with me to First Peter one verses 22 and 25. You have the Apostle Peter, talking about objective truth as well. So perhaps Paul is challenging believers and saying to them, as you prepare to to live the Christian life in a world that opposes you and your enemy is our Their base your beliefs on an objective truth, the reality of God's Word. And so you notice in First Peter one, verses 22 through 25. Peter talks about objective truth, beginning of verse 22. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth, so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart. For you have been born again not a perishable seed, but if imperishable, through the living and enduring Word of God. For All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever. There you have that objective truth God's word remains intact. It will be challenged but never destroyed. It will always prove itself Be right and true. So along those lines, you can say when Paul says put on this belt of truth, he's reminding them where your source of truth is located. It's located in God who has revealed Himself through Christ through his written word which the spirit unfolds to you, as a child of God. But we could add to that if you go back to Ephesians chapter six, that Paul may have also implied not just objective truth as important as that is, but Subjective Truth. And by that I mean that Paul's saying you need to live in accordance with the Scriptures. So you have your faith in an objective truth. And now you are to live subjectively in accordance with that objective truth. And that comes out if you are an Ephesians. Just look at Ephesians four and verse 15 and 25. Notice verse 15 Paul writes, instead speaking the truth, in love, we will in all things grow up in who is the head, that is Christ. So he talks about an action here speaking the truth, that the way we communicate the way we interact with others, is in accordance with the objective Word of God. So as a Christian, notice, we're going out into the world not adopting the strategy of the world, that our weapons are the same as the world uses, but we're responding much differently. Yeah, we see often in the news, how our world responds to things. So not to get political at all, but just kind of think of how the world responds when someone says something that hurts you, but then you're in a position where you can get back at them. And so I've been following anything with impeachment hearings. You quickly know what's happened. President Trump was acquitted. But then what happened is those who kind of have been key witnesses for the impeachment have been removed from their positions. That's how our world responds. someone does something to us, we have the power to get back at them, we will get back at them. Notice the difference here when Paul's talking about put this belt of truth around you have that be the center of your life. And so as you think of

that, it is both objective and subjective. But how should that sort of look? Well, again, in Ephesians, four, we read verse 15. Notice verse 25, and Ephesians, four. There it simply says, Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, who we are members. One body, again, how our faith is lived out, is key. And so maybe we could say, well, the application of the belt of truth would be as a believer, you must strive to be rooted and grounded in the truth of God. And that that truth that comes out of the Scriptures, that's located in the very being of God, that that truth would also show itself on a practical level in our lives, how we respond to those in our workplace, how we respond to those in our own household, how we interact and talk among ourselves in the church. So you see Paul using imagery here not to say well, there's this tangible belt you need to wrap around yourself, but but representing to us this should be central in our lives. I think it's very interesting as you'll see that the sixth item that he mentions kind of comes right back to the first. In other words, it sort of locks it all together. So that would be the first piece of our spiritual armor put on the belt of truth, buckled around your waist. But then again in verse 14, he goes on and mentions the second one, with the breastplate. With the breastplate of righteousness in place. So now we have to pause and consider what is this breastplate that a Roman soldier would typically have on? Well, it would be either made of all leather, or possibly leather with some metal pieces to it, but it would cover the soldier from his neck, to his waist, and it would cover him front and back. So it was something that was very important. And as you think about that, the reason would be if it covers you, from your neck to your thighs, is it will tend to protect your vital organs. And how important it would be that that is a part of your armor. So that's what it would mean for a Roman soldier. But now let's look at why does he speak of a breastplate not of metal or leather, but a breastplate of righteousness? And so again, I'm going to kind of divide this possibly Paul's referring to to two different aspects of this. The first one is righteousness means conformity to God's standard. So what does it mean then to be conformed to God's standard? Well, let's first speak of imputed righteousness. In other words, there's a righteousness that is charged to us because of what Christ has done on our behalf. So if you know Christ as your Lord and Savior, there's a righteousness that was charged to your account because of what Christ did. And so Paul's kind of saying here, this breastplate of righteousness means in this battle, you can stand firm, because you are covered, you have been declared righteous, based on what Christ has done for you. So notice, again, it's not a performance related thing, like we gotta earn the righteousness. Or if you don't do this, this and this, you're not going to have it but he's saying this has been given to you by faith in Christ. So to see this, just look at Ephesians four and verses 22 through 24. This is very typical in Paul's letters, he will mention certain things that then again later he'll pull all together. So in Ephesians, four verses 22 and 24. Notice what Paul wrote When he's talking about living as children of light, it says you were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, can be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to

put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. So there is a sense in which all of us if you know Christ should be comfortable in saying, I am holy. I am covered with the righteousness of God based on what Christ has done, that has been charged my account and I am separated on to him. So I think part of Paul's analogy there is when you enter this battle, enter it and knowing how you are seen in Christ. righteous, completely conforming to God because of Christ, paying for your sins. And now you have a new life a new self that has to emanate. But just like with the first piece of armor, I think you can include here something that sometimes the Puritans called imparted righteousness. And this one relates to now we need to live in accordance with that new identity that we have in Christ. to other words, as a believer, I know I'm declared righteous in Christ. But practically, I need to live in accordance with what my new identity is. This is part of what we might say, the fruit of the Spirit that the evidence that we are a follower of Christ. And Paul has not hesitated in this letter to talk about this imparted righteousness. In other words, how should we live differently than the world and so look at Ephesians three verses 16 through 19. So the fact that Paul will talk about this breastplate of righteousness and sort of given us these two different aspects that are in complete agreement with one another, would remind us that's what he's been talking about in Ephesians. Four and following. He's been talking about, how does this new change and identity that happened in the first three chapters, how should that look in your life? How should it be played out? So look with me at Ephesians three, and verses 16 through 19. As he prays for the church, he says, I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through His Spirit and your inner being. So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you being rooted and established in love, they have power together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. To know this love that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now, based on our adult class, we're talking about the Holy Spirit and every believer receiving the Holy Spirit and conversion, you know, and as Paul's praying that they would have power through His Spirit, now they're already believers. But he's acknowledging here, this working out of God's Spirit in our lives in a very evident way, which would be what Paul is challenging us with, when he says, Put on the breastplate of righteousness, stand strong in your new identity in Christ. But also that identity needs to be lived out. And that would explain why in the beginning of a fusions for Paul would write this as a prisoner for the Lord then I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you ever received. In other words, you've already been called, you've already been set apart now live in accordance with that unique position and standing you have in Christ Jesus. If you want to know how that should look, will again go through some of Paul's letters. How are our conversations or interaction with others around us? How do we handle health concerns, circumstances changing in our life? Do we display a growing trust in God? That we are quick to bring our concerns to him and be honest with the struggles he may be facing. But in the bigger context, we do so knowing our identity in Christ is

unshakable. I mean, that that's what the breastplate of righteousness should look like, on a daily basis and our lives but we've only gone through the First two pieces. Now we get to the third piece. And this is in Ephesians six and verse 15. Paul says, and with your feet, fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. So the Roman soldiers were very impressive in terms of their armor, their equipment, their training that went into being a soldier. But now you get to a part that maybe can be easily overlooked importance of footwear. And we know that the Romans were advanced, in particular in this area. So if you've seen pictures, you may be thinking of this sort of sandal that would have leather straps, that comes up quite a ways in the leg, so it's secure. But more importantly, was the sole of these leather sandals. They actually had something called hobnails put through them. So they were basically cleats. And these kind of cleats enable the Roman army to move with not just a relative speed in which they were often surprising their opponents with, but great stability on the battlefield. So Paul now goes to the footwear and says, There's something here that we need to apply when it comes to the spiritual battle that we find ourselves facing. And it's not too hard to at least kind of think about, well, he mentions here, your feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace. So I think we can look at that and say, all right, so he's talking about the gospel. We know what the gospel is. That's the good news of what God has done for us through Christ. But what exactly does he mean that this would be something that that always goes with us and as a part of our life, it affects our movements and everything else. Well, let me give you possibly two ways of considering this. Again, I think you could say both are correct. One way is Paul saying, always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is in you. In other words, always be ready to share the gospel with someone who does not know Christ. And that certainly we have many passages in Scripture that teach us that remind us of that. Often, that's one of the things we pray about have on our prayer list, that we would be more mindful of conversations that we have with people that we can sort of direct to a spiritual end or goal. Sometimes you will have someone who is just going to directly ask you something like, how can my sins be forgiven? But I think more often than not, we we are much more have to be more subtle and discerning and how we can lead people and ask thought provoking questions that will get them moving to the discussion of what God has done for them through Jesus Christ. So perhaps that's what Paul's challenging them. As Christians as you go out into the world, as you face this enemy, realize the last are not our enemies. They're the ones we are desiring to reach. And I think sometimes it's easy to confuse that, you know, we see them as being the enemy, well, then they're not the enemy. Their minds may be against scripture against God, but but they are the ones who call to reach. But you can also look at this from another perspective. And that Paul saying in this spiritual battle, you as a Christian need to be well prepared, and in a sense, firm, as to the gospel in your own life. In other words, there is a proper place for the gospel in terms of the loss those who don't know Christ. But I think often we forget the gospel is for believers to that we need that thought of an assurance.

I'm grounded in Christ by faith. That gospel of peace means everything to me personally. And so when I have to resist Satan, I do so in the assurance of the gospel of peace that I had been restored. This leads to an interesting side note that some have looked at when the question comes up, can can sane still go into God's presence? And you may realize there's some passages in job where he goes before God and he says, I'm accusing job of this. And, you know, God, again, permit certain tests to happen. But the question is, when when Satan had access to God's presence in the Old Testament, did he go on this basis? That he was saying, here are these people you've, you've received by faith, they've trusted in you, but you forgiven them of their sins, but they haven't really there hasn't been a price paid for it yet. In other words, kind of saying, This is unjust because really the price has not been paid yet. Whereas now following Christ, death and resurrection, Satan can no longer say the price has not been paid, because the price has been paid in Christ. And so it's fascinating to consider here is Paul, maybe emphasizing more as you stand spiritually firm do so in the knowledge of what the gospel means to you. The security that is yours in the gospel of peace as well that should be a reminder to all of us to never lose sight of the fascination delight we should have in the Gospel what God has done for you in Christ, and consciously remind yourself of that every day. Paul seems to never have lost sight of what the gospel means to him. And neither should way. It's interesting when you get to Paul's letter of Romans, he kind of states in the very introduction, the purpose of the letter, that we would understand the power of the gospel. But then he ends by talking about the whole Christian life is from faith to faith, which which may imply is not just saying it starts with faith, but the whole life from beginning to end is one of faith. And ultimately, is it not faith in the Gospel of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. So that covers the third piece of the armor. Now going on to verse 16, verse 16 says In addition to all of this, take up the shield of faith, which with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. So again, imagery that Paul would have had beforehand or been very much aware of. The Romans had something that they would refer to as the door shield. Pretty impressive piece of equipment. It would be anywhere from two to three feet wide, four to six feet high, about six to eight inches in width. And you'd have a covered with sometimes some metal and also covered with leather. And before a battle, you would soak it in water to your time so the first that's big, and it's heavy, but but it's necessary in battle. And you notice in the depiction he talks about, well this shield would would repel flying arrows. And any speaking about a common practice, you know you would have the Roman army that's there. Many times arrows were taken their dipped and tar lit on fire and shop. So these arrows literally would stick in these leather coated shields and eventually burn out. But one of the dangers of Roman soldiers faced is sometimes Spears were thrown as well. Now some of these Spears could be sure, like maybe two feet long, summer seven feet long. So imagine if you start getting these Spears stuck in the shield? Is that thing going to get tremendously heavy. And sadly what you had happened is sometimes Roman soldiers would drop their shields saying this is too difficult, and then they expose themselves to

much greater danger. So Looking at kind of that picture, notice Paul says it's the shield of faith. I'm talking about not talking about a physical shield that you got to carry around with you and, you know, hold up when you feel that you're being attacked. But but there's a shield of faith. And the purpose of this shield is to extinguish the flying arrows of the enemy. I like how John Murray defines faith in his book redemption accomplished and applied. He says faith has these three elements knowledge, conviction, and trust, knowledge, conviction, and trust. So the enemy is real, and the attacks are real. But he says, you know, what you need to put on is the shield of faith that you go out and your response and your ability to say Stand is because of a knowledge of who you strength you stand in that conviction that God's Word and His promises are true. And the trust only, not in your own strength, but in the one who strengthens you with infinite power and riches. One way of saying here from a Christian perspective, we're not going to ignore the the struggles of being a Christian, communicating nor that this there's a spiritual realm and a battle that's constantly waging until Christ returns. But you need to put on the shield of faith and justice for the Roman army. This was like an impressive thing. I mean, you could not get at a soldier with a shield of faith with the shield that they had and keep considering the size of it. And then what they do is an army sometimes they'd all locked together to basically you have like this impenetrable wall, just moving toward you are a reminder of what it means to be grounded in faith. Not not in emotions because emotions change not in circumstances, because circumstances change, not in the assurance of your own health because that changes but having the shield of faith. Practically, how do you feed faith in the Christian life? How do you feed knowledge, conviction, and trust? Well, one of the answers is what you're doing right now. Scripture, studying God's word, reading it worshipping together. fellowshiping like we'll do later this afternoon, prayer, serving Christ. All those are ways that we feed that shield of faith. He goes on and verse 17, to give the next item. It says, Take the helmet of salvation. I think most of you are old enough to realize that when you were younger, Did any of you wear a helmet riding a bike? No notice today like if you see someone riding a bike without a helmet, you're like, well, what's going on? Yeah, we talked about the importance of protecting the head. Well, Paul refers to here, Roman soldiers, obviously not just protecting the vital organs, but the head was equally important. And so they would have a helmet that was again, leather metal combination of both would have different side flaps to help protect the cheek, the chin and the neck. The helmet was not put on until you are actually ready to go into battle. But it was vital To a soldier's equipment. So where's Paul going with us when he says, Well, now you need the helmet of salvation? Well, it may help us that in First Thessalonians five, verse eight, Paul does reference the helmet of salvation as being the hope of salvation. But I'd like to expand that maybe say, well, Paul's getting out there with that hope. It begins with having our hearts and minds, renewed and transformed. In other words, the real spiritual battle with temptation begins not with our actions, but with our thoughts and our attitudes that have preceded that. In other words, how important it is as a



Christian, that we need to saturate our minds with God's word. And too often we may be focused on behaviors like Well, I'm not doing that. But we let our minds run in play with all kinds of things that are displeasing to God. And so when he speaks, are you as a Christian need to put on the helmet of salvation? Not just remind yourself of the hope that is yours in Christ. But But how are you? How are you feeding your mind to think about the things of God? How you routing out those very dangerous thoughts that sometimes enter our minds without even being provoked? Because we're still sinful creatures, where we just naturally want to turn our thoughts to something that is against God. So that would say to all of us, yeah, how much time am I spending and just trying to get God's word into my thoughts? And you can expand that to not just reading God's word which is primary. Our conversations reveal a lot about where our thoughts are. Good Christian, reading There's an important way to feed our thoughts and our mind that not just picking up the best seller and there's nothing wrong with reading contemporary books. But I think we need to have a steady diet of Christian literature and profitable reading that will make us think always like what a W. Tozer said, in reference to what is a good book said a good book is one that you occasionally have to stop and put down. Now whereas it makes you think it challenges you biblically. We have one final piece in this, six pieces of armor. And again in verse 17, it mentions the final piece. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. So Roman soldiers had many different weapons but in particular the word that's rendered here sword refers to a, a short dagger. And often in military battles like this, there came a point where you were involved in close physical contact and interchange. And this would be the weapon that you would basically have that you would pull out during those kind of encounters. And so as you think about this, Paul tells us, well, here's what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about physically arming yourselves, but I'm saying the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And notice how we've almost come right back to the very first piece of equipment. When it said, you need to put on the belt of truth, grounded in the Word of God. And now he's going to kind of complete that armory picture and saying you need to once again know how to use the word of God. And that brings us to a final point here in second Timothy three and verses 16 and 17. Because I think it's very important as Gerner reminds us in the opening page of his book, that it's our rest is in God's power and God's strength. But the Word of God is given to us a second Timothy 3:16 and 17 highlight that is to be used and applied with these purposes in mind. Because you notice Paul writes here to Timothy, All scripture is God breathed and as useful for so here comes the practical. What am I going to do with God's Word? It's useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work is not saying the word of God is central enough Just resisting temptation, but also in growing in holiness. And so based on these expressions, teaching, rebuking, correcting and training and righteousness, you could say the word of God is intended to strengthen others. So we can use God's Word to strengthen those who are struggling, who are maybe facing fatigue in

the battle. The Word of God is also intended to strengthen ourselves in the battle. Part of the readiness of having your feet in the Gospel of pieces, knowing what Scripture teaches the promises that we are given. So strengthening others strengthening ourselves clearly it's important and sharing Christ. Knowing how to take God's word and talk about it with someone showing them how their center showing them what it means to follow Christ. And it is always a weapon against temptation. So you see William Gern. All had it right? Not just in the opening page of his book, but I believe in the very title he chose the Christian in complete armor, because you can't pick out one of the six or a couple of them and say, Well, at least then I'm conscious of these. No Roman soldier would ever in his right mind go into battle with only a few of those pieces of armor on. Neither should we think somehow that that one piece is more vital than another and we're not in danger of going out without a complete armor on. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank You that You have equipped us as your children to grow up And the armor of light. And I pray that this message and the imagery that Paul draws upon, would also stick with us to be very conscious of what we need to put on every day and how in Jesus name Amen.