

Take Your Stand
Defending against the Head Punches
Ephesians 6:10-18

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Text Introduction: I am continuing a series this morning in Ephesians 6:10-18. First, we overviewed this passage and simply said that as Christians, we are in a battle. We are in a battle for our convictions, our culture, our children, and our churches. As a result, we are in a battle for our families and our future. We are called to take our stand in this battle. Actually, there are 3 main imperatives in this text: Be strengthened by the LORD, Put on the full armor of God, and stand.

Having given these three imperatives, Paul underscored 7 spiritual weapons that we should avail ourselves to as we carry out these imperatives. We are studying now each of these resources. To this point we have said that truth is the under armor. It is not the most important piece (they are all of equal importance), but it is the first piece. That is, it is the piece that serves as the undergirding of all the other pieces. Then, there is righteousness—the protector of the heart. Then, we looked at the shoes of the Gospel of peace and said that this signifies our readiness to be in the battle by sharing the Gospel. Last time we considered the resource of faith and saw that it is the resource that carries with it a wonderful promise. Today, we consider the fifth resource—the helmet of salvation.

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

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

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

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

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

Introduction: When Paul talks about here the “helmet of salvation” he is not necessarily at this moment inviting people to put on salvation. In other words, he is not inviting them to be saved. Paul assumed that he is writing to those who are already saved. In that spirit, what Paul is emphasizing is the assurance of salvation. We believe that a person can be assured of salvation, and that assurance makes a tremendous difference in a person's life in regards to the daily battle against Satan.

I want to give you two stories to illustrate that, and then we will talk about how the assurance of that salvation makes the difference in the battle.

A few years ago, my secretary alerted me that I had a couple, not members of our church, who desired to see me. They lived down the street from the church. After a few minutes of conversation about who they were and common people that we knew, the woman pulled out a book, and asked, "Do you believe what is in this book?" The book was Charles Stanley's *Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure?* I confessed to them that I had not read the book, but I knew who Charles Stanley was, and based on the title, I was reasonably sure that I believed what was in the book. This middle-aged couple went on to tell me that they had picked up the book in Wal-Mart simply because of the title. The woman had read the book in one evening. The husband had read enough of it the next morning, and now they were in my office. They didn't know who Charles Stanley was, but the jacket cover said he was a Baptist, so they decided to walk down to the Baptist church on their street. To this point in their lives they believed it was impossible, even perhaps sinful and certainly arrogant, to claim eternal assurance. Now, this couple was eager to have the peace and joy that accompanies eternal security. That assurance makes a difference.

The second story happened just this week at the funeral of Mr. Wayne Young, the father of our church member, Rebecca Bell. It was a wonderful service. I left there thinking, that if a stranger walked off the street, he would have barely been able to recognize that it was a funeral. As a Christian's funeral should reflect, it was joyful and hopeful, and centered on the promises of God's Word. At the end, his pastor made this comment. "How can you have a funeral like this one?" I thought it was such a great line. Assurance of salvation makes the difference.

How does our salvation help us in our battle?

Confidence in our relationship to Christ

Here is Paul's point: Stand firm in what Christ has already done for you.

- Remember who you are by remembering whose you are.

God, in Christ, has given you freedom from the penalty of sin, first of all. Then, He has given you freedom from the power of sin. Finally, in eternity, He will give you freedom from the presence of sin.

- Recognize repeatedly the grace of salvation.

We did not earn this salvation. We have it by grace through faith.

If He has fought for you to release you from Satan and Satan's power, don't you think He is going to keep you from Satan?

John 10:28-29 gives us this confidence:

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Most people never do grasp the depths of Christ's love. Tragedy comes, and people doubt or question God's love. People sin and then wonder if God still loves them. In those times, may all of us be able to comprehend that the issue of God's love was settled for us on the cross.

Certainty of Heaven

- Remember where you are going.

We can speak of our ultimate reward with certainty. 1 John 5:13 says, "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

You have heard me say over and over again, that we read, preach, and teach the Bible not just for information, but for transformation. However, don't take this to mean that information is not sometimes important. The knowledge of what Christ has done in securing a relationship with God for us and securing an eternal reward for us is the kind of knowledge that makes a difference in the daily grind against Satan. But, there is still the "so what" of our salvation. Salvation causes us to see a

Calling higher than ourselves

This calling higher than ourselves is also helpful for the battle. Ephesians has that classic balance between theology and practice that we so often see in Paul's letters. We are called to

- Walk worthy of the calling (4:1)
- Grow in every way (4:15)
- No longer walk as Gentiles (4:17)
- Put away sin (4:25-32)
- Imitate God (5:1)
- Submit to one another (5:1)
- And other issues are addressed

This is who we are in Christ and it is part of the battle as we put on the helmet of salvation.

Conclusion: Since 1971, the U.S. Marshalls Office has operated a Witness Protection Program. Since then, according to their website, 8500 government witnesses have been placed in this program. In addition, 9900 witnesses' family members have been placed in this program. These individuals are given a new identity with all the appropriate documentation and they are provided protection. Since the program's start, not one person has been harmed. I am tempted to say, "If the government can provide 100% protection, I know God can protect you." But, here is the footnote. "Not one person has been harmed who has followed the rules."

With the helmet of salvation, we have come full circle in the rules. "Put on the full armor of God."