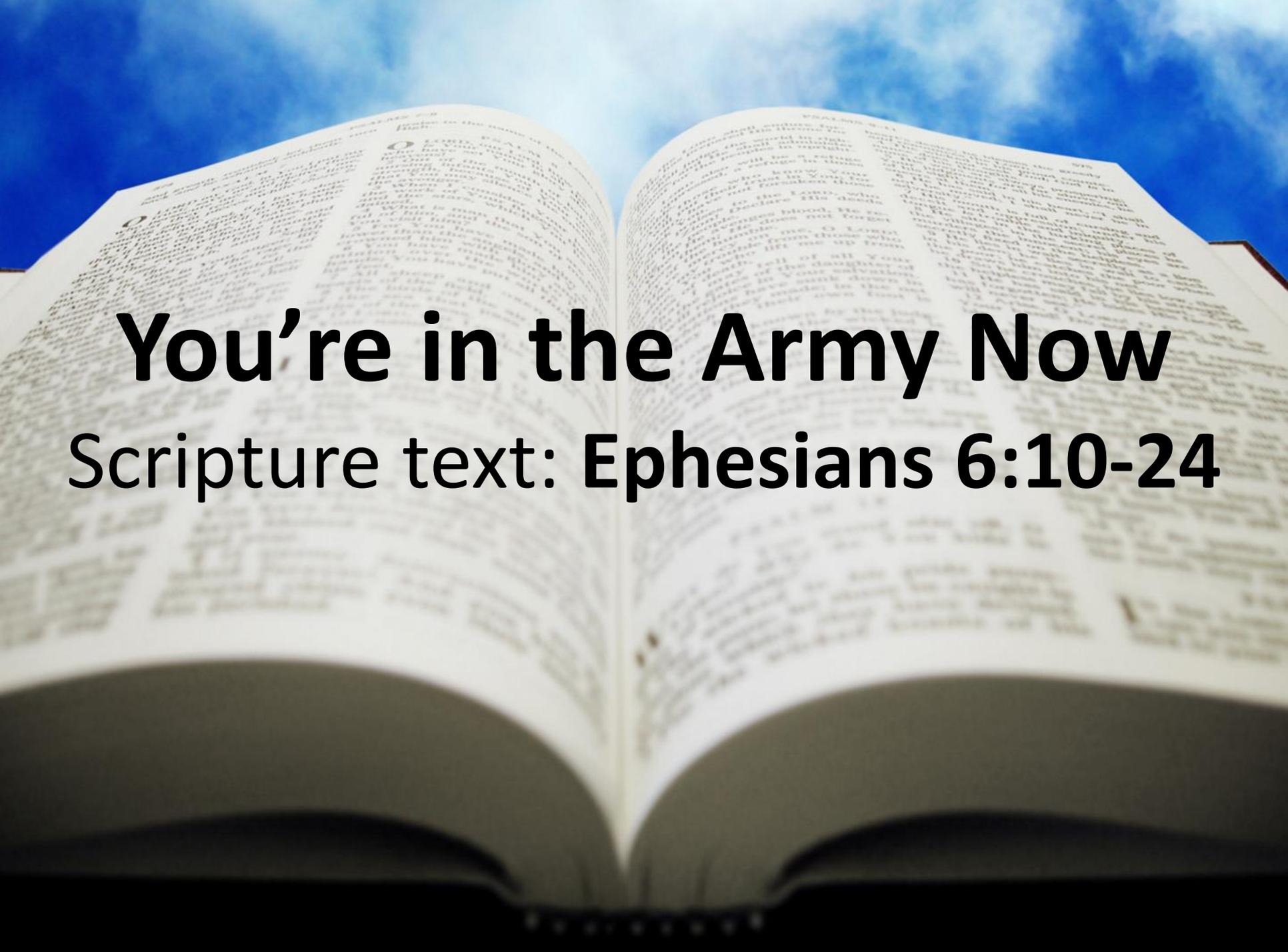


Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church
We're glad you're here!



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, but it is out of focus. The background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, black font.

You're in the Army Now
Scripture text: Ephesians 6:10-24

YOU'RE IN THE ARMY NOW!

Ephesians 6:10–24

Sooner or later **every believer discovers that the Christian life is a battleground**, not a playground, and that he faces an enemy who is much stronger than he is—**apart from the Lord**.

That Paul should use the military to illustrate the believer's conflict with Satan is reasonable. He himself was chained to a Roman soldier (Eph. 6:20), and his readers were certainly familiar with soldiers and the equipment they used.

In fact, **military illustrations were favorites with Paul**

2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

2 Timothy 2:3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

As Christians, we face three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 2:1–3).

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this **world**, following the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our **flesh**, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**

“The world” refers to the system around us that is opposed to God, that **caters to** “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”.

1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--**is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

“Society apart from God” is a simple, but accurate, definition of **“the world.”**

“The flesh” is the old nature that we inherited from Adam, a nature that is opposed to God and can do nothing spiritual to please God.

By His death and resurrection, Christ overcame the world (*John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*” ; Galatians 6:14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which **the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.),**

and **the devil** (Eph. 1:19–23).

Ephesians 1:19-23 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named,** not only in this age but also in the one to come. And **he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

In other words, as believers, we do not fight *for* victory—***we fight from victory!***

The Spirit of God enables us, by faith, to appropriate Christ's victory for ourselves.

In these closing verses of the letter, Paul discussed four topics so that his readers, by **understanding** and **applying these truths, might walk in victory.**

The Enemy (Eph. 6:10–12)

The intelligence corps plays a vital part in warfare because it enables the officers to know and understand the enemy. Unless we know who the enemy is, where he is, and what he can do, we have a difficult time defeating him.

Not only in Ephesians 6, but throughout the entire Bible, God instructs us about the enemy, so there is no reason for us to be caught off guard.

The leader—the devil. The enemy has many different names.

Devil means “accuser,” because he accuses God’s people day and night before the throne of God.

Revelation 12:7-10 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and **there was no longer any place for them in heaven.** And the great dragon was thrown down, **that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world--**he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.**

Satan means “adversary,” because he is the enemy of God. He is also called **the tempter** (***Matthew 4:3** And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."*),

and **the murderer and the liar** (***John 8:44** You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*).

He is compared to a lion (1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.),

a serpent (Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" ; Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world-- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.),

and an angel of light (**2 Corinthians 11:13–15** *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, **for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.** So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*),

as well as “**the god of this age**” (2 Cor. 4:4, niv).

2 Corinthians 4:4 *In their case **the god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Where did he come from, this spirit-creature that seeks to oppose God and defeat His work?

Many students believe that in the original Creation, he was **“Lucifer, son of the morning”** (Isa. 14:12–15) and that he was cast down **because of his pride and his desire to occupy God’s throne.**

Many mysteries are connected with the origin of Satan, **but what he is doing and where he is going are certainly no mystery!** Since he is a created being, and not eternal (as God is), he is limited in his knowledge and activity.

Isaiah 14:12-15 "How you are fallen from heaven, **O Day Star, son of Dawn!** How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, '**I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.**' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

Unlike God, Satan is not all-knowing, all-powerful, or everywhere-present. Then how does he accomplish so much in so many different parts of the world? **The answer is in his organized helpers.**

Satan's helpers. Paul called them “principalities ... powers ... rulers ... spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

Charles B. Williams translates it: “For our contest **is not with human foes alone**, but with the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers **of this dark world**; that is, with **the spirit forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest**”.

This suggests a definite army of demonic creatures that assist Satan in his attacks against believers.

The Apostle John hinted that one third of the angels fell with Satan when he rebelled against God (Rev. 12:4), and Daniel wrote that Satan's angels struggle against God's angels for control of the affairs of nations (Dan. 10:13–20).

A spiritual battle is going on in this world, and in the sphere of “the heaventies,” and you and I are a part of this battle. Knowing this makes “walking in victory” a vitally important thing to us—and to God.

The important point is that our battle is not against human beings. It is against spiritual powers.

We are wasting our time fighting people when we ought to be fighting the devil who seeks to control people and make them oppose the work of God.

During Paul's ministry in Ephesus, a riot took place that could have destroyed the church (Acts 19:21–41). It wasn't caused only by Demetrius and his associates, for behind them were Satan and his associates.

Certainly Paul and the church prayed, and the opposition was silenced.

The advice of the King of Syria to his soldiers **can be applied to our spiritual battle**: “Fight neither with small nor great, **save only with the king**” (1 Kings 22:31).

Satan’s abilities. The admonitions Paul gave indicate that Satan is a strong enemy (Eph. 6:10–12), and that **we need the power of God to be able to stand against him.** Never underestimate the power of the devil.

He is not compared to a lion and a dragon just for fun!

The Book of Job **tells what his power can do to a man's body, home, wealth, and friends.**

Jesus calls Satan a thief who comes “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10).

Not only is Satan strong, but he is also wise and subtle, and we fight against **“the wiles of the devil.”**

Wiles means “cunning, crafty arts, strategems.”

The Christian cannot afford to be “ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11).

Some men are cunning and crafty and “lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14), but behind them is the arch-deceiver, Satan. He masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14) and **seeks to blind men’s minds to the truth of God’s Word.**

The fact that Paul uses the word “**wrestle**” indicates that **we are involved in a hand-to-hand battle and are not mere spectators at a game.** Satan wants to use our external enemy, the world, and our internal enemy, the flesh, to defeat us. **His weapons and battle plans are formidable.**

The Equipment (Eph. 6:13–17)

Since we are fighting against enemies in the spirit world, **we need special equipment both for offense and defense.** God has provided the “**whole armor**” for us, and **we dare not omit any part.** Satan looks for that unguarded area where he can get a beachhead (Eph. 4:27). Paul commanded his readers to put on the armor, **take the weapons, and withstand Satan, all of which we do by faith.** Knowing that Christ has already conquered Satan, and that the spiritual armor and weapons are available, **by faith we accept what God gives us and go out to meet the foe.**

The day is evil, and the enemy is evil, but **“if God be for us, who can be against us?”** (Rom. 8:31)

The girdle of truth (v. 14a). Satan is a liar (John 8:44), but **the believer whose life is controlled by truth will defeat him**. The girdle holds the other parts of the armor together, and truth is the integrating force in the life of the victorious Christian.

A man of integrity, with a clear conscience, can face the enemy without fear. The girdle also held the sword. **Unless we practice the truth, we cannot use the Word of truth**.

Once a lie gets into the life of a believer, everything begins to fall apart. **For over a year, King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba, and nothing went right.**

Psalms 32 and 51 tell of the price he paid.

The breastplate of righteousness (v. 14b.) This piece of armor, made of metal plates or chains, covered the body from the neck to the waist, both front and back. **It symbolizes the believer's righteousness in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21) as well as his righteous life in Christ (Eph. 4:24).**

Satan is the accuser, but he cannot accuse the believer who is living a godly life in the power of the Spirit.

The life we live either fortifies us against Satan's attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us (2 Cor. 6:1–10).

When Satan accuses the Christian, it is the righteousness of Christ that assures the believer of his salvation. But our positional righteousness in Christ, without practical righteousness in the daily life, only gives Satan opportunity to attack us.

The shoes of the Gospel (v. 15). The Roman soldier wore sandals with hobnails in the soles to give him better footing for the battle. If we are going to “stand” and “withstand,” **then we need the shoes of the Gospel.** Because we have the peace with God (Rom. 5:1) that comes from the Gospel, **we need not fear the attack of Satan or men.** We must be at peace with God and with each other if we are to defeat the devil (James 4:1–7). But the shoes have another meaning. We must be prepared each day to share the Gospel of peace with a lost world.

The most victorious Christian is a witnessing Christian.

If we wear the shoes of the Gospel, then we have the “beautiful feet” mentioned in Isaiah 52:7 and Romans 10:15. Satan has declared war, **but you and I are ambassadors of peace** (2 Cor. 5:18–21); and, as such, **we take the Gospel of peace wherever we go.**

The shield of faith (v. 16). The shield was large, usually about four feet by two feet, made of wood, and covered with tough leather. As the soldier held it before him, it protected him from spears, arrows, and “fiery darts.” The edges of these shields were so constructed that an entire line of soldiers could interlock shields and march into the enemy **like a solid wall.**

This suggests that we Christians are not in the battle alone. **The “faith” mentioned here is not saving faith, but rather living faith, a trust in the promises and the power of God. Faith is a defensive weapon which protects us from Satan’s fiery darts.**

In Paul’s day, arrows, dipped in some inflammable substance and ignited, were shot at the enemy. Satan shoots “fiery darts” **at our hearts and minds: lies, blasphemous thoughts, hateful thoughts about others, doubts, and burning desires for sin. If we do not by faith quench these darts, they will light a fire within and we will disobey God.**

We never know when Satan will shoot a dart at us, **so we must always walk by faith and use the shield of faith.**

The helmet of salvation (v. 17). Satan wants to **attack the mind, the way he defeated Eve** (Gen. 3; 2 Cor. 11:1–3). The helmet refers **to the mind controlled by God.**

It is too bad that many Christians have the idea that the intellect is not important, when **in reality it plays a vital role in Christian growth, service, and victory.** When **God controls the mind, Satan cannot lead the believer astray.**

The Christian who studies his Bible and learns the meaning of Bible doctrines is not going to be led astray too easily.

We need to be **“taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus”** (Eph. 4:21).

We are to **“grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”** (2 Peter 3:18).

Wherever Paul ministered, he **taught the new converts the truths of the Word of God, and this helmet protected them from Satan’s lies.**

One Sunday afternoon, I visited a man who had been a deacon in a local church, but was at that time involved in a false cult. We sat at the table with open Bibles, and I tried to show him the truth of God's Word, but it seemed his mind was blinded by lies. "How did you happen to turn away from a Bible-preaching church and get involved in this belief?" I asked, and his reply stunned me.

"Preacher, **I blame the church.** I didn't know anything about the Bible, and **they didn't teach me** much more. I wanted to study the Bible, but **nobody told me how.**

Then they made me a deacon, and I wasn't ready for it. It was too much for me. I heard this man preaching the Bible over the radio and it sounded as if he knew something. I started reading his magazine and studying his books, and now **I'm convinced he's right.**"

What a tragedy that when his local church took him in, **they failed to fit him with the helmet of salvation.**

Had they practiced the truth found in 2 Timothy 2:2, this man might not have been a casualty in the battle.

The sword of the Spirit (v. 17b). This sword is the offensive weapon God provides us. The Roman soldier wore on his girdle a short sword which was used for close-in fighting. Hebrews 4:12 **compares the Word of God to a sword, because it is sharp and is able to pierce the inner man just as a material sword pierces the body.** You and I were “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37; 5:33) when the Word convicted us of our sins.

Peter tried to use a sword to defend Jesus in the Garden (Luke 22:47–51); but he learned at Pentecost that the “sword of the Spirit” does a much better job.

Moses also tried to conquer with a physical sword (Ex. 2:11–15), **only to discover that God’s Word alone was more than enough to defeat Egypt.**

A material sword pierces the body, but **the Word of God pierces the heart.** The more you use a physical sword, the duller it becomes; but **using God’s Word only makes it sharper in our lives.** A physical sword requires the hand of a soldier, but the sword of the Spirit **has its own power**, for it is “living and powerful” (Heb. 4:12). The Spirit wrote the Word, and the Spirit wields the Word as we take it by faith and use it.

A physical sword wounds to hurt and kill, **while the sword of the Spirit wounds to heal and give life.** But when we use the sword against Satan, we are out to deal him a blow that will cripple him and **keep him from hindering God's work.**

When He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, **Christ used the sword of the Spirit and defeated the enemy.** Three times Jesus said, **"It is written"** (Luke 4:1–13). Note that Satan can also quote the Word: **"For it is written"** (Luke 4:10), **but he does not quote it completely. Satan tries to use the Word of God to confuse us, so it is important that we know every word that God has given us.**

“You can prove anything by the Bible,” someone said. True—if **you take verses out of context**, leave out words, and apply verses to Christians today that do not really apply. **The better you know the Word of God, the easier it will be for you to detect Satan’s lies and reject his offers.**

In one sense, the “whole armor of God” is a **picture of Jesus Christ**. Christ is the Truth (John 14:6), and He is our righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) and our peace (Eph. 2:14). His faithfulness makes possible our faith (Gal. 2:20); He is our salvation (Luke 2:30); and He is the Word of God (John 1:1, 14).

This means that **when we trusted Christ, we received the armor**. Paul told the Romans what to do with the armor (Rom. 13:11–14): wake up (Rom. 13:11), **cast off sin, and “put on the armor of light”** (Rom. 13:12). **We do this by putting “on the Lord Jesus Christ”** (Rom. 13:14). By faith, put on the armor and trust God for the victory. Once and for all, we have put on the armor at the moment of salvation. But there must be a **daily appropriation**. When King David put off his armor and returned to his palace, **he was in greater danger than when he was on the battlefield** (2 Sam. 11). We are never out of reach of Satan’s devices, **so we must never be without the whole armor of God**.