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Series: Wholly Armed, Part 3

I'm Wearing Size 2B

Text: Ephesians 6:13-14

Therefore. Someone has said, "In scripture, when you see a *therefore*, find out what it's *there for*."

"Therefore, in light of what I have written up to this point", says Paul, "Take up the whole armor of God".

In light of the presence of a real devil and in light of the fact that he has a strategy, get spiritually and properly dressed!

Verse 13 is very similar to verse 11. Both contain the rationale for getting spiritually armed. It is so *that* you may be able to stand. Paul is saying that we are incapable of standing against evil in our own strength, our own dress, and our own capabilities.

Stand, stand, stand. Look at that word in verses 11...and 13...and 14.

We are able to stand as we are clothed in Christ. When we are spiritually naked, we will not win the battle with our enemy.

Over the next weeks we will walk through this passage and look at each of the six pieces of our spiritual armor Paul lists and seek to understand what those pieces mean for us today. In verse 14, Paul lists the first two. All the pieces, except one, are

defensive rather than *offensive*.

The girdle or belt.



A Roman Soldier wore a girdle or belt as the piece which held the rest of his uniform together. He tucked his tunic or robe into that belt. The sword was sometimes hung from that belt.

In that culture, people wore loose fitting garments and if they wanted to move around freely, without tripping, they used a girdle(belt) to tie all the flowing robes together(Luke 12:35,37). This apron-like piece of dress covered the loins, the midsection. I want to suggest that the core of our being, the gut of us, ought to be covered(protected) by truth. Scholars are divided in their interpretation of the word *truth* in this passage. Is Paul

referring to the truth of God's word or is Paul referring to the integrity, the truthfulness of the believer? The answer is "yes". We make at least a two-layer commitment to truth. We both see it as an attribute of our God, in whom there is no falsehood AND we embrace truth as a way of life for ourselves. This concept was terribly important to Paul as he wrote to the Church at Ephesus. Look at 1:13, 4:15, 4:21, 4:24, 4:25, and 5:9 in this letter. Satan, our enemy, is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Jesus said he was the way, the truth and the life. Those who are followers of Jesus commit themselves to walking in the **way**, living in **truth** and deriving their **life** from Jesus.

Oprah Winfrey and other New Age thinkers, love to talk and write about truth.

However, they speak of truth as relative and negotiable. In a posting on oprah.com I read:

There are only two kinds of truth: objective and subjective. Objective truth is that which is a fact and is completely separated from our opinion, biases, feelings or thoughts about it. Subjective truth is what is based on my perspective, my feelings or my opinions. Oprah and others, see nearly all truth as subjective. However, when Paul admonished the Ephesians to wear the belt of truth, he is talking about having them

wrap themselves in that which does not change. We are to both clothes ourselves in Christ AND commit ourselves to lives of truthfulness.

Illus.

I recently commended one of our worship planners on a prayer of confession that was well-written and so appropriate to that Sunday. The worship planner thanked me. Several days later, the worship planner pulled me aside and said. “Now that I think about it, I did not write that prayer, that contained phrases borrowed from other writers.” I appreciated the planner’s commitment to truthfulness. Some would have accepted the commendation and let me assume it was their own writing.

There is a body of knowledge called “the truth” and we are committed to it. We come to know it as we walk *with* and *in* Christ. Jesus, standing before Pilate in John 18:37:

Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”

Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Everyone who is serious about Jesus and about being a victor, as we fight our enemy, will put this piece of equipment on. Truth. We were born again by it (James 1:18).

Jesus, in his priestly prayer in John 17:17 said to God, “Your word is truth”. It is the belt that holds all life together. Our commitment to truth, embodied in Jesus, protects our innards.

As I am dressed for battle, I’m wearing size 2B.

I wear a **belt** and a **breastplate**.

1. The breastplate of righteousness



When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he spoke about the “breastplate of faith and love” (1 Thessalonians 5:8).

Note the language of verse 14. It contains an imperatival participle. That is, this both a command **and** the enabling power verb that goes with it. The implication, as we read the two clauses, is that we cannot stand until we have put on the breastplate. Did you see it? “Stand(imperative), *having put on(enabling verb)*...” As there is some disagreement among scholars regarding *truth* in this verse 14 (the truth of God’s word/Christ the Truth or the truthfulness of the believer), likewise, there is division on

the meaning of *righteousness* here. Does this refer to the righteousness of Christ laid upon us (imputation) at salvation or does this refer to the believers' personal commitment to choose the right when the wrong is presented? Is it the righteousness of Christ, or personal holiness that is referenced here? The answer is "yes". The breastplate of a soldier's uniform covered him from the neck to the waist, front and back. The most vulnerable areas of his body were protected by the breastplate. If Satan wants to get at us, he's going to attack our wills, our emotions. These are matters of the heart. Guard your heart!

Proverbs 4:23

*Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.*

Up to now, Paul has been writing about *walking*(4:1,17; 5:2, 8,15).

Now Paul writes about *standing*(6:11, 13, 14). We walk, we stand, we resist. All this is made possible as the Holy Spirit dwells in us and enables us.

Dr. Abraham Kuruvilla notes that for every piece of armor, there is divine provision and human responsibility. That's a helpful way to look at this text. Here is this text, God provided truth, but we have to put it on. God provides righteousness in Jesus Christ, but we have to put on the new person (Ephesians 4:24).

I am dressed for battle and I'm wearing size 2B. One belt, one breastplate!

I'm not by myself. No, there is One who, according to Isaiah 59:17, comes to deliver His people.

Isaiah said,

“He put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and was clad with zeal as a cloak.”

We are fully dressed for battle...and so is our God!!

Hallelujah!

Amen