

“Spiritual Warfare 6: The Hopeful Helmet”

We all lose hope at different times during our lives. When we lose hope the battle is lost. Dozens of comprehensive studies have established that fact. One study entitled “The Broken Heart Study” researched the mortality rate of 4,500 widowers within six months of their wives deaths. Compared with other men the same age the widowers had a mortality rate 40% higher. Major F.J. Harold Krishner, an army medical officer held captive by the Vietcong for over five years cites an example of death due “hope failure.” He writes this ...

“Among the prisoners in his POW camp was a tough young marine, 24 years old who had already survived two years of prison camp life in relatively good health. Part of the reason for this was the camp commander had promised to release the man if he cooperated. Since this had been done before with others, the marine turned into a model POW and leader of the camp's stock reform group. As time passed, he gradually realized that his captors had lied to him. When the full realization of this took hold he became a zombie. He refused to do all work, rejected all offers of food and encouragement and simply lay on his cot, sucking his thumb. In a matter of weeks he was dead.”

You see, caught in the vice grip of lost hope life became too much for this once tough marine. That is why tonight the piece of armor that we're going to look at is so important. Because it has to do with hope.

Text: Ephesians 6:10-17a

“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. 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 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 ...*”

Now if you were with us last week you know that we talked about the fact that there are three pieces of armor that the believer must wear at all times: belt, breastplate, shoes. All are necessary and all are important, but there are three that you and I NEVER take off. We are always to be ready and committed, holy, and confident that God is on our side. Last week we learned that in this battle we must rely on what God has told us rather than on what the enemy wants us to believe. Now that leads us to the fifth piece of armor – the helmet of salvation. I want you to notice three aspects about the helmet ...

I. The Soldier's Helmet

No Roman soldier would go into battle without his helmet. To do that would be foolish. The helmets were made out of leather with metal attached to it or it would be made out of cast metal or cast iron and the basic function of the helmet would be to ward off the blows of the broad sword.

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There were a couple of different kinds of swords and the one that is being described in this passage is the broad sword. The idea was that a soldier carrying the broad sword would aim at his opponent's head. This is what happened in the Garden when Peter drew his sword and cut off Malcus' ear (John 18:10). Peter wasn't aiming for his ear. The guy ducked and just missed losing his head.

A Roman soldier would go into battle with his helmet on because there would be guys coming into the battle riding horses and they'd be swinging that broad sword trying to take the guy's head off. The hope was that the helmet, in conjunction with the soldier ducking would cause the sword blade to slide off and spare the soldier's life so he could continue fighting.

II. The Saint's Salvation

The helmet is NOT talking about being saved. Paul is NOT saying to you and I ... “now that you're fighting satan, now that you have the belt, now that you have the breastplate, now that you have the shoes, now that you have the shield, now that you have all of that, what I want you to do is I want you to get saved.” That's already happened. Because you're not even in the army unless you're a believer. If you're in the battle it's because you've already come to Christ. He's not saying, “By the way, fifthly you need to get saved.” You already got that in Ephesians 2:8,9:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast.”

You're already in the army so he talking about something more than getting saved. Satan does not attack in same way if you're not a believer. He leaves unbelievers to their own devices and allows sin to take its natural course in their lives.

Question: What is the nature of salvation?

In order to understand this we'll need to have a little theology lesson tonight on the nature and meaning of salvation. Salvation is NOT an event, it's a process. Salvation is not something you did at one time – that was repentance and confession. Salvation is something that BEGAN at one time. It is a process of God working in your life.

Three Aspects To Salvation:

- 1) Past – we were freed from the penalty of sin. (Justification – something that has happened.)

Read: Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

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- 2) Present – we have power over sin. (Sanctification– something that is happening.)

Read: Romans 6:7

“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin -- because anyone who has died has been *freed* from sin.”

Read: Ephesians 3:20

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us ...”

Read: Philippians 2:13

“... For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

Read: II Corinthians 3:18

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

Read: Romans 8:26

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

- 3) Future – freedom from the presence of sin. (Glorification – something that will happen.)

There is coming a day when we'll be freed from any presence of sin. Revelation talks about a time when sin will no longer exist. There is a day coming when there will be no more death. No more death means no more sin because the wages of sin are death.

The Process: “Whom He justifies, He sanctifies, and He glorifies.”

It's important for us to realize that the helmet of salvation deals with the future aspect of salvation. It's talking about the future and that you and I will be saved! Paul is illustrating for us here how the creation was affected by the presence of sin.

Read: Romans 8:20a, 22-23

“For the creation was subjected to frustration ... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

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Our soul is saved and is being saved but there is coming a day when our body along with our soul will be saved. When the body will be redeemed. When we will be changed. In fact, in that moment we will receive a glorified body that is no longer subject to the frustration of sin. It is no longer tempted by sin, it is no longer weakened by sin, it is no longer under the domination of sin in any form. That has not yet happened to any of us here tonight. Sin is still at work in our bodies. We are in a constant state of decay. But there is coming a time when our body will be changed!

Read: I Corinthians 15:50-52

“I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

Read: Romans 8:24a

“For in this hope we were saved.”

Let’s illustrate it this way to help you put all of this together in your mind … If someone said to you that the salvation you now have is all that there is and there is no future aspect of salvation, how would you respond?

Read: I Corinthians 15:32

“If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’”

What he’s saying there is that “If all I’ve done it for is what I can get in this life, then maybe it was worth it and maybe it wasn’t because certainly not everyone who is a Christian has an easy life.” It all has to do with perspective. Some of us have had easier lives than others. Look at Paul’s life:

Read: II Corinthians 11:23-28

“I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers.²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”

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We have it easy today in the church. As a whole, we as the body of Christ do not spend too much time talking about Heaven. We don't emphasize the need for an eternal mindset enough. There is much to be said about having a heavenly mindset. What we're talking about here in the context of the Christian's armor is the thought of heaven. Let's look together at the importance of this and why it is so critical to spiritual warfare. We must begin to think about the things of eternity and heaven.

Question: If the salvation we have today was all there was, what would that mean for us?

We'd have to fight our flesh for the rest of eternity. We'd constantly be struggling against the enemy and our own sinful desires. You'd be struggling with your attitude, emotions, and desires. It'd be like running a race without a finish line. A never-ending battle. If we don't have the promise of a future salvation and of heaven then we don't have much. Because the promise of heaven tells me that there will come a day when the battle is over! There's coming a day when this fight as I know it will be over and I'll be through. I'll put down my weapons and the battle will be completed.

Read: Galatians 5:5

“But by faith we *eagerly* await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.”

Read: I Peter 1:3-9

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you,⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.⁷ These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Read: I Thessalonians 5:8

“But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Question: What is the helmet of salvation?

It is the confidence in a full and final and complete salvation that is yet to come. It is a confidence that someday the battle will be over.

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So what good does all this do us? That leads me to the third thing I want you to see tonight ...

III. Satan’s Sword

Why do we need a helmet? Because satan has a sword. There is an enemy we face that desires to take his broad sword and he desires to cut off our heads with his sword.

Question: What is his sword?

It is *discouragement*. If he can’t make you doubt as we learned about last week, he wants to try and discourage you.

Question: How does his sword work?

“You’re working your head off. You’re giving your all to the church. You’ve been down there and you’ve been working with the kids, you’ve been ushering and greeting, teaching, cleaning, etc. You’ve been doing all these different things and all of a sudden satan swings his broad sword and says, “You’ve been doing all this work and no one gives a rip. No one cares or sees all the hours you’ve put in or no one ever stops to say thanks for the effort you’ve made.”

“You’ve been serving God and have been faithful to Him and what does He do for you? You’ve lost your job ... what a blessing.”

“You’ve been reading your Bible every day but your wife is as cranky as she has ever been. In fact, she’s more cranky than before you bought a Bible.”

“You’ve submitted to that husband of yours for years now and you’ve prayed and prayed for him to get saved and how are things different after all your effort? Where is your God and why hasn’t He answered your prayers and your obedience?”

“What is God doing in your life? You’ve been going to church all this while and look at the neighbors ... look at their kids – they don’t have the problems your kids have.”

It’s easy to become discouraged. We can get tired of the battle. We can become tired of fighting. Paul knew that it is easy to get tired and down and weary ...

Read: Galatians 6:9

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

If we’re not careful what happens is that we want to quit. We want to sit down. Especially if you’ve prayed and it’s not coming together like you expected or wanted. You feel like God is being unfair with you.

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When satan tries to swing that broad sword of discouragement you and I need to have the helmet of salvation on. We need to have the helmet of the hope that there is a finish line, that we will win, that victory is ours. Because when the broad sword comes crashing down it will glance right off of you. The helmet of salvation keeps you from quitting, from becoming discouraged, from giving up. Why? Because you know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that there is a prize waiting for you at the end.

Read: II Corinthians 1:8

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.”

Read: II Corinthians 4:8

“We are hard *pressed* on every side, but not crushed; *perplexed*, but not in despair; ⁹ *persecuted*, but not abandoned; *struck down*, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the *death* of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

Read: Philippians 4:4

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”

Question: How was Paul able to keep going?

Paul, when you get discouraged and your back is bloody, what is it that keeps you going ... Paul, when you feel like you've done so much for God and nobody notices and nobody cares ...

Paul when you're sitting in a prison cell and you've risked your life to bring the gospel to people and you've given them eternal life because you preached when no one else would and now they have forgotten you and some of them are calling you a phony and a fraud and they're saying that you're in jail because God has abandoned you ...

Paul, how do you take it? Good question. How do you stay encouraged in the midst of a terrible situation? How do you keep hope when it seems like the odds are so against you that you'd want to lose hope? How does Paul make it in prison when a tough 24 year old marine can't? What's the difference?

Read: II Corinthians 4:16-18

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

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Paul was a man who had the helmet of salvation on. He had hope in his heart. He was a man whose eyes were on eternity and it gave him hope to go through absolutely everything in his life and never lose heart. That's the value of the helmet of salvation. The helmet of salvation reminds me that ...

Read: I Corinthians 2:9

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”

Read: II Timothy 4:7,8

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day -- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

Read: Matthew 19:29

“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

Read: I Peter 1:3-5

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Read: John 14:1-4

“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Conclusion:

The helmet of salvation is the thought of eternity with Jesus! The problem with a lot of us is that we get so wrapped up in this world. We get so caught up in time that we forget that God has called us to be strangers and pilgrims and we end up being settlers. Our citizenship is not here. It's in heaven. As we begin to think on heaven we will begin to rise up against the enemy as he swings his broad sword.

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Question: Have you forgotten that this life is only temporary?

That heartache that you’re facing, that setback that you’re facing, that reversal or problem that plagues you tonight is only temporary. Probably even in terms of this life it’s temporary.

There was a missionary couple who had given 40 years of their life to the Lord on the field. It had been a very hard life in the heart of Africa. They had given all that they had and because their support waned at times they spent all of their money and they had nothing to retire on. Now after 40 years their bodies spent and their finances gone, their life in the twilight ... they boarded a ship headed back to Europe. As the ship was traveling it took on some other very important guests – the king and queen of England. As this ship steamed toward London, they couldn’t help but notice the royal state rooms, the elegant banquets, all of the wealth that was lavished on the king and queen. As they pulled into the harbor there was a band there and there were crowds singing all to welcome the king and queen. And this missionary began to get discouraged. As they were making their way down the gangplank he turned to his wife and said, “It is not fair. Forty years we’ve given our life to the Lord. Forty years we’ve sacrificed everything we’ve had. And now we come home after 40 years and no one is here to greet us. And this king and queen who have done nothing but were born into royalty have a band and a reception and are treated lavishly. It is not fair.” His wife grabbed his arm and said, “Honey, listen, we are not home yet.”

Tonight we must remember that nothing from this world, except the Word of God and the souls of men, will last. Everything else is temporary. We’ve got to have a heavenly mindset and all the more as the day of evil approaches. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus and be pilgrims in this land. People who are looking for the city whose architect and builder is God. And when we do that, though outwardly we are wasting away yet inwardly we will be renewed day by day.

Next Week: The Sword Of The Spirit