

STAND FIRM, STAND STRONG, STAND IN CHRIST

November 4th / Mark Idol

The Whole Armor of God Ephesians 6:10-18

Main Idea: 1. To be strong in Christ, to stand against the devil's tactics, you must take up the whole armor of God.

Greeting: Good morning church, please turn your bibles to Ephesians 6:10

When Stan told me I could choose any passage of the bible today, I wrestled with a handful of favorite verses, but I kept coming back to Ephesians 6 because of how the Lord has used it in my life. When I was a young believer, I tried to use the picture of the armor to motivate me to be strong, to do great things for Him. But I ended up not being strong, but just trying really hard to perform for Him in my own strength. Not much victory over sin and my ministry efforts felt week too.

The passage on the armor was and is used by God to keep me close to Him and all His promises. In these verses I have found myself able to overcome some very tough trials and temptations by His strength working in me.

Let me pray for our time.

Intro:

Many years ago in Las Vegas NV, as a 9th grade kid I made a bad choice to go with a friend to go to a warehouse party where his big brother's rock band was playing. Multiple problems existed, I was on the worst side of town without my parent's knowledge at a party with alcohol. After some time passed at the party, two car loads of gang members pulled up hollering, starting fights, and breaking bottles. The next thing I knew there were people outside screaming and I see everyone inside running to the back of the narrow warehouse like their lives depended on it. Where I was standing I could not see why everybody was running so I froze for a second. Suddenly one of my brother's friends was trying to keep the door shut with all his might.

Failing to shut the door, it was flung open followed by a large handgun coming through. By this time it was just me and the guy that tried to shut the door in the main area of the warehouse with a gun toting gang member. I ducked, cowering behind a small barrel and tried to be invisible. I heard the guy yell out a gang name and then two gunshots followed by a shout of pain. I looked up to see the gunman leave and looked over to see the 17 year old football star laying on the ground. He survived with a shattered hip from one of the bullets. Most of us do not know what it is like to be so unprotected and helpless in a scene like this. I tell you this story to reveal how **exposed, vulnerable, and how unable** I was to help. A 14 yr old kid in a T-shirt, shorts, and skate shoes. Nothing to protect myself or defend others with. As good as dead it seemed for a handful of seconds. Imagine if I was a trained SWAT team officer with a lot of armor and weapons. Bullet proof vest, helmet, combat boots, belt with

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ammo and handcuffs, training and semi-automatic rifle. I would still have fear but with determination could have been strong to protect that 17 yr old boy and stopped a violent criminal. Yes, this is a terrifying story that never happens to most Americans, but scripture tells us we Christians are actually in a major battle. All followers of Christ are in an intense struggle, a wrestling match daily, whether you recognize it or not. Please consider how spiritually exposed and vulnerable you may be. Are there areas of your walk that could use God's help, His presence, His strength? Let's read Ephesians 6:10-13 so we can see what God has to say about being strong for the battle we all are in.

READ: Eph 6:10-13

The Problems: vs10-13

Immediately after Paul asks us to be strong, he tells us to put on the whole armor of God. Being strong is having all of His armor on. He quickly gets to the point, we need to be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. We are wrestling with rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, spiritual forces of evil. If that was not enough, there are problems that some Christians add to make things worse. First, they may not comprehend or may deny they are in a real spiritual struggle. Our enemy is invisible and so are His demonic darts. It can be easy to ignore this reality, especially if life is really good right now, really prosperous. You may think spiritual battle is for missionaries in pagan 3rd world countries, not for us. Perhaps just for pastors. Do you believe there is a spiritual war being waged in your life, in this church? In vs 12 we are told our struggle is NOT against flesh and blood. This is telling us who our enemy is NOT. Who is flesh and blood? Ephesians ch 5 and the beginning of 6 tell us flesh and blood are people in our lives; wives and husbands, children and parents, or slaves and masters (boss & employees). The real fight is not between you and them, but against all the destructive lies the enemy uses to hurt relationships. Our kids don't come into the world trying to figure out all the ways they can freak out their parents. On our wedding days, newlyweds are not contemplating the many ways they plan to tear down their new spouse. The enemy wants to destroy relationships and pull us back to our old sinful ways. Imagine what a sad state a Christian is in when he/she is oblivious to just how under attack they are, and he has no idea how to withstand the attack. The struggle, the wrestling match is between you and the devil and his demons. This is an unseen world that we don't grasp or understand yet it is warned about. Let's stop for a second and think; A whole army of evil is out there to destroy all that is associated with God, you. Various schemes and fiery darts are designed to kill, steal, and destroy. The enemy is powerful, otherwise God would not be commanding us to stand firm and to withstand. He knows that we are under attack. I like the way God's warnings never camp out on the enemy's power, but He will camp out on grace, holiness, and how to be close to Him. He is so faithful to warn us though. He delivers this warning in an emphatic way. Learning more about the struggle, we should be thinking, "How do I deal with this?" I go to church, I go to Bible study, but sometimes this is just more than I can handle. This creates a

big question in each of us, “how do I do all of this?” If it is so clear why is it so hard to figure out? “I see now I am in a fight, but how do I fight an invisible and silent enemy?” It doesn’t feel like God’s metaphorical armor is helping. I just keep failing, feel stuck, and don’t see great victory. Allow me to make this more tangible for day to day life.

Armor vs 14-18 I want to emphasize that if we put on the whole armor, God states we will have victory, we will be able to stand, we will withstand the enemy.

Having put on- I want to point out these armors are on. Think of the soldier coming in from the field, he may take his helmet off, set his sword down, and his shield, but his breastplate, belt and shoes will most likely stay on. Still recognizable as a soldier but not in battle. In your sermon notes, I purposefully left out the armor descriptions to better help you get your minds around what the armor really is.

1. **Truth** - Jesus is our truth. I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6 When we were born again, all of the truth of Jesus was revealed to us at the cross, the free gift of salvation. Our eyes were opened to finally believe and see God’s word and all the truth revealed in scripture. God began to correct error and lies in our hearts with His truth. The belt of truth is what holds the armor together, you pull your robe up into it so you are fast on your feet and ready. Truth from God is what holds you together, what gives you back bone, gives you readiness instead of hesitation or doubt. Truth was revealed and established when we first heard and believed the gospel. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free. Are you growing in truth? In fellowship, sermons, scriptures, Bible study?
2. **Righteousness** - Jesus Christ is our righteousness. When He died on the cross for us, He took all the wrath of God for sin and placed His righteousness on us, covering us in His blood. Making us white as snow. A soldier’s breastplate protects his heart and vitals, shows his allegiance, shows who he fights for. The breastplate of righteousness also reminds us of Christ taking the wrath of God on our behalf. It reminds us of him imputing to us his righteousness, which is the only way we are seen innocent before God. It is not your righteousness that takes you into battle. We approach God and the enemy with the righteousness of Christ covering our hearts. Jesus, our great high priest invites us to come, Come to the throne room of grace boldly that we may obtain mercy and find grace. Heb 4:16 His righteousness given to you is what makes you right with him, not your good works. With this we can stand before our enemy! Do you believe you are truly righteous in Christ or are you still trying to get there on your own effort?
3. **Gospel** - Jesus is our good news. The good news of Jesus taking away our sin prepares us to walk and to stand. Soldiers need to be able to walk without worry of stepping on sharp objects and from foot traps set by the enemy. Things that slow you down or take you out of the fight for a while. Staying close to the good news of Christ

and applying the gospel to all areas of life protects your walk and gives you sure footing. If we don't forget what happened at the cross and why that is good news, we will not lose step or be afraid to walk forward with God. We won't be afraid to share Him with others. We won't walk in pride or unforgiveness, remembering how much Christ has done for us, how much He has forgiven. Dear saints, don't forget that good news brings gladness. I challenge you to truthfully crack a big smile every time the gospel is mentioned. Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Tim 1:10. Do you believe it is truly good news? Are you joyful about the gospel? Do you push the gospel into all areas?

Take up. The soldier called into battle or when under attack will put on his helmet, and take up his sword and shield. Completely ready and not on break. Take up implies we can put it down. Are some of us like those who after salvation, we stopped exercising faith, stopped enjoying the hope in the saving grace of our Lord, and stopped using the word of God to win battles?

4. **Faith-** Faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross. Faith in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Paul emphasizes faith above the rest. A faith that shields you is only a faith in God, zero faith in yourself. What is so encouraging about faith is that it quenches ALL of the fiery darts of the enemy. Every attempt, every scheme of the devil is repelled by faith in God and His promises. How wonderful is this? Put your faith in God and hide confidently from the evil barrage. We are told that faith pleases God. Are you trusting Him to shield you from evil? If not why?

5. **Salvation** - Jesus is our savior. Helmets protect our brains, our mind. Consider this; holding our thoughts captive to Christ, placing the hope of our salvation on Him alone, will protect your mind, thoughts, and decisions. We are told to take up the helmet. You have to struggle with your own thoughts and the temptations the enemy sends you. This requires forethought and discipline. It takes searching the word about who our savior is, how he saves, when he saves, and what he saves you to. Salvation also means rescue and defense. Do you spend time thinking God is for you? That He is a savior, defender, and rescuer? 2 Corinthians 1:10 (KJV)

Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver [us]; Do you believe Christ's redemption truly saves you. That He will continue to be a savior to you.

6. **Word of God** - Jesus is the Word. The word of God is very powerful when it is opened and delivered with purpose and love. Our Bibles do nothing for us as they sit closed, looking good on the shelf. When we think about, talk about, and use the word we are wielding a sword that delivers grace, encouragement, rebuke, instruction, edification, and comfort. This is a weapon we can easily set down. We must be intentional to take the word and argue it with God in prayer. We must resist the enemy with the Word. We must use the word to love

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on the saints. No longer say, be encouraged or be strong. Say, Be encouraged, God is for you, not against you, you can do all things through Christ which strengthens you, cast all your care on Him for He cares for you. Use the written word to speak for God to His people. It is super rewarding.

Can you share bible verses more? Study how to use the word more? Start the habit of using scripture when helping someone in difficulty.

This fantastic section of Ephesians states clearly, we **are** in a **big fight** and **God Himself is our defense**. The help we have from God is wonderful; He wants to share His strength with us and He wants us to find ourselves enjoying all that He has offered us. He never wants you to fight on your own. He never wants you to show Him you can do it. The only performance He is asking for is for you to press hard into Him, His word, His promises, and to believe He can move mountains, because you cannot.

7. **Prayer** in the Spirit

Prayer is spending time with your Captain. Your King strengthens your armor with Himself and He reveals to you who and what is truly the enemy Eph. 1:21 He is seated above all rule and authority and power and dominion. The reason we need Him, His armor is because He is above it all.

Rom 8:35-38 nothing can snatch us out of his hand, not principalities, or powers or evil
John 17:15-18 (ESV) 15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

Provoke One Another - As you all leave today, I want to challenge you to be doers of the word and not just hearers. Husbands and wives, parents and children, good friends, spend time together talking about the different pieces of armor. Discuss specifically where you have laid down armor for too long, where you need help, or instruction. Let's challenge each other to be complete in Christ. Having all His armor on.

A second way to put this into action is to acknowledge when you see this in action. Someone encourages you with the Word, "wow thank you for using the sword of the spirit." Someone else is exercising great faith in a tough situation, "Hey, you have the shield up and the enemy's darts are blocked." You see your spouse keeping the Gospel in their parenting style, "Hey, nice gospel shoes you have on. ;)"

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Main Idea: To be strong in Christ, to stand against the devil's tactics, you must take up the whole armor of God.

The Gunman

The Problems

Ignorance of the believers true struggle

Doubt that God has given you *all* you need to stand firm

The Armor

Having put on:

Truth

Righteousness

Gospel

Take Up:

Faith

Salvation

Word of God

Stand Guard

Provoke One Another

Take Inventory

Family & Friends Challenge