

Ephesians 6 - Children/Parents; Employee/Boss; The Armor of God

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Ephesians 6

- (b) Parents and children (6:1-4)
 - (1) Children's submission (6:1-3)
 - a. Imperative (6:1)

1 Children, **obey** your parents **in the Lord, for this is right.**

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- The next basic human relationship that needs affecting by the filling of the Holy Spirit (5:15-21) is the one between parents and children...

- "...obey" - *hypakouō*, to obey, to heed; different Greek word than "submit" (Cf. 5:22)

— The first obligation that a child has to their parents, as that child is operating within the blueprint established by God, is obedience

— Obedience is an action; the attitude of obedience will be described in v2

- "...in the Lord" - obedience to parents is part of a child's obligation to Jesus Christ; as the child obeys the parent, that child is fulfilling a service to Jesus Christ

— This phrase modifies "obey" not "parents"; children should not obey their parents if their parents tell them to disobey the Lord

— How strongly God feels about the obedience of children to their parents is documented in the Mosaic Law (Cf. Lev 20:9)

— Paul predicted that in the last days, children would be disobedient to their parents (2 Tim 3:2)

— Yet children who are under the Spirit's control will resist the urge to speak ill of their parents or disobey their parents

- "...for this is right" - obedience is "right" because it is in harmony with God's will for children (Col 3:20); obeying parents is obeying the Lord

— Disobedience of children is a characteristic of the last days (Rom 1:29-30; 2 Tim 3:1-2)

— In Israel, rule by the children was an indicator of degeneracy (Is 3:4,12)

- b. Old Testament support (6:2-3)
 - i. Commandment (6:2a)
 - ii. Promise (6:2b-3)

2 **HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER** (which is the first **commandment** with a promise),

- 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),
- 2 "Honor your father and mother..."—which is the first commandment with a promise—
- 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)
- "...HONOR" - Paul moves from the action of obedience to the mindset or attitude of obedience, which should be one of honoring them
- Jesus gave a practical application of what it looks like for children to honor their parents (Mark 7:9-13)
- One of the ways children honor their parents, from Jesus' example in Mark 7, is to financially provide for and support them in their old age
- In 1 Tim 5:3-4 Paul told Timothy to not have the church support widows who could be supported by their family (children/grandchildren), reiterating the idea that children are to support, financially and otherwise, their parents/grandparents
- As we as adult children are under the Spirit's control, we will have the desire to financially support and assist our parents as they get older
- "...commandment" - Cf. Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16; although we are not "under the Law" (Rom 7:6; 10:4; Gal 3:13; 5:1), the righteousness of the law is still a revelation of the holiness of God
- The Holy Spirit enables us to practice that righteousness (of the law) in our daily lives (Rom 8:1-4)
- An Israelite who persistently disobeyed his parents was not privileged to enjoy a long, stable life in the land of Israel. A clear example of this was Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam 4:11).

3 **SO THAT IT MAY TURN OUT WELL FOR YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.**

3 so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

3 "so that it may go well for you, and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

- Paul rephrased the promise connected with obeying the fifth commandment

— In the original commandment, God promised obedient Jewish children, who lived under the Mosaic Law, "long life" in the Promised Land (Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16)

- Since He has not promised Christians a particular piece of land, Paul restated the promise the lays behind the specific promise more generally, namely longer physical life "on the earth"
- Children who obey their parents avoid many of the pitfalls in life that other, disobedient children, will unfortunately experience
- The advice of your parents should be heeded because of their life experience and knowledge of how the world works. When their advice is heeded, the children will have to endure far fewer trials and sufferings in life than they would if they didn't obey their parents.
- Sin always robs us; obedience always enriches us
- Disobedience to parents is rebellion against God

(2) Parent's duty (6:4)

- a. Negative: do not provoke to wrath (6:4a)
- b. Positive: rear them in knowledge of God (6:4b)

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up by training and instructing them about the Lord.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- "Fathers" - Paul addressed fathers because they are God's ordained family heads on whom He places primary responsibility for child-raising

— Paul stresses God's will that father's give consideration for the feelings of the children under their responsibility

— Nowhere in the Bible is the training of children assigned to agencies outside the home

- Fathers have two obligations/responsibilities to their child(ren):

- "...do not provoke your children to anger" - *parorgizete*, do not exasperate (antagonize, unnecessarily enflame) your children

— When Paul wrote this, it was a revolutionary thought in the Greco-Roman world. At that time, the father had complete authority over the home/family. He could abuse anyone in the home as he saw fit, even as far as sentencing a family member to death.

— Paul made it clear earlier (5:23-24) that the husband/father is the head of the family, but here again he puts restraints on the authority in the area of children, saying that they should not use that authority to provoke or unnecessarily enflame their children's emotions

— How can fathers provoke or antagonize their children?

1. Legalism - where we place on children so many boundaries, restrictions, obstacles that they are impossible to fulfill
2. Arbitrary authority - exercising your authority as a father and head unnecessarily
3. Favoritism - preferential treatment of one child over another
4. Verbal attacks - negative speech, running down your children; "you'll never amount to anything!" It's very easy, in the heat of the moment, to say something that will emotionally scar a child for life. We've long forgotten what we said, but those words sit with the child for a long time as a deep emotional scar.
 - A child does not have the life experience or emotional maturity to be able to process a verbal attack, especially from a parent. They don't have the same verbal skills as an adult does; their verbal skills are in development. They have no way to respond to verbal attacks and in that way are innocent and vulnerable.
5. Providing no adult direction - there are actual studies that demonstrate that children who receive no adult direction in life are the most bitter adults. Children are crying out for restrictions, stability, schedule, normalcy, reasonable boundaries.
 - When parents do not provide any direction or encouragement to their children, and no boundaries of behavior, we have provoked them.
 - "...bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" - transmit spiritual truth to them
 - The transmission of spiritual truth from one generation to the next rests with the parents. It says "Fathers" not pastors, Sunday School teachers, high school teachers, Bible study leaders, youth pastors, etc.
 - This same truth was revealed way back in Deut 6:4-7, which echoes Paul's instruction that it was not the Levitical priests who were responsible for transmitting spiritual truths to the next generation, but it was the parent's responsibility.
 - The Deut 6 passage also uses the word "diligently" (v7) indicating that it requires diligence on the part of parents to communicate and teach their children spiritual truth. Basically, it takes *time*.
 - In Joshua 4:19-24, as Joshua was about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, he provided an example of a teachable moment so that the Israelites could teach their children what God had done, but for them (in drying up the Jordan River) but also for the previous generation when He dried up the Red Sea.
 - However, it appears that the Joshua generation did not heed Joshua's advice, because when that generation died and the next generation rose up, they did not know the Lord (Judges 2:10)
 - Conversely, Daniel and his three friends (Dan 1:6) were raised by God-fearing parents (we see this because each of their names, before being changed by Nebuchadnezzar, reflected an attribute of God). Thus, the parents were godly and they transmitted spiritual

truth to their children, and consequently when these children were out of the home and under pressure to compromise their spiritual beliefs under Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian system, they stayed true to the Lord.

- Timothy was raised by his godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5). Later on (2 Tim 3:15) Paul says that they had taught Timothy the Scriptures from an early age.
- “discipline” - chastening; correction; directing and correcting (Cf. 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 12:8)
- “instruction” - warning; rebuke; reproof; correction by word of mouth, including advice and encouragement (Cf. 1 Cor 10:11; Titus 3:10)
- Fathers are to do both with the Lord at the center of the relationship and training

Responsible authority does not wield power, it serves with it. —Bock

- (c) Slaves and masters (6:5-9)
 - (1) Duty of slaves (6:5-8)
 - a. Imperative: obey masters (6:5-7)

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ;

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear, trembling, and sincerity, as when you obey the Messiah.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

- "Slaves" - at the time Paul wrote Ephesians, approximately one-third of the Greco-Roman world were slaves, as many as 60M people

— Paul is in no way advocating for the institution of slavery, he's simply recognizing that it was a dominant institution at the time he was writing. It is an acknowledgement of the reality of slavery, not a promotion of the institution.

— He's simply giving instructions to slaves on how they are to respond to their slavery from God's perspective

— Why didn't the apostles directly condemn slavery?

1. They did speak out against masters mistreating their slaves (Col 4:1; 1 Peter 2:18-20)
2. Had the apostles directly condemned slavery, Rome would have taken away their freedom to evangelize
3. The apostle's ministry prioritized the salvation of souls over social reform
4. Paul supported emancipation whenever possible (1 Cor 7:21; Philemon 21)

5. Perhaps the apostles knew that the gospel, with its emphasis on human rights, would one day lead to the abolition of slavery. It can be shown in history that the more the gospel spread in a country or area, the more the institution of slavery has waned.
 - Theodore Weld in 1837 wrote a book called *The Bible Against Slavery* that you can read online today. He also wrote *Slavery As It Is* in 1839, which was the work on which Harriet Beecher Stowe partly based her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
 - Weld uses Scripture, including the 8th commandment and the fact that man is made in the image of God to preach against slavery.
- Even though slavery is not legal in the US any longer, these verses can still be applied to the employee/employer relationship, or the vendor/client relationship, whether you are the boss/employer or the worker/employee. In fact, these verses can be applied to any relationship in which someone has authority over you, or you have authority over them (i.e. student/teacher relationship).
 - "...be obedient" - a command
 - "...to those who are your masters" - to your employer, your teacher, etc.; anyone who has authority over you
 - "...according to the flesh" - Paul is differentiating between our earthly/human bosses and our heavenly Boss, here referring to our earthly/human employer
 - What he will go on to explain is that our attitude on the job should not just be to please our earthly masters, but also our heavenly Master. How we do that is covered in v5b-7, where Paul provides seven work habits that would please both human and heavenly master.
 - "...fear and trembling" - *phobos*, as used here, not a term of intimidation but rather of reverence
 - Used in 5:33 to describe a wife's obligation to her husband, translated as "respect"
 - We are to respect those who are in earthly authority over us because after all, God is the One who put them in that position
 - "...sincerity" - without hypocrisy or duplicity; on the job, I'm not saying one thing but doing something else; indicates consistency
 - "...as to Christ" - note the distinction between "as to Christ" and "as if to Christ"; identical to Paul's command to wife's treatment of their husbands
 - In 5:22 Paul says the same thing to wives regarding submission to their husbands...in other words, wives are supposed to be in submission to their husbands in the same way as they are in submission to the Lord. In the employee/employer context, workers should labor for their employers with the same reverence and sincerity that they regard the Lord.
 - When a wife is submissive to her husband, she is honoring the Lord; likewise when an employee is reverent and sincere with their employer (or person in authority over them), they are honoring the Lord

6 not by way of **eye-service**, as **people-pleasers**, but as **slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart**.

6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

6 Do not do this only while you're being watched in order to please them, but be like slaves of the Messiah, who are determined to obey God's will.

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

- "...eye-service" - a Christian's work should be consistent, whether the master/employer is watching or checking up, or not

- Paul may have also had in mind doing work that the master/employer could not check on

- Slacking off when the boss is away is a form of dishonesty

- "...people-pleasers" - even when our boss is looking, we are not ultimately working for him, but we're working for the Lord (who is always looking)

- At the end of the day, we want our boss to be pleased with the work we do, but ultimately we want the Lord to be pleased with the work we do because He is always watching and knows everything that is going on

- "...slaves of Christ" - we're ultimately working for the Lord, and the Lord is always watching

- "...doing the will of God from the heart" - proper motives; we should have the proper motives in our work

7 With **goodwill** render service, as to the Lord, and not to people,

7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

7 Serve willingly, as if you were serving the Lord and not merely people,

7 With good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men:

- "...goodwill" - not as a fault finder, a complainer, or a rabble-rouser, but quietly, out of a heart of goodwill toward those in authority

- We are to view our earthly authority figures/employers as someone whom God has put into that position, and thus we should exemplify a proper attitude toward that person

By understanding this passage, it's clear that to God, a job is more than just a job: it's also a ministry. You are extending your ministry inside the place of employment where God has placed you. Many Christians are confused about the scope of ministry, thinking that any ministry we may be involved in must take place within the four walls of the church, and the only person who is a minister is the person behind the pulpit on Sunday morning.

b. Reason: God rewards (6:8)

8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, he will receive this back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

8 because you know that everyone will receive a reward from the Lord for whatever good he has done, whether he is a slave or free.

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

- Even if your diligent, sincere work is never recognized by your employer or earthly authority, it is recognized by God

— If you miss out on a promotion that you deserved, if you missed out on the raise that your work deserved, you can rest assured that because God's eyes are never off of us and our work, He sees our diligence and sincerity and will one day reward us for it, even when our employer overlooks it

— If we do not receive an earthly reward for our diligent work (raise, promotion), God will in the end reward us at the Bema Seat judgment of rewards (1 Cor 3:10-15; 2 Cor 5:10)

An old missionary returning from many years of sacrificial service in Africa, on the same ship with President Theodore Roosevelt, returning from a big game hunt in Africa. When the ship docked, great crowds, press, et al., greeted the President. The old missionary and his wife walked off unnoticed and made their way to a cheap hotel. "It doesn't seem right! We gave our lives in Africa to win souls to Christ and when we arrive home there's nobody to meet us. The president shoots some animals and receives a royal welcome!" the missionary complained. "Because we aren't home yet," the wife noted.

(2) Duty of masters (6:9)

a. Imperative: do not threaten (6:9a)

b. Reason: God judges (6:9b)

9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

9 Masters, treat your slaves the same way. Do not threaten them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

- "...masters" - employers or anyone in authority over another

- "...do the same things to them" - the same thing Paul says employees owe their employers (v5-8), he is now saying that employers owe their employees
- "...give up threatening" - do not use your position of authority to abuse or take advantage of another human being; do not treat people in an unfair way
- Just because you are in a place of authority, don't be deluded into thinking that you can use your position to manipulate or take advantage of one of those whom you are in authority over
- Employers are not to use their position of authority to harass, devalue or to antagonize someone else
- This verse about slave masters was radical when Paul wrote it...slave masters in the 1st century believed that a master could never be friends with a slave because they have nothing in common. They looked at slaves as tools, and tools as inanimate slaves. A slave was nothing better and had no more rights than a tool or other implement.
- Masters would throw away slaves like garbage on the trash heap when they became older and unproductive; when a slave was ill, it would be too extravagant to provide them with minimal medical care. Old and sick slaves were broken and inefficient tools.
- So when Paul says that a master is not to threaten his slaves, this was revolutionary in the Greco-Roman world
- "...both their Master and yours is in heaven" - masters were to recognize their accountability to theirs (and their slaves') heavenly Master
- It doesn't matter how high on the corporate ladder you rise, it doesn't matter how many people are under you...you must always remember that there will always be Someone above you, the Lord, and He will hold you accountable for how you treated those you are in authority over
- "...there is no partiality with Him" - God is not impressed with your high position or your high salary and bonus compensation. He treats all people equally, without partiality. What He is impressed with is servant-leadership, which is why He put you, as a believer, in that position of authority.
- The overall point Paul is making is one of authority and headship (Jesus over church, husband over wife, parents over children, masters/employers over slaves/employees), however in each of these authority/headship relationships, the head is commanded to perform as a servant-leader
- Jesus also taught this principle to the disciples in Mark 10:42-45
- We see here in v9 God's care and provision for the "little guy"...
- There were many provisions protecting the poor in the Mosaic Law (Lev 25:53; Deut 25:4; 24:17)
- God also condemns exploitation of the poor (Amos 4:1-2; James 5:1-6). The Bible never condemns money or wealth, but it often condemns exploitation of the poor.

- Proof that God identifies with and protects the poor and working class is that God incarnate was a carpenter

Our Three-Dimensional Warfare

Our wealth as believers make us a target for Satan. You notice that the more money you have, the more you become a target of people? Thieves and swindlers do not typically target the poor and downtrodden, they target the people who have wealth and money. When we are blessed with every spiritual blessing, we all of a sudden become a target. When we become a Christian, we inherit three enemies: the world, the flesh (sin nature) and Satan. The reason why so many Christians remain in immaturity is because they don't know they have three enemies, and if they are aware of them, they have no idea how to combat them. They don't understand the divine resources that God has given to defeat each enemy. It's important that we don't fear these enemies because God has given us sufficient resources to deal with the strategies and tactics of each, to help us overcome them.

See [Ephesians 17 Three Dimensional Warfare \(Eph 6:10-12\)](#) for additional details on our three enemies.

(7) Walk of warfare (6:10-20)

(A) Be strong in the Lord (6:10)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord, relying on his mighty strength.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

— "...be strong" - present tense, meaning "to continually be strong"; imperative mood, meaning it's a command; passive voice, meaning we receive the action

— I'm strong when I avail myself of the resources that God provides, which Paul describes below

— "...strength" - *kratei*, power that overcomes resistance (as used in Christ's miracles)

— "...might" - *ischyos*, speaking of God's inherent strength

— "Strong," "strength," and "might" all appear in 1:19; here they each recur, reminding us that all of the Lord's strength and power is available to us in our spiritual warfare

The contrast of v10-11 are examples of the balanced teaching of Scripture: Paul expresses the proper combination of divine enabling and human cooperation in the area of spiritual warfare.

(B) Put on God's armor (6:11a)

(C) Purpose: to stand against Satan (6:11b-12)

11 Put on the **full armor of God**, so that you will be able to stand firm against the **schemes** of the devil.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

11 Put on the whole armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the Devil's strategies.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

- "Put on" - *endyō*, aorist middle imperative, meaning to put it on and continue to put it on; the subject (believers) are both the agent and the recipient of the action; the imperative mood means that it is a command, not a suggestion (1 Thess 5:8)

— He supplies it for the believer (Cf. Is 11:5; 59:17)

— Be *completely* armed (also in v13) *before* the battle begins...you are already on enemy turf!

- "...full armor of God" - the divine resources that God provides in order for the Christian to be victorious over all of the methods of Satan

— God wants us to be aware of the problem, because Satan is a big problem in the life of a Christian, but He also wants us to be aware of the solution

— The reason we are to accept the equipment that God provides for waging spiritual warfare is to equip us to withstand all of Satan's attacks

— In light of the context of Ephesians, Satan's aim has primarily been to sow disunity within the body of Christ. However, what Paul says here applies to all of Satan's aims and attacks.

- "...schemes" - *methodeia*, methods, strategy and tactics; the devil has a strategy to attack Christians, which is described in multiple passages

— Our job as believers is to "watch the film" by knowing and understanding these passages, so they we know exactly what Satan is trying to do

— Just as a football team will watch hours of film on their opponent before the game, the Christian must do the same thing with their opponent: Satan

— Satan's strategies are nothing new (Eccl 1:9; 2 Cor 2:11). They haven't changed from the Garden of Eden to today. Fact is, he doesn't have to change his strategies because most Christians don't know what his strategies are because this subject is rarely taught or emphasized in church, and we haven't been diligent students of God's Word.

— A thorough knowledge of the enemy and a healthy respect for his prowess are a necessary prerequisite to victory in war. Similarly, if we underestimate our spiritual enemy, we shall see no need for God's armor, we shall go out to the battle unarmed, with no weapons but our own puny strength, and we shall be quickly and ignominiously defeated.

— Satan's methods against believers and the body of Christ come from an intelligent and experienced strategist and they are frequently deceptive (Cf. 4:14)

The Devil

Satan has consistently aimed his personal attacks at getting people to doubt, to deny, to disregard, and to disobey the revealed will of God (Cf. Gen 3; Matt 4). The world system seeks to get people to believe that they do not need God and that they can get along very well without Him (1 John 2). The flesh tempts us to think that we can find satisfaction, joy, and fulfillment on the physical, material level of life alone (Rom 7).

See [Satan](#) for details about Satan's fall, the consequences, his names & titles, his works (past, present and future), and his progressive defeat.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

12 For our struggle is not against human opponents, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers in the darkness around us, and evil spiritual forces in the heavenly realm.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- Whether or not we want to accept it or believe it, all Christians are engaged in three dimensional warfare. Before coming to Christ, we were on the same side as these three enemies, but at the moment of faith, we switched sides.

— Now that you are in Christ, have become wealthy and have been infused with the new nature, these three enemies are now at war with you, seeking to keep you in a state of immaturity and ineffectiveness in your Christian life.

— But if we understand who these enemies are, the resources God has given us to overcome each enemy, we learn that we can become all that God has called us to be, as individuals and as the church, despite ever ferocious attacks.

- "...our struggle" - whether we choose to acknowledge it or not, we as believers are in a moment-by-moment struggle with the prince and power of the air and the fallen angelic kingdom

— The struggle of each believer does not take place in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm. The church wages warfare on a spiritual level, with an enemy we cannot see.

- "our" - this is an individual struggle as well as a corporate struggle among the church, because the church is the pillar and support of the truth (Cf. 1 Tim 3:15)
- Israel's struggles in the OT were physical...they entered the Promised Land and God told them to massacre the Canaanites
- "...not against flesh and blood" - things that are taking place in the physical world are often dictated or controlled by things that are taking place in the spiritual world
- The Bible teaches that there are two worlds: the physical world, which we see, and the spiritual/angelic world that is mostly invisible to us
- The conflict that is happening in the spiritual world has a tremendous impact on what we see happen in the physical world. We see this elsewhere in the Bible:
 - Job - Job and his friends were completely unaware of the conversation between God and Satan (Job 1:6-12). What happened in the spiritual world dictated something that happened in Job's life.
 - In 1 Chr 21:1, David had a desire to number the troops of Israel, yet we learn later that it was Satan who put that desire into David's mind
 - In Matt 16, Jesus told Peter that He needed to die on the cross. Peter didn't think that was a good career move for a Messiah so Peter pulled Jesus aside and rebuked Him. Jesus told him to Get behind me Satan. Peter had no idea that there was a demonic force in his mind causing him to make that statement.
- Our struggle is not against a person, a company, or even a political party...it is against the power and the energy behind these things, which are spiritual forces
 - In Eph 3:10, we saw how good angels are organized according to a particular hierarchy. Demonic beings are also organized into a hierarchy. However, the four terms used of our spiritual enemies do not identify four separate kinds of adversaries as much as they point out four characteristics of them:
 - "...rulers" - principalities; stresses authority
 - "...powers" - stresses their strength
 - "...world forces of this darkness" - point to their wide influence in the world
 - "...spiritual forces of wickedness" - relate to their evil character

(D) Reiteration: put on God's armor (6:13)

13 Therefore, **take up the full armor of God**, so that you will be able to **resist on the evil day**, and having done everything, to **stand firm**.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

13 For this reason, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to take a stand whenever evil comes. And when you have done everything you could, you will be able to stand firm.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

- "...take up" - *analambanō*, to pick up in order to use

— A Christian's posture in this "war" against Satan is defensive..."armor up," "resist," "stand firm". We're never commanded to take down the devil or to be on offense against him.

— There have been many false teachings on how to deal with Satan...casting out demons, praying down territorial spirits, loosing Satan, binding Satan, etc.

— Sometimes "Christian" fiction books will open up our "sanctified imagination" to some of these things, yet we want our principals for spiritual warfare to be derived from Scripture

— The Bible tells me that Satan will not be bound until after the Second Coming (Rev 20:1-3), and in the meantime I live in a world system that he is running

— As we learn about the armor of God in this passage, the divine resources that God gives us, we learn they are both defensive and sufficient (v16)

- "...full armor of God" - Paul will describe six pieces of armor:

1. Belt of truth (v14a)
2. Breastplate of righteousness (v14b)
3. Sandals of peace (v15)
4. Shield of faith (v16)
5. Helmet of salvation (v17a)
6. Sword of the Spirit (v17b)

— Paul repeats the command to "put on the full armor of God" twice (v11,13). The emphasis is on the "full" armor. It would be ridiculous for a Roman soldier to go out to battle with only part of his armor, with his helmet and sword, but without his breastplate or shield. If the soldier did not have the full armor on, he would quickly be defeated.

— Paul is telling us very clearly that we need to appropriate each piece of armor

- "...resist...stand firm" - hold the line; don't give up ground. A defensive posture.

— Why are we commanded to be on defense against Satan? Because Satan is already defeated. Did Jesus leave something still undone after His victory on the cross that I now have to come in and clean up? I don't think so (Cf. 2 Peter 2:10-11).

— God details Satan's progressive defeat throughout the Bible; see note: **Satan's Progressive Defeat** below.

- "...the evil day" - Satan does not come at us all the time; he comes at us at specific times, and always targets specific weaknesses. He strategizes against us, seeking an opportunity, a surgical strike directly at our weakness our area of vulnerability.

— In 4:27, Paul talked about not giving the devil an *opportunity* (by allowing anger to fester); the devil is always seeking an opportunity to discredit us, to neutralize our effectiveness for Christ on the earth

— In Luke 4:13, after Satan tempted Christ and failed, it says that Satan "left Him *until* an opportune time." The devil left, and waited for a future opportune time to tempt Jesus again.

Why are we commanded to be on defense against Satan? To understand this, we have to understand Satan's progressive defeat. We have to understand that according to God's plan, Satan is not defeated in one fell swoop, but rather he is progressively defeated throughout history, up until the very end.

Satan's Progressive Defeat

1. Initial eviction from heaven (Is 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17)
2. Eden (Gen 3:15)
3. Cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8)
4. Midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev 12:9)
5. Beginning of the millennium (Rev 20:2-3)
6. End of the millennium (Rev 20:10)

We are living after the first three defeats of Satan, but before the final three defeats of Satan have been carried out. Compare it to a criminal trial in our judicial system: once the accused has been convicted (the guilty phase), the Judge will determine his sentence (the sentencing phase). This is what has happened to Satan: at the cross, he was defeated (found guilty), his fate is sealed. Now we're just waiting for the sentence to be carried out. So because Satan is defeated already, but his sentence has not yet been carried out, there's no point to be on offense against Satan. He's already lost, Jesus already declared victory over him, so did Jesus leave something still available after His victory that we have to come in and clean up? I don't think so.

God has already laid out the sentencing phase of the trial in Rev 20...the incarceration of Satan during the millennial kingdom (20:1-3), then the final life sentence in 20:10. There's nothing we can do to contribute to that...it's all God.

A Description of the Armor (v14-17)

A few preliminary observations...

1. When Paul wrote these words, he was in prison (Cf. 3:1). In 6:20, Paul makes a reference to his chains.

2. What was Paul chained to? Most likely a Roman guard (centurion). In Phil 1:13, written around the same time from the same prison, Paul references a Roman centurion. In other words, when Paul begins to talk about the armor of God, he was likely prompted by the Roman guard he was chained to, and the six pieces of armor that they typically wore. So Paul begins to use that object lesson to describe what we as Christians experience in spiritual warfare, using the Roman soldier he was chained to as a metaphor for the defensive tools God has given us against our adversary.
3. Of the six pieces of armor, four are identified by the noun that is used: shield, breastplate, helmet, sword. Two of them no noun is given, but a verb is given, and it's obvious from the way the verb is used what he's talking about. For example, "gird yourself" is obvious that it refers to a belt, even though the word "belt" is not used. "Shod your feet" obviously refers to sandals (no shoes in those days), but the word "sandals" is never used.
4. The armor was extremely significant in the Greco-Roman world. One commentator says: "It was common knowledge that a well-trained Roman soldier was worth 20-50 barbarians in battle. The barbarians were gigantic in stature, 6-7ft tall, and much stronger than the Roman soldiers. The Roman soldiers averaged about 5-1/2 to 6ft tall, a full foot or more shorter than the barbarians." But the Romans won because of their armor.
5. When Paul talks about the armor of God, he is reinforcing a concept found earlier in Ephesians. For example, when Paul talks about the belt of truth, to understand what truth means you have to understand how he used it earlier in Ephesians. Want to know what righteousness means, you have to study how Paul uses righteousness earlier in the letter. When you begin to understand that Paul is reinforcing something that he has already said in this letter, the armor of God becomes understandable.
Rich Kozart, College of Biblical Studies, says: "Each of these pieces of armor was used by Paul to reinforce a previously mentioned point in the letter. The difference now is that they are presented in a unified and dramatic metaphor that culminates the practical section of the letter. Six aspects of our weaponry will summarize key aspects of the epistle and call the church to action." This is why Paul has chosen to end this six chapter letter with the discussion of armor. He is wrapping up thoughts that he has already introduced earlier in the letter when he mentions the armor of God.
6. The pieces of armor mentioned in the order in which they were put on by the Roman soldier. The foundational piece of armor is the belt of truth, which was put on first, and so on.

7. The verbs in this paragraph are commands. In other words, we can't wait for the armor to be put on us automatically...we have to engage in some action in order to put on each piece of the armor. A Christian must consciously and tangibly appropriate the armor.
8. Outline for each piece of armor:
 - Description - in terms a Roman soldier would understand
 - Represent - what does the piece of armor represent in a believer's life
 - Application - how it functions in every day life
 - Protection - what this piece of armor protects us from

(E) Weaponry enumerated (6:14-20)

- (a) Belt of truth (6:14a)
- (b) Breastplate of righteousness (6:14b)

14 Standfirm therefore, having **belted your waist withtruth**, and having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**,

14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

14 Stand firm, therefore, having fastened the belt of truth around your waist, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

— "Stand firm" - the third usage so far in this passage (v11,13). The last two words of v13, and the first two words of v14.

— Paul continually reiterates through the command to "stand firm" or "resist" that we are in a defensive posture; our command is to not give ground in our life to the devil.

— Four participles follow (v14-16) that describe *how* to stand

— "...belted your waist with truth":

Description: a large leather belt that the soldier wore to protect his abdomen, to gather his tunic, and to hold his sword

- "belted" - girded; the idea of tying it around your waist
- The belt was the foundational garment around which all other weapons are based
- Once the belt was put on and the tunic/robe/coat was tucked into the belt, it gave the soldier a great advantage: freedom of movement, agility, versatility; the ability to move quickly, without hinderance from his robe

Represent: "truth" - *alētheia*, mentioned 6x earlier in Ephesians

- In Ephesians, when Paul uses this word, he means:
 - The Gospel (1:13; 4:21)
 - Doctrinal orthodoxy and stability (4:14)

- Moral purity (4:24-25; 5:9)

Application: the belt of truth is the foundation of our defense, which involves standing in the truth of God's Word, as well as our personal integrity

- When Paul talks about truth, he not only talks about objective truth (facts, reality), but he also talks about life, how we are to walk. Thus, the belt of truth involves both of those dimensions.
- It involves defending ourselves against Satan in the truth of God's word as well as our personal integrity
- There are two dimensions to the belt of truth:
 - There is an objective standard of truth. We are to stand in the truth of God's revelation. When you put on the belt of truth, you're standing in the truth of Scripture.
 - John 8:44 calls Satan "the father of lies" (note the definite article "the" meaning he is the ultimate liar). Lying is his native language.
 - Rev 12:9 says that Satan has deceived the whole world
 - He was able to deceive a full one-third of an innumerable cohort of angels, who stood in the presence of all-powerful, all-knowing, and all present God and saw His glory
 - He was able to deceive Adam and Eve when they weren't in a sinful condition yet...they did not have a sin nature, and he was able to fool them with his lies
 - If he was able to deceive one-third of angels who were in God's presence, and Adam and Eve without their sin nature, what do you think he is capable of with us?
 - As a believer, day after day after day your mind is being inundated with lie after lie after lie. Thus, our only defense against a world system based on lies is the truth of God's Word.
 - The more we read, study and understand the Bible, the easier it is for us to discern truth vs lies. Our protection against deception is the belt of truth.
 - The Bereans (Acts 17:11) are an example of people who put on the belt of truth. Putting on the belt of truth means having one eye on the person teaching and one eye on the Bible, to ensure that what is being taught lines up with the truth of Scripture.
 - In Deut 13:1-5, Moses to the Israelites just before the entered the Promised Land, told them that once they get in, they'll encounter people who would perform miracles, but at the same time they will contradict God's prior revelation. Moses warns them to not fall for the deception because they are contradicting what God had already revealed.

- In Rev 2:2, in his letter to Ephesus, Jesus commands them for putting on the belt of truth. People showed up in Ephesus saying they were apostles and had a message for the church. But the folks in Ephesus put on the belt of truth and said thanks but no thanks.
- 1 John 4:1 encourages us to put on the belt of truth in order to test false teachers. There is not a deceleration of false teaching as we move closer to the return of Christ, there is an acceleration of false teaching, both inside and outside the church.
- 1 Thess 5:21, in the context of prophecy coming into the church, Paul says to "examine everything carefully" and hold fast to what is good. Don't believe everything you hear, but examine it carefully, discard deception and falsehood, and hold on to what is true.
- If you are not a Bible student, you have no ability to put on the belt of truth because you don't know what the Bible says. Heb 5:14 says that through constant use (Bible intake), our senses are trained to distinguish between good and evil.
- The belt of truth is acquired through regular Bible reading and study, which produces in us a mental mechanism by which we can screen true ideas from false ideas.
- Moral purity/personal integrity
 - Putting on the belt of truth is not just a mental exercise...it's something that I also live out in my life
 - I don't just know the truth, but I'm also walking in it
 - If I'm walking in the truth, I cannot be accused (at least fairly)
- Truth is what gives us a foundation on which to base our lives and make decisions; it provides stability. It allows us to be agile, move quickly when necessary, and not be tripped up
- When we are putting on the belt of truth objectively and subjectively, I cannot be tripped up by false doctrine, because I'm walking in the truth. I cannot be tripped up by my own sinful tendencies because I not only know the truth, but I'm walking in the truth.

Protection: The belt of truth protects us from false doctrine

- "...breastplate of righteousness":

Description: a breastplate was a set of steel plates that covered the front and back torso of a soldier

- The breastplate protected the vital organs; nothing was as important as the breastplate

Represent: "righteousness" - *dikaiosynē*, used 2x elsewhere in Ephesians. In Ephesians, when Paul used this word he means:

- Pertains to our practical (rather than positional) righteousness (4:29; 5:9)
- Positionally, every believer is perfectly righteous; God looks at us through the shed blood of His Son and sees absolute perfection, as if I have never sinned, because the righteousness of Christ has been transferred (imputed) to our account
- According to Paul, we should live according to our position...if we see ourselves in the position as a dirty rotten sinner, then we will live as a dirty rotten sinner. But if I see myself as absolutely perfect in God's eyes because of the imputed righteousness of Christ, then I'm going to live according to my new identity.
- So the breastplate of righteousness represents our underlying protection, which includes our righteous character and deeds, which stem from our positional righteousness before God.
- The point of positional righteousness is that the believer should be so overwhelmed by the "great exchange" and their resulting positional righteousness that they should reason that if God has done that, maybe I should live according to my new identity.
- The breastplate of righteousness is simply our righteous words and deeds, but it emanates from our understanding of who we are positionally in Christ.

Application: when I put on the breastplate of righteousness, I am making a conscious decision to live consistently with my position in Christ.

- Lord, you have theologically decreed certain truths about me that I don't deserve, and are wholly from your grace. Because you have done that, in response to this grace gift that you have given me, which cannot be revoked, I will choose to live consistently with your will and according to your commands.
- The moment you make this conscious decision is the moment you have just put on the breastplate of righteousness
- The breastplate protects the vital organs. If you choose to not put on the breastplate of righteousness, to not live consistently with your identity, your vital organs are exposed, and consequently you can take an arrow right to the chest. I'm vulnerable to Satan's attacks.
- For example, David in 2 Samuel...first 10 chapters, everything is going David's way...he's consolidating power, he captures Jerusalem and moves the ark there, he builds himself a palace, he's winning war after war after war. Surrounding nations, former enemies, are afraid of him and bring him tribute. Israel is rolling in wealth and riches. Then one day David doesn't put on his breastplate of righteousness (2 Sam 11), and Satan drills an arrow right into his chest. The rest of 2 Samuel describes the huge consequences David endured for the rest of his life.

- This is not only an individual command, but it's a corporate command. It's your entire small group, your entire church, all of the local churches in your city, and all of the Bible believing churches around the world.

Protection: The breastplate of righteousness protects us from an unholy lifestyle, and it protects me from the wide-ranging consequences (wage) of sin.

- We avoid a lot of problems and hassles in life by living righteously. Sin has a price tag, sometimes a high price tag, and by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, we protect ourselves from these consequences.
- It's the divine principle of sowing and reaping...if we sow to the Spirit, we will reap blessing; if we sow to the flesh, we will reap destruction.

(c) Sandals of peace (6:15)

15 and having **strapped on your feet the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

15 and being firm-footed in the gospel of peace.

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

- "...strapped on your feet" - shoes, or greaves (often of brass or the like), were part of the military armor. The use of them was to defend the feet against the gall-traps, and obstructions (Cf. 1 Sam 17:6).

- "...preparation of the gospel of peace":

Description: a sandal that was fastened under the feet; the soles were layers of leather. It was fastened with leather straps that went halfway up the calf. When the weather was cold, the soldier could stuff their sandals with wool to keep their feet warm.

- Shoes today are nothing more than a status symbol, but shoes in the 1st century were extremely important
- Wars were won and lost based on the quality of a soldier's shoes. The military success of both Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar were due in large part to their armies being shod, thus they were able to take long marches at incredible speed over rough terrain.
- Good shoes measurably increased your chance of success militarily

Represent: "preparation" - the shoe was a piece of armor that prepared the soldier for battle

- "gospel" - good news; the gospel is good news because it brings something positive, some sort of benefit
- The good news that the gospel brings is peace
- "peace" - *eirēnē*, used 7x earlier in Ephesians
 - Positional peace (1:2; 6:23)
 - Before we came to Christ, we were in conflict with God (Rom 5:10)

- When I trusted in Christ, I gained positional peace (Rom 5:1)
- Racial harmony (2:14,15,17 [2x])
 - There was a conflict in Ephesus between Jewish believers and Gentile believers
 - Jews wanted church run their way, Gentiles wanted church run their way
 - Paul explains that the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile in the church has been torn down
 - So in the church, we are at peace with God and we are also at peace with each other
- Unity (4:3)
 - Peace among believers
- So the way Paul uses peace illustrates both a vertical dimension (our positional peace with God) and a horizontal dimension (racial harmony and unity within the church)

Application: because we are at peace with God, we should pursue peace and unity within the church

- The reality that I'm now at peace with God, that my enmity with God that I had before I was a believer in Christ has been called off. This cessation of hostilities between me and God, which is permanent, should then affect how I interact with other people within the church.
- Rather than causing conflict or division within the church, I should seek to be at peace with my brothers and sisters in Christ.
- My positional peace should inform my practical peace; my vertical peace with God should impact my horizontal peace with others
- The moment that I make a conscious decision to attend a church and decide to pursue, not division or conflict, but instead peace with my brethren, is the moment I have put on the sandals of peace.
- Do some research and look up every time the Bible talks about peace between Christians...you'll be astounded by the amount of text dedicated to this topic.
- One of the primary passages is Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17:20-23...an amazing set of verses. Jesus prayed to the Father that the church would be united with the same amount of unity as is among the Godhead.
- Other passages: Ps 133:1; Prov 6:19 (disunity one of the things God hates)
- Negative example: Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4:2-3) were in conflict with each other, and they were tearing the church in Philippi apart. They did not put on the sandals of peace and consequently disunity of some sort had infiltrated into the church in Philippi.
- In 1 Cor 6, believers were taking each other to courts before unbelieving magistrates, which was discrediting the gospel before the unsaved judge

Protection: the shoes of the gospel of peace protect us from discord and disharmony within the church, which could discredit the gospel before the unsaved world

(d) Shield of faith (6:16)

16 in addition to all, taking up the **shield of faith** with which you will be able to extinguish **all the flaming arrows** of the evil one.

16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

16 In addition to having clothed yourselves with these things, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to put out all the flaming arrows of the evil one,

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

- "...shield of faith":

Description: a large, door-like shield; rectangle: 2-1/2' x 4' in size and 2-4 inches thick. It had two layers of wood glued together, covered on the outside with canvas and calf skin. It was bound top and bottom with edges of iron pieces, which easily deflected arrows. For many soldiers, the shield had to be held with two hands, so no soldier would go into battle without it. The shield provided total protection.

- The Roman army would fight in two ways: hand-to-hand combat, but at other times they would hunker down behind their shields and let the enemy exert their ammunition of arrows, which would just bounce off the shield.
- Sometimes the Roman army fought as a community. There would be a row of soldiers on the front row with their shields, and the army would be hiding behind the row of shields. The Roman army understood that they had to win battles together.
- Earlier in Ephesians, Paul told us how we are blessed by God as a church, as a community of believers. Now he develops the idea that we also defend ourselves as a body. Much of the idea of the shield of faith is the reality that we are in a corporate battle with the enemy.
- Think of battles that you have won in the past...did you win them on your own, or did you win it with the help of other believers, the body of Christ, with prayer, assistance, support, encouragement.

Represent: "faith" is used 9x elsewhere in Ephesians; sometimes used as a noun (*pistis*) and other times as a verb (*pisteuo*)

- Nearly every time "faith" is used in Ephesians, in either noun or verb form, it refers to the content of what the Christian believes
- Faith is our confident trust in God and the gospel, in order to withstand Satan's attacks
 - An assault on your mind is coming...when it arrives, you can either trust in God's ways, knowing that they are higher than our ways, or you don't

Application: "...flaming arrows" - some arrows would have a flammable material attached to the tip. Before the enemy fired it, they would light it on fire.

- When these arrows entered the camp, it would cause panic, chaos, other things would catch on fire, and very quickly the army would be frightened, disillusioned, and in their own mind they would become defeated.
- If the army had their shield up, they could absorb the flaming arrow or even extinguish it because of its thickness and the iron edges. Many times these shields were soaked in water so if a flaming arrow hit it, it would diffuse it.
- So the shield would both deflect and absorb the arrows. Once the flaming arrow was absorbed by the shield, the fire would be extinguished.
- Once the arrow was extinguished, the panic and chaos that the arrow was intended by the enemy to cause would be eliminated.

- "all" - the sufficiency of our faith; if we put on the shield of faith, Satan's fiery arrows become powerless to affect us as individuals, and powerless against the church

- Satan aims his flaming arrows at our mind...the arrow of doubt, the arrow of fear, the arrow of impurity, the arrow of selfishness, the arrow of laziness, the arrow of lust, the arrow of disappointment, the arrow of hypocrisy, the arrow of anxiety, the arrow of frustration, the arrow of greed, the arrow of pride
- Charles Hodge says: "It is a common experience for God's people that at times horrible thoughts, unholy, blasphemous, doubting and malignant thoughts crowd on the mind, which cannot be accounted for by ordinary law of mental action. And these thoughts cannot be dislodged, they stick like arrows and fill the soul with agony. They can only be quenched by faith, by calling on Christ for help."
- Satan is targeting these flaming arrows, these thoughts, directly to our mind. The mind is always the target of the adversary (2 Cor 4:4). It's not just the mind of the unbeliever that Satan is satisfied with, it's also the mind of the Christian (2 Cor 11:3).
- Satan knows that if he can control your mind, influence the way you think, he can control you. It cannot be direct possession since the Holy Spirit lives within us, but he can influence us nonetheless.
- The 9/11 hijackers did not need to control all of the plane...they only needed to control a small part, just the cockpit, and they controlled the entire plane. This is how it works in spiritual warfare...Satan only needs to control a small part of you, or even a small part of your mind, in order to influence and control you. If Satan could get you to believe 10% of the lies, it would have tremendous affect on you as an individual and he could cause you to lose your effectiveness for Christ in the world.

- The greatest tool that Satan will use is that he'll inject a thought into your mind and you'll think, How could I have thought such a thing, I must be a terrible person. The fact of the matter is that it's not your thought at all. Or Satan will inject a thought into your mind, then get you to believe that the thought came from God. In actuality, that thought did not come from God, it came from the adversary.

Protection: the shield of faith protects us from the fiery darts of the wicked one that lodge in our mind and tempt us to think that maybe God is not as good, as faithful, or as powerful as we once thought He was, and thus rob us of blessings we could've had in Christ and in life if we had simply trusted God in the midst of the crisis.

- How do we protect our minds from the bombardment of these flaming arrows? When these terrible thoughts come into your mind, your protection is first to recognize that it's normal for a believer, and second trust God's ways instead of the way the satanic thought is urging me to act.
- In reality, this is how it works: a thought comes into your mind. You immediately recognize the thought as from the enemy rather than from God, so you make a conscious choice to not believe that thought, and instead you believe what God says.
- Anxiety - you're worried about your job...finding a job, changing jobs, losing your job, and all of a sudden your mind is controlled by worry. When you put up the shield of faith, you say I'm not going to entertain these thoughts, but instead I'm going to trust God. You may also invoke Phil 4:6-7.
- Fear - a thought pops in your mind and you become fearful of something (likely nothing, but Satan will make you think it's the biggest thing ever). You recognize that fear and say I'm not going to indulge this thought, I'm going to follow God's ways. You may invoke 2 Tim 1:7.
- Anger - someone has mistreated you in the past, then the thought comes into your mind against the people who have been so cruel to you. You have a choice...you can follow the influence of this flaming arrow, or you can follow the influence of God's Word. You may invoke Eph 4:26-27.
- Pride - a thought enters your mind...I'm so good, why am I putting up with so little. In your job or even in your church, you have a desire to promote yourself. You desire to get ahead, even if it means stepping on someone else. Then you recognize this thought, and decide to not trust it and follow God's ways. You may invoke 1 Peter 5:6.

- Satan may come in and say...you have been following Jesus for awhile now and you're just so unhappy all the time. Christianity may work for other people, but it's probably not going to work out well for you. He'll get you to believe that the more you submit your life to Christ, the more unhappy you will be. You recognize that thought as coming from the enemy, put up your shield of faith and say I'm not going to believe this thought, but instead I'm going to trust that God's ways are better. You may invoke John 10:10.
- You get a bill in the mail that comes due and look at your bank account and there are insufficient funds. Immediately you're tempted to lapse into fear, but you recognize that thought and choose to put up your shield of faith and instead believe that God is powerful enough to provide for your needs. You may invoke Phil 4:19.
- A thought comes into your mind and you begin to doubt your self worth. You believe your life means nothing, you have no real purpose, God cannot use me. But you put up your shield of faith and choose not to believe that, and instead believe that you are valuable, precious, and made in God's image. You may invoke Gen 1:26-27.
- What happens when we don't put up our shield of faith when the fiery darts of the enemy come our way?
 - You don't go to hell...but you forfeit a blessing
 - One of Satan's goals is to turn a believer into an unbelieving believer
 - An unbelieving believer is an oxymoron, just like reasonable attorneys fees, postal service, jumbo shrimp...
 - When you study your Bible, you see many people who became unbelieving believers. They were still saved, they are in heaven today, but when a crisis hit, they stopped believing God. They still believed in Him for their salvation, God is enough to save them from hell, but not enough to help them through a trial.
 - Peter was, at times, an unbelieving believer. Peter walked on water for a short time, but then his eyes were off the Lord and he began to focus on the wind and waves. By his actions, he believed that Jesus was sufficient to save his soul, but not enough to help him in this crisis, thus Peter sank. He didn't go to hell, but he forfeited a blessing.

- The Israelites in the wilderness were unbelieving believers. They were saved...they put the blood on the doorposts, they trusted God in crossing the Red Sea, and they saw the dead Egyptians that God rescued them from on the seashore. When they saw God's great power, they "believed in the LORD." God gave them the Law, provided for them, and after their ~10 day journey from Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea, they stumbled. They trusted God because of what He had done to save them, but they couldn't trust Him to fulfill His promise. They were as grasshoppers in their own eyes. Their eyes were off of God and on their problems. What they should've done is put up their shield of faith and realized that the same God who dramatically saved them from Egypt could also deliver them from the giants and fulfill His promises...but they didn't. They should've trusted God instead of the satanic thoughts that entered their minds. Thus, they forfeited a blessing and ended up dying in the wilderness.

- (e) Helmet of salvation (6:17a)
- (f) Sword of the Spirit (6:17b)

17 And take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the **word of God**.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
 17 also take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:
 - "...helmet of salvation":

Description: made of bronze and fitted over an iron skull cap lined with leather or cloth. It covered the head, including the back of the head. There was a back plate on it that protected the neck. There was a brow ridge that jettied out in front, with hinged cheek pieces fashioned by a chin band to protect the face.

- Historians have documented that Roman soldiers rarely suffered head injuries because of the protection provided by this helmet
- Two features of the helmet: when the soldiers wore the helmet, they appeared taller than they actually were, and the helmet also identified them with a group. Everyone in the Roman army had the same structured and colored helmet.
- The moment we trust Christ, we also become part of a group or community, the church. We also appear to be "taller" because we receive spiritual blessings that we did not have before being saved.
- There was a ridge on the top running from front to back. Feathers were inserted into this ridge for parades and festive occasions, but not for battle. So the helmet had a military aspect to it, but also a festive or celebratory aspect to it.

Represent: "salvation" (*soteria*) is used only one other time in Ephesians (1:13)

- Salvation as Paul uses it Ephesians is not limited to how someone becomes saved. This limited meaning would not be helpful to Paul's audience because they were already saved.
- In Ephesians, when Paul uses "salvation" he is referring to the full scope of our salvation: justification, sanctification, and glorification.
 - Justification: a legal term; a declaration of righteousness, an announcement of innocence. Justification doesn't make us innocent before God, imputation does. Imputation is the righteousness of Jesus Christ transferred to me, thus God looks at me as if I'm as perfect as Jesus Christ (Phil 3:9).
 - Sanctification: a long process whereby I'm learning to live my life to glorify God. I'm learning to draw upon God's resources, the power of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. God is teaching me to trust in Him and His resources, and gradually as I walk in this, my life in practical terms begins to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.
 - Glorification: the point in time where we are freed from our sinful body and in the presence of the Lord with no capacity to sin. This event occurs at our death or the Rapture, whichever comes first.
- So when Paul says to put on the helmet of salvation, he's commanding believers to understand the doctrine of salvation, the various tenses/phases of it. Understand that your glorification is just as certain as our predestination, our calling, and our justification (Rom 8:30).
- We also need to understand as Christians that no matter what crises, problems or trials come across our path, the victory is assured and we've already won, not because of anything I've done, but because I'm attached to the Winner.

Application: the helmet of salvation is maintaining confidence of our past, present and future deliverance in the midst of battle, no matter what Satan throws in our direction that causes our assurance to wain.

- God wants us to understand and walk in the fact that no matter what happens to us in this life, we will be victorious in the end. Our final glorification is a done deal, and the way we can be confident in that is that it was promised by God, who is outside of time.
- To God, there is no beginning and no end, so God can clearly see the future as if it has already happened
- Satan would love nothing more than to have you worry about the assurance of your salvation. This is why Reformed theology and Calvinism are so dangerous.
- We put on the helmet of salvation when we choose to have full confidence in our assurance of salvation, no matter what trials or circumstances come into our lives that would attempt to overthrow that confidence and cause us to question our salvation.

- If the Bible is clear on anything, it's clear on the fact that once you come to Christ, on His terms, and receive what He has done for you, every blessing He has for you will be achieved in the next life (John 10:27-29; Rom 8:38-39; Phil 1:6).
- God doesn't order something that He doesn't pay for. He doesn't forget His wallet. When God ordered through you through justification will be brought to completion in your glorification (1 Peter 1:4-5).
- When we put on Paul's perspective of salvation, you have a view on life that you wouldn't otherwise. You're able to see your problems and trials through a certain lens. If you understand that you're on the winning side of history, it gives you a different perspective on the trials and difficulties that you're going through.
- Paul viewed his trials, which were substantial (2 Cor 11:23-28), as "momentary and light affliction" (2 Cor 4:17). He viewed, as we should also, his trials and sufferings in this life with a view toward eternal glory, because we rest in the guarantee of our future glorification. When I view my struggles in this life in comparison with God's promises, they don't look that bad.
- Going through trials, even difficult ones like Paul had, having God's promises in mind gives you an extra measure of endurance that those who do not have this perspective lack.
- Tomorrow, you go to work and get a layoff notice. Serious trial, but against the backdrop of our future glorification, that trial is momentary and light.
- You go to the doctor and he says there's something concerning on the x-ray and we'd like to run further tests. Serious situation, but against the backdrop of our future glorification, it's light and momentary.
- A proper and full view of our salvation helps us put trials and suffering in this life into proper perspective.

Protection: The helmet of salvation protects us from losing the assurance of our salvation and losing hope in the midst of trying times.

- "...sword of the Spirit":

Description: 2" wide by about 2' long; it was sharp on both edges (double-edged), and tapered to a sharp point at the end. It was fairly light in order to give the soldier versatility during close combat. It was typically sheathed on the right leg in order to allow the soldier to hold his shield with his left hand.

Represent: the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Cf. Heb 4:12)

- The sword of the Spirit represents the doctrinal and theological truth that Paul received from the Holy Spirit, and wrote down to send to the Ephesians.
- Over and over again Paul tells us in Ephesians that the Holy Spirit gave him the doctrinal insight, he just wrote it down.

- Eph 1:9: He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He set forth in Him,
- Eph 1:17: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.
- Eph 3:5: which in other generations was not made known to mankind, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit;
- Eph 3:16: that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self,
- "of the Spirit" - how the Spirit sought to bring the Word of God to existence; how He "filled the sails with air" (2 Peter 1:21)
- "...word" - *rhēma*, refers to speaking forth a truth
 - When Paul speaks of the sword of the Spirit, he uses the Greek word *rhēma* instead of *logos*, which refers to a concept or idea
 - In other words, God, in our defense against Satan, wants us to speak forth truth
 - So when Paul says to take the sword of the Spirit, he has in mind the specific and skillful speaking and application of God's written revelation in order to overcome Satan's schemes.
 - What God intends for us when we are under spiritual attack, is that we would be so conversant with God's truth that we would know how to specifically apply it to our situation, and even speak forth divine truth to help us in the midst of spiritual combat.
 - Jesus took up the sword of the Spirit when He was tempted by Satan (Matt 4:1-11)
 - Satan tempted Jesus in three areas: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life
 - Jesus was pushed further than any person has ever been pushed in each of these areas, yet did not yield (Heb 4:15)
 - Jesus answered every temptation from Satan with Scripture (Deuteronomy); He was "speaking forth a truth" (*rhēma*)
 - Jesus gave us the ultimate example of what Paul was referring to when he commands us to take up the sword of the Spirit
 - Eve in Gen 3 was under the exact same temptations as Jesus...lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - Unlike Christ, Eve failed. She failed because she fumbled the Word of God. She misstated God's truth in her response to Satan. She didn't have a firm understanding of God's truth.

- To be able to wield the sword of the Spirit, we need to not just read but study and memorize God's Word. We need to understand doctrine, a bit of theology. We need to have a solid foundation of the whole counsel of God, then continue to build on it daily.
- Ezra's example: he studied, and applied what he learned, then began to teach (Ezra 7:10).
- God told Ezekiel to "eat" His Word (Ezek 2:7-10)

Application: every Christian knows the areas of attack that they are vulnerable to...commit those verses/passages to memory. So when the temptation comes, you decide that you are going to believe God's Word and can speak forth (*rhēma*) these verses from memory.

- If you think that God doesn't have a plan for your life, you may want to commit Prov 3:5-6 to memory.
- You may think that God can't use your life for eternal, strategic purposes, you may want to memorize John 15:5.
- If you struggle with anxiety and worry, you may want to memorize Phil 4:6-7.
- If you struggle with fear, you may want to memorize 2 Tim 1:7.
- If you struggle with hatred or bitterness, you may want to memorize Eph 4:26-27.
- If you struggle with too much ambition, obsessed with success and willing to run over anyone to get it, you may want to memorize 1 Peter 5:6.
- If you struggle with divine goodness, doubting that at the end of the day if God's intentions for you are good, you may want to memorize John 10:10.

Protection: The sword of the Spirit defends us from coming under the deception of Satan's schemes and tactics, and protects us from a life lived in defeat.

Summary: The Armor of God

Belt of Truth

I put on the Belt of Truth when I begin to make a regular habit of Bible reading and study, which then begins to produce in me a mental mechanism by which I can screen true ideas from false ideas.

Protection: The Belt of Truth protects us from false doctrine and also from a life or decisions based on lies.

Breastplate of Righteousness

When I put on the Breastplate of Righteousness, I am making a conscious decision to live consistently with my position in Christ.

Protection: The Breastplate of Righteousness protects us from an unholy lifestyle and it protects me from the wide-ranging consequences (wages) of sin.

- We avoid a lot of problems and hassles in life by living righteously. Sin has a price tag, sometimes a high price tag, and by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, we protect ourselves from these consequences.
- Doesn't mean we don't have trials in our life, because that's how God grows/matures our faith, but it does mean that we skip out on the discipline of God...He doesn't need to "correct" me because of my sin.

Sandals of Peace

I put on the Sandals of Peace the moment I make a conscious decision to attend a church or small group, or other ministry, and decide to pursue peace with my brethren instead of division or conflict.

Protection: The Sandals of Peace protect against discord and disharmony within the church, which could potentially discredit the gospel before the unsaved world

Shield of Faith

When a terrible thought comes into your mind, you put on the Shield of Faith by first recognizing that the thought is from the enemy, and second to trust God's promises instead of the way the satanic thought is urging me to act.

Protection: The Shield of Faith protects us from the fiery darts of the wicked one that lodge in our mind, cause chaos, and tempt me to doubt that maybe God is not as good, as faithful, or as powerful as I thought He was, and thus rob me of blessings I could've had in Christ and in life if I had simply trusted God in the midst of the crisis.

- "Believing unbeliever" - just like the Israelites, who forfeited God's blessings

Helmet of Salvation

When we put on the Helmet of Salvation, we first understand the doctrine of salvation, the various tenses of it, and that fact that our future glorification is certain.

Protection: The Helmet of Salvation protects us from losing the assurance of our salvation and losing hope in the midst of trying times.

Sword of the Spirit

When we take up the Sword of the Spirit, we specifically and skillfully speak and apply God's Word to overcome Satan's schemes. What God desires is that when we are under spiritual attack, that we would be so conversant with God's truth that we would know how to specifically apply it to our situation, and even speak forth divine truth to help us in the midst of spiritual combat.

Protection: The Sword of the Spirit defends us from coming under the deception of Satan's schemes and tactics, and protects us from a life lived in defeat.

The Heavy Artillery

After describing, in very specific terms, the six pieces of armor that a Christian should take up and put on every day, Paul goes into the topic of prayer. It's not a coincidence that he talks about prayer right after talking about the armor of God because prayer is the best weapon we have, yet many times we fail to use it. The other six weapons are primarily defensive, but prayer allows us to go on offense.

One of the most important factors in a military engagement is proper ground support: interdiction, flanking fire, and direct assaults. This goes beyond personal armor. Now we focus on the heavy artillery—with action-at-a-distance—*prayer!*

(g) Prayer (6:18-20)

(i) Petition (6:18)

18 With **every**prayer and request, **pray at all times in the Spirit**, and with this in view, **be alert with all**perseverance and **every request** for **all** the saints,

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times with every kind of prayer and request. Likewise, be alert with your most diligent efforts and pray for all the saints.

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

– "...every...all" – occurs 4x in this verse in Greek, which emphasizes the great need for prayer in our lives; our prayers should be:

- Continual, not sporadic: like reliable soldiers, we are to be keeping diligent, literally, "in all persistence"
- Habitual: public & private; deliberate & spontaneous; supplication & intercession; confession & humiliation; praise & thanksgiving

– "...prayer" – simply talking/communication with God

— Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship with God. The Bible uses the Bride and Groom imagery to describe the relationship between us and Christ.

— If your marriage is having trouble, it's most likely an issue with communication.

Communication is the lifeblood of any relationship.

— Prayer is the tool that God provides to communicate with Him. He communicates with us primarily through the Word, and we communicate with Him primarily through prayer. If your relationship with God is distant, the culprit is likely your communication with God, both from His Word and in prayer.

– "...pray at all times" – the command is to pray all kinds of prayers ("every prayer and request") all the time (1 Thess 5:17)

- "...in the Spirit" - praying in the Spirit is praying according to the will of God as outlined in His Word. It is praying the will of God as expressed in the Scripture, which was authored by the Holy Spirit (Cf. Jude 20).

— In Rom 8:26-27, Paul tells us that the Spirit **helps** our weakness when we don't know **what (or how)** to pray. When this happens, the omniscient Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

- The Greek word for "helps" (*synantilambanomai*) is in the present tense, meaning He "keeps on helping" (Cf. John 14:16,17,26)
- It means He "puts His hands to the work, in cooperation with the believer"
- Not knowing "what" or "how" to pray implies either ignorance of the content and subject of our prayers, or ignorance of the proper method and procedure of prayer

— Many people today try to drive a wedge between the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. If you want the Holy Spirit to speak to you, to guide your life, understand that He wrote a book called the Bible...that's primarily how He speaks to you.

— God is not obligated to answer any prayer request that is not consistent with His will (James 4:2-3; 1 John 5:14)

— The more your mind is soaked in Scripture, the better you understand the will of God. The better you understand the will of God, the more effective your prayer life.

— "...be alert" - be aware of the adversary, be aware of his strategies and his agenda to neutralize your life and make it ineffective for the cause of Christ (1 Peter 5:8)

— "...perseverance" - stamina; the idea that I don't slow down or give up at the slightest roadblock

— If we slowed down or quit when we hit a roadblock in life, we would never get anywhere. That's exactly what Paul is saying here about prayer: don't give up in your prayer life or you'll never get anywhere.

— We are to pray with stamina, pray with a mindset that we will not be easily dissuaded or deterred

— Daniel embodies the idea of perseverance in prayer: he prayed facing Jerusalem 3x per day. Everyone knew this. The only way to get Daniel was to frame him by passing a law outlawing prayer, which the Persians did. But Daniel continued to pray. His punishment was to be thrown into the lion's den, and we know what happened there (Dan 6).

— "...every request" - petition; a call for intercession. We are to be alert and persevere in every request for all the saints.

— Many times our prayers revolve around the holy trinity: me, myself, and I. But Paul is telling us to pray for all the saints.

— Why should we pray for the saints, and what should we pray for them? Paul just finished telling us in v10-17 about our battle against the enemy. We should pray for our fellow believers, that they would understand and appropriate the armor of God in their battles.

Negative Example of Perseverance in Prayer: Peter

- The night before Jesus crucifixion, Peter fell asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus prayed (Matt 26:36-46)
 - Jesus had done the work of prayer, and now met His temptation with strength and dignity, and He overcame it
 - The disciples slept, and now met their temptation with weakness and fear, and they fell before it
- Peter fought a spiritual battle with physical weapons (cutting off Malchus' ear, John 18:10).
- Just a few hours later, Peter was wide awake, in the middle of the night, and denied Jesus 3x.

Positive Example of Perseverance in Prayer: Daniel

- Daniel was a great example of perseverance in prayer: 3x per day
 - Lion's Den (Dan 6)...because he was diligent in prayer
 - Dan 10...Daniel had just received the more specific and important prophecies of the end times in all of Scripture (Dan 9:24-27)
 - He then prayed for 21 days to understand more of what that prophecy meant for his people (Israel)
 - The first day Daniel began to pray for this meaning and add'l information, God dispatched an angel to speak to Daniel and provide this info
 - It took this angel 21 days to arrive to Daniel because he was hindered by the prince of the kingdom of Persia, so much so that Michael was dispatched to help the angel.

We often underestimate (at least in our minds) the power of prayer:

2 Cor 10:3-5 [ISV]:

- 3 Of course, we are living in the world, but we do not wage war in a world-like way.
- 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not those of the world. Instead, they have the power of God to demolish **fortresses**. We tear down **arguments**
 - "...fortresses" - *ochuroma*, refers to the false arguments of his opponents
 - "...arguments" - we wage war against invisible, intangible spiritual forces, powered by Satan
 - Satan doesn't only use demons, he also uses speculations, theories, and incorrect information that contradicts God's revealed truth
 - The propaganda of our enemy run counter to the truth of God
- 5 and every **proud obstacle** that is raised against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive in order to obey the Messiah.

- "...proud obstacle" - pride is anything act or attitude that asserts itself as being superior to God's will or truth

For a parable of Jesus teaching on persistence in prayer, see the Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8).

Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.

(ii) Intercession for Paul (6:19-20)

(a) Utterance (6:19a)

(b) Boldness (6:19b-20)

19 and *pray* in my behalf, that speech may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the **mystery of the gospel**,

19 and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

19 Pray also for me, so that, when I begin to speak, the right words will come to me. Then I will boldly make known the secret of the gospel,

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

- And in addition to praying for all the saints, Paul requested these Ephesian believers to also pray for him. He sensed his own great need for the prayer support of his readers.

- What is Paul's prayer request? That his mouth would speak with boldness the mystery of the gospel. Notice that Paul did not pray for comfort, safety, or provision, but for the effectiveness of his witness and ministry.

— Paul was phenomenally educated, knew the OT forward and backward. He spent three years in the Arabian desert with Jesus Christ as his personal tutor (Gal 1:17-18). He was also raptured into heaven and heard things that man ought not to hear (2 Cor 12:2-4).

— Yet Paul is not relying upon his education or his knowledge to have the right words. He is relying on the people of God to lift him up in prayer so that he may have the right words at the right time.

— When Paul wrote Ephesians, he was just about to go to Rome and have his trial before Caesar. Paul invoked a legal loophole (being a Roman citizen, he could request a hearing before Caesar) because he wanted to get to Rome to preach the gospel.

— Paul says that when he stands before Caesar, I want the people of God to pray for me so that I have the right words, so that the gospel may penetrate Rome. Paul knew that if the gospel got to Rome, it would go everywhere from there.

- "...mystery of the gospel" - everything that Paul has explained so far in Ephesians...our peace with God and with each other; our wealth as believers in Christ

20 for which I am an **ambassador** in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I **may speak boldly**, as I ought to speak.

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

20 for whose sake I am an ambassador in chains, desiring to declare the gospel as boldly as I should.

20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- "...ambassador" - a person who represents the values of his home country to a foreign country

- Paul's citizenship was in heaven (Phil 3:20), but he's representing the values of God in a foreign place (earth)

- "...I may speak boldly" - Paul stresses the need for his readers to pray for his boldness (v19,20)

(8) Conclusion (6:21-24)

(A) Tychicus as the letter's bearer (6:21-22)

21 Now, so that you also may know about my circumstances *as to* what I am doing, **Tychicus**, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

21 So that you may know what has happened to me and how I am doing, Tychicus, our dear brother and a faithful minister in service to the Lord, will tell you everything.

21 But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

- "...Tychicus" - Paul would send him to Ephesus to update them on Paul's circumstances and what he is doing

- He accompanied this epistle to Ephesus, and may have carried it there

- He is also mentioned in Acts 20:4; 2 Tim 4:12; Titus 3:12

22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

22 I am sending him to you for this very reason, so that you may know how we are doing and that he may encourage your hearts.

22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

- Paul wanted the Ephesians to know about his circumstances, not for their benefit, but so they would know how to pray for him

— He also wanted them to be comforted (encouraged); evidently they were worried about his situation, presently in prison, so Tychicus was also being sent to comfort them that Paul was right where God wanted him to be.

(B) Salutation (6:23)

23 Peace be to the brothers *and sisters*, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

23 May peace and love, with faith, be with the brothers, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus, the Messiah!

23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(C) Benediction (6:24)

24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible *love*.

24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible *love*.

24 May grace be with all who sincerely love the Lord Jesus, the Messiah!

24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

<To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.>

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians ends well, but it goes downhill from there for the church at Ephesus...

- 35 years later, Jesus wrote a letter to this same church (Rev 2:1-7), where He told them that they had left their first love (Rev 2:4)
- During the 35 years between Paul's epistle and Jesus' epistle, the Ephesian church had fallen out of love with Jesus Christ. We don't know why, maybe through Christian activity? We don't know, but something came in a replaced their relationship with the Lord.
- Jesus gave them an opportunity to repent (Rev 2:5), but they didn't, so Jesus as promised removed their lampstand (removed their sphere of influence; negated their Christian activity).

- We need to understand that the church at Ephesus was the primary church of that day: Paul, Timothy, John, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila were all connected in some form or fashion to the church of Ephesus.
- Paul, on his third missionary journey, set up his headquarters in Ephesus. Consequently, all of Asia Minor heard the gospel (Acts 19:10). Nobody ever dreamed that the church of Ephesus would fall on hard times.
- Today, the church of Ephesus is a pile of rocks