**SOUL OR THE SPIRIT - Invisible Gear for an Invisible War**

R. Giglio 3/19/21

**The whole series Soul or the Spirit has been working its way to this section of at the end of Ephesians.**

**There has never been a time in my life, when the truth of Ephesians 6:10-20 has been so vital and essential to the lives we are living today.**

There is no question that the world is at war.

So much turmoil, dissention, Struggle and conflict.

While there are no large-scale military conflicts going on right now compared to decades past, it is NOT a time of peace.

The Pandemic is just *one* polarizing issue that has created conflict and animosity in the world. Politics is another. The sanctity of Life, Human Sexuality, Racial Tension, Faith and Religious Freedom are all battlefields that are being fought every day.

The daily casualty count is staggering. Not only with those who’ve lost their lives due to the virus and other illnesses, but very many have lost relationships with loved ones, lost hope for the future, lost trust in mankind and most sadly - lost faith in God.

The war is raging, maybe even on a Nuclear level. But it’s NOT against flesh and blood...

It’s against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

The lack of peace in the world is palpable!

This is why it is SO important to understand the Soul, and the Spirit.

The battle you face every day is a Spiritual one, and if you go at it with just your Soul *(mind/emotions)* you will eventually be defeated.

However, if you suit up and gear up in the Spirit, you will be victorious.

**Sermon: Invisible Gear for an Invisible War**

### **EPHESIANS 6:10-20**

**10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.**

**Verse by verse:**

* + **10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in *his* mighty power.**

Understand that it is HIS power, not yours.

In and of ourselves, we are powerless in the fight, but when we operate in His power we will be victorious. Don’t go it alone.

That means using the Word of God in your speech, conduct and thinking as opposed to your own ideas and feelings.

It also means recognizing your own weakness, and confessing that to God, SO THAT He can show himself strong in your weaknesses.

***2nd Cor. 12:9-10*** *“[His] power is made perfect in weakness. ... For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

* + **11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.**

Scheme - (a large-scale systematic plan).

The Devil hates you. He is against you. He wants to destroy you, and has a large-scale systematic plan in place to do it.

If we don’t believe that, then he is has an overwhelming advantage on us.

He knows your weak spots, behaviors, tendencies, habits, etc.

The good news as that we have access to armor, that will render his schemes useless.

Put on the FULL armor, not just bits of it.

* **12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

***NLT: “For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world,***

Know your enemy! It’s not people. Even the deceived perpetrators are victims themselves.

Soul or Spirit? In your soul you can’t see the enemy, only the destruction and casualties. In your Soul you yourself may even be led into deception by your mind or your emotions.

In the *Spirit*, you can identify the:

Evil rulers and authorities, powers of this dark world, and forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

* + **13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground,**

Put on the *Full Armor*. Six pieces are listed here. You need every one of them, not just some, because WHEN (not IF) the “day of evil” comes (could be everyday), you will not be struck down, but remain standing.

* + **and after you have *done everything, to stand.* 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,**

NKJV “having girded your waist with truth”

This is the first piece or armor listed, and it is necessary for all others to be added.

Eph 1:13 (Berean Study Bible) "having heard and believed the word of truth...you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”

**Truth**. Both in what you say, how you live, and what you believe is necessary for battle.

In 2 Cor. 6:7, Paul tells us that *TRUTH* along with the *Power of God* make up our *armor of righteousness*.

**2 Cor. 6:7** “by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left”

* + **with the breastplate of righteousness in place,**

The Breastplate is very important. It protects your vital organs. But if we rely on our own “righteousness” we are in trouble.

Righteousness -

**"What is righteousness?"**
Dictionaries define *righteousness* as “behavior that is morally justifiable or right.”

Living a moral life and practicing right behavior will make it very difficult for the enemy to penetrate our armor.

However, the true and perfect righteousness of God, is not possible for man to attain on his own; the standard is simply too high.

*We have no ability to achieve righteousness in and of ourselves. But Christians possess the righteousness of Christ, because “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (*[*2 Corinthians 5:21*](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%205.21)*).*

The integrity of our armor, is not achieved by our moral behavior, but by the righteousness of Christ.

* + **15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

Always be ready and prepared with the understanding of the gospel (good news). Know the Word and be able to share it.

Isaiah 52:7,Romans 10:15 “How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace”

It’s not just “hey, nice feet”, it’s declaring how wonderful those are who are prepared to go and share the gospel of peace.

1 Peter 3:15 “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

* + **16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

Flaming arrows don’t need to hit a bullseye to cause devastation. In Roman times they were dipped in “pitch”(tar) and shot into the camp of the enemy. Once they penetrated the lines they set the entire area on fire.

The Devils flaming arrows (fiery darts) are intended to do damage way more than just the initial impact. (Think of an unkind word, a selfish or thoughtless act, a lie or half-truth), the damage can actually get worse over time.

The Shield of Faith not only stops the arrow, but extinguishes it.

Faith = Trust (pistis)

How can Trust, stop a flaming arrow?

The answer is that the “Evil One” has only one weapon, DECEPTION

Deception is rooted in lies.

Faith is rooted in truth.

When have Faith/Trust in God and His Word there is no lie that can penetrate it.

In fact the flaming arrows are extinguished and neutralized on contact.

*The Devil’s plan is to use anything he can (virus, tragedies, politics, media) to rip the church apart. If you are looking through the eyes of the spirit you see it clearly, if you aren’t, it just looks confusing. (Like 3D glasses)*

* + **17 Take the helmet of salvation**

Sometimes the Helmet of Salvation is listed first when the armor is described from top to bottom.

The helmet is usually the strongest part of a suit of armor, because it protects the head. The rest of the suit is not sufficient in battle without the helmet.

However, the helmet alone (just being saved) is not enough. The rest of the armor is necessary as well. *[Think of a soldier going into battle with just a helmet on – whack-a-mole?)*

* **and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

This is the one offensive weapon listed, and it is enough.

Don’t be confused, the “Word of God” here is not necessarily “The Bible”.

The Bible contains the Word and words of God. The Word of God is “living and active”. As we seek, study and ingest the word of God, it becomes alive in us. The Holy Spirit activates it in our lives and we become transformed by the Spirit.

 **Heb 4:12 “The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”**

Study the Word, trust it, internalize it, and put it into practice, and you will see that it is the greatest weapon that you can ever attain in the spiritual battles you face. (think light-sabre)

* + **18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.**

PRAY!

*in the Spirit, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers, and requests.*

*There are many ways to pray;*

*In groups, by yourself, with someone else, with words, silently, praising, meditating, listening, requesting...*

We all pray differently; the important thing is that you pray. I can’t emphasize this enough.

#### C&MA Core Value #2 “Prayer is the primary work of God’s people.”

Prayer is our main connection to God, who is our power source. Without praying, we won’t have access to His power in the same way.

We all need to pray.

If there is one person who could have gotten away without praying, because of His own power and connection to God, it was Jesus. Yet He prayed constantly more than anyone else.

*Jesus’ preferred method of prayer was to go off by himself and talk with God, that’s how He prayed and He did it very often.*

* **With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.**

We need to pray for other Christians. Pray for other churches even as we pray for the lost. Your brothers and sisters in this church and all over the world have a target on their back from the enemy. With this in mind, be alert, and pray for them

* **19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.**

In these times where so many prominent leaders have become casualties of the enemy by their own sin and the Devil’s scheme’s, we need to pray for them and other leaders.

Paul asked the Ephesian church to pray that he would fearlessly declare the gospel, we need to pray that our leaders do the same, especially in the dark and deceptive times in which we live.

So,

* Be strong in the Lord
* Put on the Full Armor
* Pray in the Spirit
* Be Alert
* *BUT Do not be afraid.*

It *is* a battle, but remember whose side you’re on, and who is on your side.

The last words that David spoke before he stepped up to fight Goliath;

**1st Samuel 17:47 “**And everyone assembled here will know that the LORD rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the LORD’s battle, and he will give you to us!”

We belong to God, we are his *children* and He is our father. “No weapon formed against us shall prosper”

**1st John 4:4** “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”