

Ephesians – Week 18 – Prepared to Stand – Bible Study Helps

Title: Prepared to Stand

Sermon Summary:

This sermon continues a verse-by-verse study of Ephesians, focusing on spiritual warfare and the armor of God. The sermon emphasizes that every believer is engaged in an invisible spiritual battle against Satan and demonic forces. The message centers on three critical pieces of armor that must be put on before battle begins: truth (the belt), righteousness (the breastplate), and the gospel of peace (the shoes). The sermon stresses that the battle is often won or lost before it even starts, making daily spiritual preparation essential. Truth serves as the foundation that holds everything together, righteousness protects the vulnerable heart, and the gospel provides purpose, stability, and forward momentum. Without these three foundational pieces of armor, believers become easy targets for Satan's attacks through lies, deception, sin, and discouragement. The sermon calls Christians to daily examine their hearts, walk in integrity, and remain ready to share the gospel regardless of opposition or difficulty.

Key Points:

- Every believer is engaged in an invisible spiritual war against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness
- The goal of Christian warfare is to stand for Jesus Christ in an unseen battle
- Truth is the foundational piece of armor that holds the Christian's life together
- Satan's primary weapon is lies and deception; he attacks through information warfare
- Reading and believing God's Word daily is essential for spiritual stability and protection
- The breastplate of righteousness protects the heart, which is the center of spiritual life
- Every act of obedience strengthens spiritual protection; every act of disobedience weakens it
- Unconfessed sin gives Satan an advantage and opens doors for spiritual destruction
- The gospel shoes provide stability, traction, purpose, and hope for moving forward
- Satan tries to halt forward progress through fear, isolation, discouragement, and hopelessness
- Believers must be ready daily to share the gospel and cannot quit or stop serving
- The armor must be put on before the day begins, not during the heat of battle
- Character and righteousness provide greater protection than position or circumstances

Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 6:10-18 (primary passage)

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- Ephesians 6:14-15 (specific focus)
- Isaiah 11:1-5
- Isaiah 52:7
- Proverbs 4:23
- John 14:6
- John 17:17
- Genesis 3
- John 8:44
- Psalm 18:36
- Psalm 40:2
- Romans 10
- 2 Corinthians 2:11
- Luke 6:45
- Luke 22:31

Stories:

- An experience with wrestling, emphasizing the importance of proper stance and core stability
- The Gladiator obstacle course analogy, illustrating the Christian life as standing firm while attacks come from all directions
- Pilate asking "What is truth?" while standing before Jesus, the personification of truth
- A reference to the book "Conversations with God," and the ability to recognize it as satanic deception because of grounding in biblical truth
- The Roman soldier's shoes with iron or bronze hobnails (like football cleats) that gave them superior footing and stability in battle, allowing them to refuse being pushed backward
- Joseph resisting Potiphar's wife's temptation by saying "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"
- Daniel purposing in his heart not to defile himself before temptation came
- David's fall with Bathsheba showing how removing righteousness led to destruction
- Gehazi's lie to Naaman resulting in leprosy and life unraveling
- Ananias and Sapphira being struck dead for lying to God and the church

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- Philip being ready to share the gospel
- Paul continuing forward despite every possible attack
- Jonah trying to quit and run from God's calling
- Elijah becoming discouraged and wanting to die shortly after his mountaintop victory

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Discipleship Questions

How does understanding that we are in an invisible spiritual battle change the way you approach your daily decisions and interactions?

In what specific areas of your life do you find it most difficult to gird yourself with truth, and what practical steps can you take to strengthen this foundation?

The sermon emphasizes that every act of obedience strengthens spiritual protection while every act of disobedience weakens it. How does this perspective affect your view of seemingly small compromises?

Considering that the devil knows you better than you know yourself, what vulnerabilities in your heart need the protection of the breastplate of righteousness right now?

How can you practically protect your heart from bitterness, lust, pride, or other sins that would give Satan an advantage in your life?

The Roman soldiers' shoes gave them the ability to hold their ground and refuse to be pushed backward. What circumstances or discouragements are currently trying to push you backward in your faith?

If the gospel is meant to give us hope, purpose, and forward movement, what signs indicate that you may have removed your gospel shoes and lost your spiritual footing?

How does the reality that half the country believes one thing and half believes something completely different illustrate the information warfare we face, and how can you discern truth in this climate?

Joseph's response to temptation was rooted in truth he had already established before the battle began. What truths do you need to establish now to prepare for future temptations?

In what ways might you be like the soldier who has all the armor except protection for vital organs, appearing prepared but actually vulnerable to spiritual attack?

Small Group Guide: Prepared to Stand

Ephesians 6:10-18 - The Armor of God (Part 1)

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: What's one piece of protective gear or equipment you use regularly (helmet, safety glasses, phone case, etc.)? Why is it important to you?

Sermon Review (5 minutes)

This week we studied the first three pieces of spiritual armor every Christian must put on daily:

1. **Loins Girt with Truth** - Truth secures us
 2. **Breastplate of Righteousness** - Righteousness protects us
 3. **Gospel Shoes** - The gospel guides and stabilizes us
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Discussion Questions

Part 1: Loins Girt with Truth (20 minutes)

Read Ephesians 6:14a - "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth"

1. **Understanding Truth:**
 - Why do you think truth is described as the foundational piece of armor that "holds everything together"?
 - In what ways do you see our culture attacking or undermining truth today?
2. **Personal Reflection:**
 - The sermon said, "A person's life is only as stable as the truth that he or she rests in." What are some "truths" people build their lives on besides God's Word? What happens when those foundations fail?
 - How would you describe your daily time in God's Word? What obstacles keep you from reading the Bible consistently?
3. **Application:**
 - What's one verse or biblical truth you need to "gird yourself with" this week? Why that particular truth?

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- How can we help each other stay anchored in truth when emotions, circumstances, or culture say something different?
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Part 2: The Breastplate of Righteousness (20 minutes)

Read Ephesians 6:14b - "and having on the breastplate of righteousness"

4. Understanding Righteousness:

- The sermon emphasized that righteousness protects our "most vulnerable areas" - our heart. Why is the heart so important spiritually?
- What's the difference between positional righteousness (what we receive at salvation) and practical righteousness (how we live daily)?

5. Personal Reflection:

- The sermon stated: "Every act of obedience strengthens your spiritual protection. Every act of disobedience weakens your spiritual protection." Can you share an example of when you've seen this principle play out?
- What areas of your life feel most vulnerable to spiritual attack right now? (bitterness, lust, pride, anger, etc.)

6. Application:

- What's one specific area where you need to "do right" this week to protect your heart?
 - How can we create accountability in this group to help each other walk in righteousness?
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Part 3: Gospel Shoes (20 minutes)

Read Ephesians 6:15 - "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"

7. Understanding the Gospel:

- Roman soldiers' shoes had hobnails (like cleats) for traction and stability. How does the gospel give us "traction" and keep us from slipping in spiritual battle?
- Why does Satan want to stop our "forward movement" for the gospel?

8. Personal Reflection:

- When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? What made it easy or difficult?
- The sermon mentioned having gospel tracts ready. Are you prepared to share the gospel when opportunities arise? Why or why not?

9. Application:

- What's one practical step you can take this week to be more prepared to share the gospel?
- Who is one person in your life who needs to hear the gospel? How can this group pray for that opportunity?

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

Have group members share their biggest takeaway:

- **Truth secures** - Without God's Word as our foundation, we're easily deceived and unstable
 - **Righteousness protects** - Living right protects our heart and most vulnerable areas from enemy attack
 - **The gospel guides** - Gospel purpose keeps us moving forward and gives us hope and stability
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to focus on this week:

Option 1: Truth

- Read your Bible every morning before checking your phone
- Memorize one verse related to an area where you're struggling
- Write Scripture verses on index cards and place them where you'll see them daily

Option 2: Righteousness

- Identify one area of compromise in your life and confess it to God
- Choose one act of obedience you've been avoiding and do it this week
- Ask someone to hold you accountable in a specific area of temptation

Option 3: Gospel

- Carry gospel tracts with you everywhere this week
 - Pray daily for one specific unsaved person by name
 - Practice sharing your testimony with someone in the group (3-5 minutes)
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Group Accountability (5 minutes)

- Share which option you're committing to this week
- Exchange contact information if you haven't already

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- Commit to checking in with at least one person during the week
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Prayer Time (10 minutes)

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for strength to put on the full armor of God daily
- Pray for specific struggles or vulnerable areas group members shared
- Pray for the unsaved people mentioned by name
- Pray for our church to stand strong in truth, righteousness, and gospel witness

Closing Prayer: Ask someone to close, praying specifically that we would "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" and that we would stand firm in the spiritual battle.

Before Next Week

- Review your notes from this sermon
 - Complete your chosen practical application
 - Be ready to share what God taught you through it
 - Read Ephesians 6:16-18 in preparation for the next part of the armor
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Leader Notes

- **Be Vulnerable:** Share your own struggles with truth, righteousness, or gospel witness to create a safe environment
- **Keep It Practical:** Don't let the discussion stay theoretical - push for specific, actionable applications
- **Emphasize Daily Practice:** The armor must be put on daily, not just studied weekly
- **Create Urgency:** We're in a real spiritual war with real consequences - this isn't just interesting information
- **Follow Up:** Contact group members during the week to encourage them in their commitments

5-Day Devotional:

Prepared to Stand in Spiritual Warfare

Day 1: Girded with Truth

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-14; John 17:17

Devotional: Before the battle even begins, a soldier must prepare. The Roman soldier would gird his tunic with a belt, securing everything for combat. Spiritually, truth is what holds your life together. Without God's Word anchoring your heart and mind, you become vulnerable to deception, tossed about by every wind of doctrine and cultural influence. The enemy's first attack in Genesis 3 was against truth: "Yea, hath God said?" Today, we face unprecedented information warfare—half-truths, outright lies, and confusion flooding our world. Your stability depends on whether you've girded yourself with Scripture. Before facing today's challenges, have you spent time in God's Word? Truth isn't just what you believe; it's how you live. Anchor yourself in Christ, who is the Truth, and His Word, which is truth.

Reflection: What area of your life needs to be more firmly anchored in God's truth today?

Day 2: Protected by Righteousness

Reading: Ephesians 6:14; Isaiah 59:15-17; Proverbs 4:23

Devotional: Your heart is the center of your spiritual life—your desires, affections, choices, and motives all flow from it. Yet Jeremiah tells us the heart is "deceitful and desperately wicked." This is why we need the breastplate of righteousness protecting our most vulnerable areas. At salvation, God gave you His righteousness positionally. Now you must live righteously practically. Every act of obedience strengthens your spiritual protection; every compromise weakens it. Bitterness, lust, pride, unforgiveness—these remove your breastplate and give Satan an advantage. Your character is your greatest protection. Daniel's enemies couldn't find fault in him. Joseph's righteousness preserved his testimony even in prison. Guard your heart with all diligence. Choose what's right today, not what's easy or popular. Righteousness isn't just about avoiding sin; it's actively pursuing holiness and integrity in every area of life.

Reflection: Where are you vulnerable today? What righteous choice do you need to make?

Day 3: Footing in the Gospel

Reading: Ephesians 6:15; Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15

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Devotional: Roman soldiers wore specialized shoes with iron hobnails—like cleats—giving them superior traction and stability. Many battles were won simply because Roman soldiers refused to be pushed backward. Your spiritual footing comes from the gospel of peace. This isn't passive; it's preparation for movement. The gospel gives you hope when circumstances would discourage you, purpose when you feel aimless, and stability when the enemy tries to shake you. Without gospel shoes, Christians stop serving, witnessing, and living with purpose. They become isolated, fearful, easily offended, and begin backsliding. But when your feet are shod with gospel preparation, you keep moving forward for Christ's sake. You don't quit when it's hard. You don't retreat when attacked. Souls need saving. The world needs Jesus. Put on your gospel shoes every morning and remember: you have a mission that cannot be abandoned.

Reflection: Are you ready to share the gospel today? Do you have gospel tracts with you?

Day 4: Standing in the Battle

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-13; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 2:11

Devotional: "Stand" appears four times in Ephesians 6. The goal of Christian warfare is not to attack or advance aggressively, but to stand firm when attacked. You're in an invisible war against spiritual forces you cannot see. Satan has specific strategies designed to bring you and your family down. He knows you better than you know yourself, understands your weaknesses, and attacks your most vulnerable points. Every day, demonic forces work to destroy your faith, your family, your testimony, and your effectiveness for Christ. This isn't figurative language—it's reality. The battle is often won or lost before it begins, based on your preparation. Did you start today by putting on truth, righteousness, and gospel readiness? Or did you walk into spiritual warfare unprepared? The enemy is real, the battle is intense, but God has provided everything you need to withstand and stand firm.

Reflection: How seriously are you taking the spiritual battle you face daily?

Day 5: Daily Preparation for Victory

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18; Psalm 18:32-36; Psalm 40:2

Devotional: Before busyness consumes your day, anchor your mind in God's truth. Before facing the world's problems, examine your heart, repent, and walk in righteousness. Before encountering others, remember the gospel and be ready to share it. This is your daily armor routine. You wouldn't go to battle without physical armor; don't enter your day without spiritual armor. The Christian life isn't just learning truth—it's standing for truth in a world where Satan actively opposes God's work. Every act of obedience strengthens you. Every time you choose righteousness over compromise, you protect your heart. Every gospel conversation advances

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God's kingdom. God has set your feet upon the Rock and established your steps. You have His strength, His righteousness, His truth, and His gospel. Now stand. Stand when others fall. Stand when it's unpopular. Stand because Jesus is worth it.

Reflection: Will you commit to putting on the whole armor of God every morning this week?

Closing Prayer: Father, help me to be strong in You and in the power of Your might. Teach me to put on the whole armor of God every day. Gird me with truth, protect me with righteousness, and give me gospel readiness. Help me to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. In Jesus' name, Amen.