

August 23, 2009

Christian Armor

Ephesians 6:10-20

With today's reading we find that Paul is coming to the close of his Epistle. Addressing all the family of God, he makes a stirring appeal to them as soldiers of Christ. Every true child of God soon learns that the Christian life is in fact warfare. The hosts of evil are committed to hinder and obstruct the believer of Christ and to knock the individual soldier out of combat. The more effective a believer is for the Lord, the more he or she will experience the savage attacks of the enemy; the devil does not waste his ammunition on the nominal Christian or the lost. In our own strength we are no match for the devil. So the first preparatory command is that we should be continually strengthened in the Lord and in the boundless resources of His might. God's best soldiers are those who are conscious of their own weakness and ineffectiveness, and who rely solely on Him. "God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty." (1Cor. 1:27). Our weakness commends itself to the power of His might.

The second command is concerned with the need for divine armor. The believer must put on the whole armor of God that he or she may be able to stand against the forces of evil. The Christian should not be morbidly occupied with the subject of demons, neither should the Christian live in fear of the devil. In the armor of God the Christian has all he or she needs to hold ground against evils attack. So then take up the whole armor of God, that we may be able to withstand

when the conflict reaches its fiercest intensity, and still be found standing when the smoke of battle has cleared away.

The second piece is the breastplate of righteousness. In 2nd Cor. Chapter 5 verse 21 it tells us that every believer is clothed with the righteousness of God, but the Christian must also manifest integrity and uprightness in their personal life. Someone has said "when the Christian is clothed in practical righteousness, they are impregnable. Words are no defense against accusation, but a good life is." If our conscience is void of offense toward God and man, the devil has nothing to shoot at.

The Christian must have his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Frances Ridley Havergal said, "Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee."

The shield of faith, faith here is firm confidence in the Lord and His word. When temptations burn, when circumstances are adverse, when doubts assail, when shipwreck threatens, faith looks up and says, "I believe God."

The helmet God provides is salvation. No matter how hot the battle, the Christian is not daunted, since he or she knows that the ultimate will of God is victory. God wins out in the end. That is certain. Romans 8:31 says, "If God is for us, who can be against us."

Finally, the soldier takes the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. I think knowledge of the word of God is most important, however here I think the word of God does not mean the whole Bible but the particular portion of the Bible which best suits the battle.

Prayer is not mentioned as a part of the armor; but we would not be overrating its importance if we say that it is the

atmosphere in which the soldier must live and breath. Prayer should be continual, not sporadic; a habit not an isolated act. We as soldiers of Christ should use all kinds of prayer; public and private; deliberate and spontaneous, supplication and intercession, confession and humiliation, praise and thanksgiving. Prayer requires spiritual keenness, alertness, and concentration. And there must be perseverance in prayer. We must keep asking, seeking, knocking as is says in Luke 11:9.

So in conclusion, Paul, a chained prisoner, speaks boldly as an ambassador of the gospel. No ambassador presented in chains has much of a chance for the success of his embassy. No wretched dirty creature in chains could hardly make the rhetorical show necessary to accomplish the task of ambassador. Nevertheless, both Philippians and Philemon indicate that Paul did manage to use imprisonment as an opportunity to spread the gospel.

As a side thought, groups are also subject to the dynamics that work for evil that no individual would engage in separately. I think of pre World War II Germany. Group discussions can lead persons to extreme statements they would never make on their own. People, who are ordinarily tolerant of others, become capable of violence toward outsiders.

The concern Ephesians shows for the way Christians speak, pray, and sing indicates that the ethical consequences of language were already well known. Words have consequences. Father Wild suggests that we see this passage as an ideal image to encourage Christians in all the tasks required of them. He says, "The cosmic and demonic powers still seek to exercise a tyranny over the Christian, and in that sense the Christian appears to be 'in bonds.' In actuality, however, the bonds are broken and the powers are

defeated in Christ." They have God's armor, and it is God
who guarantees their freedom.
God is the victor!!!!!!!!!!

Amen.

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