

The Helmet of Salvation (v.17a).

Again this morning we have the wonderful privilege of coming to our study of Ephesians chapter 6. As you know if you've been with me at New Covenant for any length of time I am committed to an expositional type of ministry, teaching the truths of the Word of God verse by verse. But every once in a while we come to certain passages that have so much implicit truth that really we wind up with kind of a theological study. We dive a little more deeply into one verse, and that has been the case in studying Ephesians 6. As we work through this section on spiritual warfare we have been unable to go along very rapidly and I have slowed down to discuss one piece of armor each week.

So for our setting this morning I want to read to you Ephesians 6:13-17,

- 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**
14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.
17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

We started this section by saying that the full armor of God is a graphic picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so to put on the full armor of God is just another way of saying what Paul says in Romans 13:14, "**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ ...**" In other words, it is Christ Himself we are to put on in the battle against sin and Satan. Christ Jesus is our armor.

Putting on God's armor means that in every trial and temptation by faith you appropriate Christ's strength in place of your weakness. With the **Belt of Truth** you stand on the truth of Jesus, not the world's philosophies. With the **Breastplate of Righteousness** you depend on Christ's righteousness, not your own. With the **shoes of the gospel of peace** you have peace with God and the peace of God that guards your heart so your feet can run to tell others the good news that Jesus saves. With the **Shield of faith** you can extinguish the fiery darts of doubt and discouragement. That's what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

Now for this morning I want to go on to the fifth piece of armor, "**And take the helmet of salvation.**"

Let's answer three essential questions about the helmet of salvation this morning:

- Why do I need the helmet of salvation?
- What is the helmet of salvation?
- How do I take the helmet of salvation?

WHY DO I NEED THE HELMET OF SALVATION?

Roman soldiers wore helmets made of thick leather that were often covered with metal. There were thick bands to protect the forehead and the cheeks. The metal cover extended down the back to protect the neck. When it was tightly strapped on the only exposed areas were the eyes, nose and mouth.

Although the helmet would protect the head from arrows, its primary purpose was to ward off blows from the enemy's broadsword. Next time, we'll look at the sword of the Spirit, where Paul describes a smaller, dagger-type sword. But the broadsword was a massive, three to four foot long weapon that was held in both hands like a baseball bat. A soldier would lift it over his head and chop down on his opponent's head in order to try and create a split personality. And the helmet was the primary means of protecting the head against those blows.

It's not too difficult to see the spiritual implications of the helmet. Paul here draws on Isaiah 59:17, where it says of the Lord as the righteous Judge and Warrior, **"For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak."** Isaiah was picturing God going forth into battle to bring deliverance to His people by judging their enemies. But in Ephesians, Paul pictures believers putting on the helmet of salvation to protect themselves in the conflict with the enemy.

We've consistently noted that Satan's attacks primarily come against our mind. And it is the helmet of salvation that protects us from those attacks.

WHAT IS THE HELMET OF SALVATION?

When Paul uses the phrase, **"the helmet of salvation,"** The preposition "of" is one of apposition, meaning, **"the helmet, which is salvation."**

Now most of us know what salvation is. But to remind you, look back to Ephesians 1:13. There you find Paul is writing about the Lord Jesus Christ, and he says, **"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."** So just in that one verse we find that salvation begins by trusting in Jesus Christ. We do that by believing the word of truth, the gospel. When we are saved, God seals us with His Holy Spirit. Later, in chapter 2 Paul says, **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."**

Now Paul says to **"take the helmet of salvation."** Is Paul telling them to get saved again? No. First, Paul is writing here to those who are already followers of Jesus. He is not writing to unbelievers and encouraging them get saved. He wants them to be protected by understanding the fullness of salvation.

In order for us to understand the helmet of salvation, we need to go back to some very basic theology. We've already seen evidence of this throughout Ephesians, but it will be helpful to go back and review. In Ephesians, as well as throughout the rest of the Scriptures, we discover that there are...

Three aspects of salvation:

- 1) Past – justification – freedom from the penalty of sin
- 2) Present – sanctification – freedom from the power of sin
- 3) Future – glorification – freedom from the presence of sin

Paul has frequently made reference to all three of these aspects throughout Ephesians. We were saved the very moment that we trusted Jesus Christ. At that moment, we were positionally righteous before God and freed from the penalty of

our sin. That's what the first three chapters of Ephesians were all about. But salvation doesn't stop once we initially believe.

Jesus Christ continues to save us. We are being saved right now as we live out that righteousness through work of the Holy Spirit in us. That's what the last three chapters of Ephesians are all about. We no longer have to be under the power of sin.

And one day in the future, our salvation will be complete. Paul has described how we have the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that we will one day receive the full inheritance that God has in store for us. In his letter to the Romans, Paul summarized all three aspects of our salvation like this:

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Romans 5:1, 2

So which of these is Paul referring to here when he describes the helmet of salvation? There is one other place where Paul refers to the helmet of salvation in his letters:

"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. 5:8, 9.

In this passage, Paul very clearly points out that it is the **"hope of salvation"** that is our helmet. And in verse 9, that hope is very unmistakably connected with the future aspect of our salvation. He is pointing out that there will be a day in the future where we will not suffer the wrath of God, but instead receive the full measure of our salvation. Paul has written about this concept frequently in the earlier section of Ephesians when he wrote about our inheritance. And that inheritance, that future glorification, is assured for every believer by the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to every follower of Jesus as a guarantee that we will one day receive everything that God has promised to us.

Unfortunately, we tend to miss out on the significance of what Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians because of the way we use the word "hope" in our English language. Like all the people who hope they win the Powerball Jackpot each week, even though the odds of winning are about 1 in 146 million--not a very realistic hope, right?

But the Biblical concept of hope is much more than just wishful thinking. It is a confident expectancy, and the absolute assurance of the good that God has in store for me in the future. When we apply that concept to our salvation, we come up with a very clear picture of the helmet of salvation:

The helmet of salvation is the absolute assurance that God will be faithful to bring our salvation to its full and complete fulfillment.

You are secure. You have a hope, and your hope isn't in finances, your hope isn't in people, your hope isn't in circumstances. Your hope isn't other people coming through for you, your hope is not what's going happen someday, some way, somehow. Your hope is in the person of Christ.

And when we define the helmet of salvation in those terms, it is very easy to see how this is such an effective weapon against the weapons of discouragement and doubt that Satan launches against us.

Ever watch an 8-year-old put on a football helmet? They start running around, purposefully bumping their heads into things! Why? Because they feel invincible in their helmets. In the same way **"the helmet"** of our **"salvation"** gives us confidence because we know that no matter what happens we will ultimately win the victory! Salvation infuses us with the optimism that victory is assured!

Let the enemy attack. Let the forces of hell rage against us. Let them shoot their **"fiery darts."** We may be wounded. We may suffer momentary defeats. We may falter and stumble. However, because of the cross, victory will ultimately be ours!

Part of the assurance that comes from salvation is the hope of life beyond this life. Titus 2:13 tells us to be **"looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."**

I not only have assurance that I can make a **"stand"** in this present battle, I have a **"blessed hope"** that one day the battle will be over! 1 John 3:2 says, **"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."**

What hope means is this: when we are discouraged, when we are troubled, when we have sinned, when we feel like giving up, when we think we can't go on remember that we have an ETERNAL salvation. This lifetime is but an instant compared to eternity.

Heb.6:11 says, **"And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end."** Gal. 6:9 says, **"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."**

HOW DO I TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION?

The word "take" in verse 17 is a command which literally means to "receive" or "accept". Once the soldier had on all his other armor and was ready to go into battle, his attendant or armor bearer would hand him his helmet and his sword, so the soldier would have to take or accept those pieces of the armor in order to be properly prepared for battle.

There are two interesting things about that command. First the command is plural – y'all take the helmet. The second is that the verb form makes this an urgent command. It has the sense of "do this right now; don't delay."

Taking the helmet of salvation will enable you to live rightly before God and rightly in relation to others. Salvation means that God has rescued you in the past from the penalty of sin through your faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is rescuing you in the present from the power of sin through the resurrection life of Christ in you. He will rescue you in the future from the presence of sin when Jesus Christ returns in power and glory.

Don't go out into the battlefield of the world without your helmet on! Stand firm against the enemy by taking the helmet of salvation!