

Roman infantrymen wore tough sandals studded with sharp, thick nails on the bottoms to increase traction. The **gospel** that has brought peace to the Christian enables him or her to stand firmly against temptation (v. 13). The gospel is the *whole Christian message* viewed as good news, not just how to get saved. Theological imbalance and error can often be traced to a narrow focus on only one part of the Bible while neglecting the rest.

In v. 16, Paul instructs Christians to “take up the **shield of faith.**” The shield of faith is trust in all that God has revealed and active application of that trust at the moment of spiritual attack.

In v. 17: Here Paul instructs Christians to put on two more pieces of armour: “the **helmet of salvation**” and “the **sword of the Spirit.**” The salvation from condemnation has already been received by Christians. Now we are to receive all salvation, the present and future deliverance that is needed for dealing with satanic attack, by calling upon God and requesting it in prayer. Of course, deliverance assumes that we are putting our trust in God rather than in self and that we are walking in obedience to God. The sword refers to the words of God.

How is the sword used in spiritual warfare? (see Matt. 4:4, 6, 10).

Prayer

Spiritual warfare cannot be won without prayer. Thus Paul writes: “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 on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” In vv. 19-20, Paul asked for prayer. He was an ambassador for Christ and to do God’s work, Paul needed prayer support so that his witness and ministry would be effective.

What do “prayer” and “requests” mean to you? Assess on a scale of 1 to 10 your prayer life. What are the shortcomings and how do you intend to address them? Do you pray regularly for the effectiveness of the ministry of the Church? If not, do you plan to make changes in this area?

SUMMARY

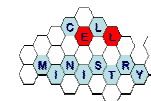
**Wars cannot be won with weapons.
In the same way, satanic wars cannot**

be won without the armour of God and prayer.

Ephesians

Week 14
(final)

[Cell-group Discussion]



Ephesians 6 : 10 - 20

In Eph. 4: 12, 16, Paul urged the strengthening and growth of the body of Christ. There is a need for this because the body is at war with a spiritual enemy. We do not just walk, but we also war. Spiritual warfare is a reality.

Be Strong Against Evil

To “be strong in the Lord” (v. 10) means both to allow the Lord to strengthen you and to strengthen yourself in the Lord. The theme of power was introduced earlier (see Eph. 1:19-20; 2:1; 3:16-21). Now Paul tells us that the Lord’s might is available to us in our spiritual power.

What must we do to be strong in the Lord? (see v. 11). Name some schemes of the devil against Christians.

Why does Paul use the term “struggle” in v. 12? Identify the four terms that Paul uses to describe our spiritual enemies. Why are these enemies formidable?

Compare v. 13 with v. 11. Can you draw any conclusions from the comparison? What do you think Paul means by the phrase “day of evil”?

The Armour of God

The armour described is that of a heavily armed Roman foot soldier. Just as a Roman infantryman wear an armor for protection, the armor of God describes God’s protection (v. 14).

Identify the main verbs in the text (see vv. 14, 17). What sense do these verbs convey?

The first two pieces of the armour that Christians should put on are (i) the **belt of truth**; (ii) the **breastplate of righteousness** (v. 14). What does “truth” refer to? “**Truth**” certainly refers to God’s revealed truth (the Bible) that the Christian has believed. Of course, we need to correctly interpret the Bible. A major problem in the history of the Christian Church is presented by the problem of proper interpretation of the Bible. One is in danger of error if one elevates private interpretation over the tradition of corporate interpretation established by the historical Church. That is not to say that the Church has never made mistakes in interpreting the Bible, but we can always trust the Holy Spirit to guide the whole Church in the interpretative process which is a historical process. One grave danger that the early Christians faced was the philosophy of Gnosticism that only certain people possessed “secret knowledge” which others do not have. This philosophy is still the basis of the “new” teachings promoted by some “Christian” teachers and preachers and enjoy significant popularity within certain “Christian” circles. Truth also refers to the Christian’s own truthfulness, specifically a lifestyle that reflects the truth. Full truth is the only adequate basis for a defense against Satan. Unless we know the truth and practice it, we cannot use the Word of truth. Once a lie gets into the life of a believer, everything begins to fall apart. When King David lied about his sin with Bathsheba for over a year, nothing went right. Eventually it led to David’s murder of Bathsheba’s husband. The breastplate of **righteousness** refers to both the righteousness of Christ that becomes ours at regeneration (“born again”) as well as our righteous conduct.

Think of some practical ways which will help you in interpreting the Bible as you continue to read and study the Bible for yourself. Are you aware of any “new” teachings that we as Christians of the 21st century should avoid? Why?