

Protection of HOPE

Ephesians 6:17

This morning to continue on in our study of the armor of God. We have up to this point looked at the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace and the shield of faith. Has any one here found over this last week a greater dependence upon their faith, using it as a shield?

I know that I need my faith to protect me from the cunning words of men, the intellect that tries to explain everything away as chance or wishful thinking. In fact, I find that there are times when I need to get away from things, teachings, or ideas that can cause me to question my faith, and find assurance in my faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

I believe that for all of us here that there are things that we need to protect ourselves from, ideas of men, philosophies that are going around that cause you to question the reality of your faith. And instead we need to be people who hold on to our faith no matter what people are saying, what we are surrounded with and what life may look like.

Life is too hard and too short to try and figure everything out, when God has revealed in his plan a way for us to come to Him, to find hope, to find peace, righteousness and find one who will walk with us through whatever life may hand us. I simply need to trust in God. Hold on to your faith in God.

This morning we continue and we find that Paul speaks to us about the helmet of salvation. He continues on and uses the analogy of armor. We have already seen the breastplate of righteousness, how just like in real armor **the breastplate protects the heart**. The righteousness of God protects our motivation because it should all be focused on Jesus Christ and his transferred righteousness to us and our sin transferred to him on the cross.

Then we had the shoes of peace, and how the shoe protects where we walk, we find that **the shoes of peace protect our will** - the part of us that makes choices. We are to no longer be motivated out of guilt but out of the kindness of Christ who brought peace between us and God. With the helmet of salvation this morning we find that just as the helmet protect the head, the **helmet of salvation protects the mind**.

Have any of us ever gone through a time when life seemed hopeless, when it is overwhelming, when things get so difficult and complex that you find that it cripples you? Have you ever been in a situation when all you wanted to do was give up? Even as Christians there are times when you want to toss your Christianity aside because it's just too hard or it is so out of the ordinary – contrary to how others are able to live. There are some who would rather walk away from the faith than live with it.

We find a perfect example of it when Jesus started teaching about being led by the Spirit in John 6. People wanted to figure it out instead of just trusting Jesus' words and we read in **John 6:66-67**:

66 At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. 67 Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

I think all of us find times in our lives like this. We hear something we don't like, we find it's too hard to live, we don't understand and we're mad at God – whatever it may be and we find ourselves coming to a point in time when God says, "Are you also going to leave?" Like the constant nagging of the enemies darts that tear at us a bit at a time, we find that if we don't put our armor on we come to the end and we walk away. I like the answer of the disciples when Jesus asks this question because their response is so real and desperate. It says in **verse 68**:

"Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

It takes a sense of humility, desperation and faith to follow God. Anything else is nothing more than a counterfeit. But faith always hopes. We need to understand how the helmet of salvation protects our minds so that our minds do not puff up the heart and lead us to walk wherever we want. Let's read **Ephesians 6:13-17**:

13 Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. 16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.* 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Put on the Helmet of salvation. Often when one thinks of the idea of salvation they refer to the forgiveness of sins, the restoration of relationship back to God, but that is not what Paul is referring to here. The term **salvation is the word "satisfaction" referring to a future hope and assurance.** Paul put it this way in **1 Thessalonians 5:8**:

8 But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence (HOPE) of our salvation.

The thought of the physical reunion with God and the end of the earth as we know it and its transformation into a place where sin, sickness and pain no longer exist, but when the purpose of the universe takes place – thinking on that day gives us a sense of satisfaction and hope. **Romans 8:22-25** tells us:

22 For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 And we believers also groan, even though we have

the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.*

Can our thoughts become consumed with the worries of life? Is there enough problems in our world to inundate us with fears, concerns, efforts to try and fix them? Is our nation and our world living in the midst of uncertain times with problems that seem to be running out of control? Can we fix them?

Man for centuries has tried to fix issues of the human heart let alone the famines, illnesses, immorality of our time with some advances yet never a full solution. Can we fix these problems? NO! There is only one who can bring an end to the chaos and bring resolution to the issues of the world.

Can we become consumed with our neighbors problems let alone our own? Can we get into a mental hamster wheel and allow our own problems and our own issues disable us? There is only one true answer who can bring an end to our insanity.

If living this life is about understanding the truth and reality of God, taking the righteousness of his Son and embracing it as my own, and putting on shoes that allow me to walk in freedom and love without having to worry about whether or not God likes or even loves me, and then holding on with all my might to my trust in God, then really my life is about what God has done for me and not what I have done for God. And if life is all about what God has done for me, then it is also about how God is working in the lives of others as well.

We have to trust the sovereignty of God – we have to trust that he is in control, although he doesn't cause evil to happen he allows it, he allows free choice, but really history is orchestrated by God through his involvement, in his lack of involvement and in his ability to see into the future. Man kind will always have problems and as intellectual human beings we will never fully solve all the issues of the world. Thank God that he will orchestrate everything from the salvation of men, women and children, to the testing of our faith, to the eventual salvation of hope and assurance in the future.

We don't have to carry the weight of the world on us anymore but we can rest in the fact that Gods plan will end with our salvation in the end.

The Example of Job

When we look at the life of Job we find that he was a man who faced many problems or challenges. After loosing all of his wealth, his animals, his children and then being faced with a physical ailment he was challenged to give up. In **Job 2:9** we read:

His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die."

Anybody felt like this any time in their faith? But look at what Job kept focused on in **Job 19:25-27**:

“But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. 26 And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! 27 I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!*

1. Putting on the helmet of our future salvation helps us to keep an eternal perspective. Instead of being consumed in the moment and losing all perspective, reacting and revolting about what is happening, **seeing things in light of eternity helps us to press through and learn valuable lessons that we can help others learn as well.** In light of eternity the worst thing that can happen to us is that we can die and really that’s not so bad.

I also believe that **2. Putting on the helmet of our future salvation defuses fear.** It would be one thing if the book of revelation spoke of how all of mankind had nothing to look forward to but doom, but it doesn’t say that does it. It would be one thing if the Bible taught us that we are to become perfect before we can be with God, but it doesn’t say that. It would be one thing if the Bible showed us that God is out to get us and that bad things will happen to us for no reason, but it doesn’t say that – we know he works everything out for the good, we are to call him our Father (loving parent).

Fear can cripple us and stop us from stepping out in trusting God, establishing a sense of confinement and control. God wants you to trust him, to take steps in your life, to believe he is for you and not against you, to help you to live a life of freedom to help others with their fear.

Do you think Job was starting to get afraid of what was happening to him? What tends to happen when people become afraid? Their minds go through lists of questions. We see in Job 30 a list of questions asking God “what did I do?” I can’t tell you how many nights I have gone through when things have happened and my minds starts to race and then next think I know I can’t sleep and it fear seems to take over. **We need to put on the assurance of our future and trust that God will allow things to pan out to our salvation.**

I also want us to notice something about Job, after he starts to complain and worry we find the beginning of God’s response to him in **Job 38:2-7**:

2 “Who is this that questions my wisdom with such ignorant words? 3 Brace yourself like a man, because I have some questions for you, and you must answer them. 4“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. 5 Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line? 6 What supports its foundations, and who laid its cornerstone 7 as the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?*

Does God ever answer Job's questions? No. He simply asks the question "who do you think you are to question my motive and my methods. I am powerful enough to do whatever I want and so if I make a promise to you, you can be rest assured that it is going to happen." And the reality is he is right! Putting on the helmet of my future will defuse my fear.

That leads us to my next point that **3. Putting on the helmet of our future salvation lightens the blow of disappointments.** Instead of asking the question "why" we need to trust God in the midst of the why's. Scripture tells us in **Proverbs 3:5:**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.
6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

31 But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31

Even when things don't make sense, when things don't go our way, when things seem to be coming against you, when everything seems unbearable, trusting God and putting confidence in God's divine plan will ultimately never disappoint you because it lead to your future hope of eternity.

Never forget what lies ahead of you. Never allow the tactics of the enemy to make you loose sight of the future. Instead find confidence and satisfaction in Jesus Christ and his return. Protect your mind with hope and press through in Jesus name. Let's pray!