

Satan Hates Integrity: The Belt of Truth

Ephesians 6:14a

Pastor Joe Laher

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One of the things that I enjoy doing is reading the church bloopers that I frequently find on the Internet. It is amazing how there is such a lack of proofreaders in the church. One would think that when there is going to be published information for the public that the church, of all the organizations, would be careful what it prints. But..... we know that it is just we humans in our effort to get the bulletin published every week, that we fail to scrutinize what we write and what we print. On top of that we do know that God has a sense of humor. After all, He created the platypus.

I was reminded of all of this this past week when I was looking for a bit of humor to start this message off. I came across a church blooper that I thought was very appropriate. But I'll get to that in a moment.

Right now I want to set up where we are going for the next several weeks. We are going to be looking at the various pieces of armor that God has graciously supplied us with in order to fight off the fiery arrows of Satan, as he tries to mess with us and destroy our lives. Each of these pieces of the armor and the weapon that God does supply us with, are critical to the battle. As I thought about just giving you the verses that include the various pieces of the armor, I was convicted to slow down.

If you've ever whitewater rafted, the rapids are categorized on a scale of 1-to-5 depending on the severity and danger of the rapids, 6 being the most dangerous. Sometimes as you're coming down the river that has been carved out of the rocks, these rapids continue on for long stretches and your adrenaline is going at full tilt the whole way. That's what brings you back the next time, the rush of the adrenaline as you speed through the various twists and turns in the river. But eventually the river plays out into the calm water and you drift through the calmness now that the rush is over.

When I think about the battle armor and what it must have been like to fight as a Roman soldier, I have recently been reminded by the movie trailer on TV for the movie, "300." I have seen it and I was amazed at the determination that 300 men had against an entire army.

You see, I love history and the movie is based on 300 Spartans who take on the army from Troy in spite of all the odds. There is a mentality among the warriors that they stand for something worth fighting for, even to the point of death.

We have a warrior King who also stood for something worth fighting for even to the point of death. His name is Jesus and He did it for you.

So, we can rush through this battle regalia, the armor that God tells us to put on. Perhaps you've done that in the past. Perhaps as you've gotten to the end of the sixth chapter of this great letter to the church at Ephesus, you've anticipated finishing it up and have basically just gone through the armor getting the big picture and finishing the letter.

You might recall that I have likened the book of Ephesians to the Reader's Digest version of the letter to the Romans; a summarization of the tenants of theology compacted in verse after verse of nugget after nugget of who God is and how He relates to us and how we relate to Him. There is a velocity of our reading. As the popular chef Emile would say, "Bam, Bam!" Needless to say, there is a lot here, so I want to slow you down a bit so you don't miss it. Sermons are intended to transform the hearer. If you do not leave here with a plan for the rest of today, tomorrow, this week and the rest of your life, than this message this morning simply end as the

Words of God, good in themselves, but they are intended to make you more Christ-like, not just an explanation of their meaning.

So, here we go! Verse 14 starts off with a command, not a suggestion. Paul says that you are to stand firm. *“Stand therefore...”* Whenever I see the word **‘therefore’** in the Scriptures, I have reason to take a pause. What is it that the writer has just said that has caused him to use the word **‘therefore.’** *“...**be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put** (a command) **on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.**”*

Eph 6:14 – *“Stand firm then (or ‘therefore’- NASB), with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,...”*
Isaiah 11:5 – *Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.*
Luke 12:35 – *“Be dressed in readiness...”* **1 Peter 1:13** - *Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Paul is giving us battle instructions. First he tells us who the enemy is. *take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* Too often, we battle each other. Have you ever heard the quote, “I have seen the enemy and he is me!” In many ways that is true because of our sinful nature, but that is nothing compared to the evil of Satan and his minions.

What does it mean to stand against Satan? I believe that James 4:7 is a major component to this answer, which says *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”* It’s through allowing God to lead us in our life that we can make a stand against Satan.

So Paul is giving us the **‘therefore’** to *“Stand firm then with the belt (or girdle) of truth buckled around your waist,...”* We realize that Paul is using the metaphor of the Roman soldier’s armor as an illustration. Certainly the reader of Paul’s day would be familiar with it and so are we. In the original Greek text, the word that Paul uses to describe this piece of armor around the waist is not a belt, but the Greek word for girdle. Girdle is the word we get from the verb to “gird up.” It meant to tuck the lower part of your robe into the belt or sash around your waist so that you could run quickly.

We don’t see the word girdle much any more in our culture. It was an undergarment that is fairly familiar to most of us. In the American culture it came into fashion in the 1920’s and survived into the late 60’s and early 70’s. It was intended to give the sleek look of the fashions designed to accentuate the hips and for about 50 years was a staple of the undergarment industry. Remember the blooper I spoke of earlier? Well, here it is. It seems that at one particular church they posted an announcement in the bulletin which read: **“Pastor Bill would appreciate it if all the women of the church would kindly bring in their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday. Pastor Bill promises to return them as soon as he is done using them for the breakfast.”** That should be a very interesting menu.

The girdle as a piece of armor was not a belt or sash around the waist of the roman soldier, but rather two layers of approximately 1 ½ inch leather strips that overlapped. This girdle went 180 degrees around the waist of the soldier. The purpose for this was to protect the lower body of the soldier from attack.

But it has been transformed to mean making or getting your mind ready for Christian service. In today's life as we put on the whole armor of God, it's essential that we miss not one piece. It's ironic how such a small insignificant piece can have so much value to the soldier. It's upon this girdle that the weapons are secured. It's upon the girdle that the robe is tucked to make rapid advancement in the war. It's the girdle that holds the components of the armor together. And is the Girdle that supports the strength areas of the soldier's armor, our armor, as we stand against the wiles of the devil.

What is it that protects us from the attacks of the Satan? The truth is what protects us. We know from the gospel accounts that when tempted and challenged by Satan, Jesus countered with the truth of the Scriptures by saying, **"It is written....."** so the question I have for you this morning is this, "Where do you find truth?" I know of only one place where I can find absolute truth and that is in the Word of God.

In this spiritual warfare the first piece of armor that is mentioned is the Girdle of Truth. There are many different commentaries on this subject, but for all simplicity I like to define this as "a true commitment to the divine word of God." In Isaiah 11:5 it was prophesied that ***"Righteousness shall be the belt of his loins and faithfulness the belt of his waist"***. This prophecy was spoken of about Jesus. As we look into the life of Jesus we can see through the scripture that Lord Jesus Christ was totally committed to doing the will of God. It's through our faithfulness that we have balance in our life. It is the truth that gives us strength against Satan's attacks.

What is truth? The Bible declares that Jesus Christ is the truth. In John 8:31-32 Jesus said to his disciples ***"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*** In John 14:6 Jesus declared to these same disciples, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life."*** Not only that He also said in John 14:17 ***"The Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."*** It's when we put on Jesus Christ (who is the truth) and are faithful to the divine word of God we receive power to stand against Satan.

One of the biggest deceptions of Satan is to deceive the world concerning Jesus Christ, and to deny that he is the Son of God. He has gone through great lengths to deceive us. He knows without Jesus (whom is the truth) in our life we have no true defense against Satan. When we stand on our own account Satan will eventually trap us with his tricks. We must not forget that we are men who are in a fallen state due to Adam's act of disobedience. And our thought process is fallen.

So even at our best we are no match for Satan. But thank God, for all those who believe in Christ have received the Spirit of Truth, which will lead us in to all Truth and Righteousness. Which will lead us in the time of attack to victory if we listen to His divine counsel. That's why we must study the words of God, because it's the Spirit of Truth (The Holy Ghost) that brings to our remembrance the Word of God. It's the truth that binds the pieces of the armor together.

Many of us have been wounded because we forgot the truth. We have forgotten to include Jesus in our plan for the day. We walk through life not making a distinction of whose side we are on. We rely on our own inner strength as though we don't need Jesus. As if He is just something we worship with lip service.

There is a church, which was spoken of in the Bible, which was wounded by Satan and I believe they didn't even know it. You may remember the Church of the Laodiceans. This was one of the seven Churches of Asia minor to which John was commanded to write. This church was very prosperous and felt like they didn't need anything. They had a form of religion but no real commitment or no real power. They were self-reliant. Wounded by Satan and didn't know it. Jesus said that he would rather they be hot or cold, rather than the lukewarm that they were. If they continued that way, Jesus said that He would vomit them out of Himself. Pretty strong words for that church and strong words for the church today.

There is an absolute truth that I want to close with that has been in dispute recently. After three days in the grave **the truth** is Jesus was raised from the grave. Mary and Martha can attest to this. On the first day of the week they came to see the tomb of Jesus and found the stone roll back and the angel of the Lord sitting on the tomb. He said to them come to the place where the Lord laid. And go tell His disciples.

Thomas, His disciple, became a witness to the resurrection of Christ. It was Thomas who said, he wouldn't believe that Jesus had risen unless he could touch the wounds. As the disciples met in the house, Jesus appeared to them, and having called Thomas to Himself, Jesus told Thomas to touch His wounds, erasing all doubt for Thomas that Jesus was the risen Lord. Yes, Jesus lives, and He is sitting now at the right hand of the Father. He also lives in the heart of every believer.

There is just one last truth that I would like to share with you all this morning and that is this: He is coming back, and every eye will see Him and every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess His name. Therefore, **stand**, having put on The Girdle Of Truth, the Word of God, which is Christ Jesus.

Pastor Joe