

Christian Combat - God's Armor: What to Take

by David Guzik

In Christian combat, we need to take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit to protect ourselves from the fiery darts of the wicked one and to stand against the enemy.

Duration: 34:56

Scripture: Matthew 4:4, Matthew 6:33, John 14:26, Ephesians 6:13-14, Ephesians 6:16

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Armor"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having hope and optimism in the future through a strong belief in God. He highlights that as believers, we have the assurance of victory because the Bible tells us that we win in the end. The preacher also discusses the significance of the spiritual armor mentioned in Ephesians 6:14-17, emphasizing that each piece has its own importance. He points out that there is a difference between having armor and taking armor, highlighting the need for believers to actively take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit.

Transcript

We're starting this morning in Ephesians chapter 6. We're going to focus in on verses 16 and 17. We're in the fifth part of a six-part series that we've titled The Two Pillars of Christian Combat. Today, we're going to focus on the armor of God in the second aspect of it.

Again, that'll be verses 16 and 17 of Ephesians chapter 6. Let me read. I'm going to start at verse 13, just so we get an idea of the context. Paul writes, 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.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. We've been talking in this series about the two pillars of Christian combat.

And the first pillar that we spoke about in our very first week together was this whole idea of the strength of God in our life, and how we have to be strong in the Lord, or it doesn't matter how much armor you put on an emaciated, weak person, they're not going to be able to fight effectively. That's why the first pillar of Christian combat is found in Ephesians 6, verse 10, where Paul writes, Finally, my brethren, be strong in

the Lord, and in the power of his might. That's where Christian combat begins.

It begins by being strong in the Lord. But once you're strong, you still need the armor of God. And in this previous week, and in this week, we're talking about the armor of God, and we're presenting it in the whole picture, because the whole armor of God is important.

But I want you to notice, in verse 16, these two verses that we're going to focus on today, verses 16 and 17, Paul says, Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. In verses 16 and 17, he lists three items of our spiritual equipment for Christian combat. The shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Now, if you notice, in the first two words of verse 16, he began by saying above all. When we hear those words, it makes us think that the last three items that he mentions are the most important. He mentioned the first three items, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes, or the combat boots, so to speak, of the gospel.

You might think, well, those are of lesser importance, because in verse 16, he says above all. I want you to know that in the language and in the grammar that the Apostle Paul originally wrote with, that's not the idea. The idea of above all isn't that the last three items are more important than the first three.

The idea, instead, is that above all means in addition to the previous. I'll say that again. Above all means in addition to the previous.

So it's wonderful to have those first three items of spiritual armor. You have the belt of truth. You have the breastplate of righteousness.

And you have the shoes, or the combat boots, of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But in addition to those, we have to put on these three items of armor that he mentions in a secondary sense. Now, here's what else I want you to notice, is that there's a difference between having armor and taking armor.

Let me read these verses to you again, beginning at verse 14, and I'll emphasize my reading of it to sort of point this out. Look at verse 14. He says, stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Now verse 16, above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Do you see the difference there? The first three are presented in the sense of having. This is armor to have, and sort of to have as a foundational, starting, constant equipment all the time.

But then, in the critical moment of attack, there's armor for you to take. In other words, some of it's on you all the time. And you live in a constant awareness of the truth of God.

And you live in a constant awareness of the righteousness that you have in Jesus Christ. And you live in constant connection with the gospel of Jesus. But then, at the critical moment of attack, there's armor that you have to take.

You have to take it up and battle with it. Think of a firefighter. The firefighter is at the fire station, and they walk around in sort of standard issue firefighting uniform all the time.

You know, a t-shirt and pants and special shoes. There's certain things that they wear with them all the time while they're on duty at the fire station. But then the alarm bell rings, right? And they get ready for their positions, and I don't think they slide down poles anymore, but it's a nice thing to picture in your mind.

They slide down the pole, and they put on those special overalls with the boots in them, and they put them on, and then they put on the special jacket, right? And they grab the helmet, and they put it on, and then they take the axe, and then they jump on the truck, and they go at the critical moment of battle. Now, if they weren't wearing the right shoes and pants and shirt underneath all of that, they'd be very uncomfortable and ineffective. So they have to have the uniform that they wear.

But then at the critical moment when they're needed, they need to take special things and use them. That's the difference we're talking about. The armor to have and the armor to take.

So we fight with the whole armor, but there is armor to have, and there is armor to take. The having comes first. But now let's consider what we do with this armor that we take.

And we take it up from situation to situation as the moment demands. And I want you to think about those demanding moments in Christian combat. Those demanding moments in your spiritual warfare.

Let's say that moment when a flood of depression or discouragement, it feels like a black cloud, and it comes and it's lowered upon you. That's a spiritual attack. It may have a biological component to it.

It may have an environmental component to it, but it's a spiritual attack as well. Are you familiar with that kind of attack? Are you familiar with that critical moment when the attack comes? Well, that's the moment when you need to take up the armor of God. I know what that flood of depression or discouragement, what that black cloud is like.

You know when I experience it sometimes? Right here at church on Sunday morning. Right before I'm going to preach. It doesn't happen terribly often, but occasionally it does.

Where I'll be under just such intense, dark, gloomy spiritual attack, right there as I'm worshipping God, and oh, the people are worshipping, and the worship team's doing their job, and the whole congregation's worshipping, and I'm just sitting there thinking, I can't go up there and do this. Who am I? Look at my life. Look at all the places I fall short.

Look at how much I need to be cleansed and forgiven by the blood of Jesus. Who am I to go up there? I can't do this, I think. And I just get feeling overwhelmed and dark, and like a cloud lowers over me, and you just think, oh, Lord.

I say, God, this is it. You know, I mean, I just can't do this anymore, and you know, and I write out my resignation letter in my head, and I say, well, God, I just can't go on anymore, and I think, well, it's too late this morning, right? I can't ask, I'm here, and I guess I've got to do it this morning, and I think, I guess this will be the last time. I mean, this will be it.

And then, you know, oftentimes, if you've ever noticed in spiritual attacks, Satan almost overplays his hand. He'll get a little exaggerated, and then it'll sort of key you off on something, and then I think, well, you know, if this is the last time I'm ever going to speak to these precious people, then I want it to be the best message that I can possibly give, right? Your last one should be your best one. And I think, okay, Lord, just help me to just, and then all of a sudden, I turn my focus on the Lord and not on myself, and I

just think, okay, God, just get me up there and get me started, and God does great things, just wonderful things.

Again, I'm very grateful that that's not a common occurrence for me, but when it happens, it feels terrible, and at that critical moment of attack, I need, just like you need, I need to take these aspects of the armor of God, the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, to take those aspects of the armor and put them into action. About those other demanding moments in spiritual warfare, a time when something that's relatively small or insignificant in your life, and it takes on a proportion that's way out of measure. I mean, if somebody could follow you around with a video camera and show how you're acting and how you're reacting to things that are relatively small and insignificant and play that tape back to you later, you'd be horrified.

You'd say, that was me? Why, this is nothing, and look at what a big deal I'm making over this. Friends, I want you to see, that may have an environmental component to it, it may have a biological component to it, but it is a spiritual attack as well, and at that moment of attack, you better take up the armor. Take it up, that's what it's there for.

How about when you have an opportunity to speak with somebody about what Jesus has done or is doing in your life, and all of a sudden, you feel like you've never been so ashamed to be a Christian. Isn't that strange? I mean, at other times, it's like, well, come on, I'd love to talk to people about Jesus, but so often, right when that opportunity comes, wow, the attack comes spiritually, and you just feel almost depressed and overwhelmed. That's time to take up the armor.

Or how about the time when you sense that God wants you to do something, God wants you to follow through, maybe something you've heard, something you've learned, and then all of a sudden, a dozen reasons come flooding in your mind why you can't do what God is telling you to do. That's spiritual attack, isn't it? Or when you just seem to have a sense of panic or helplessness in your life. Friends, so often, these things that we don't immediately perceive them to be spiritual attacks, but that's what they are.

You're in Christian combat, and God says, in these critical moments, I want you to take the shield of faith, and I want you to take the helmet of salvation, and I want you to take the sword of God's word and use those things to meet the need and to triumph in that critical moment of attack. So how do we do it? What does it mean to take the shield of faith? Well, let's look at our text again. Verse 16, he says, above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Well, the first thing we see is that quite obviously, the shield is connected to faith. It's the shield of faith, and sometimes we just need that shield, don't we? You feel like you're attacked, you're assaulted on every end, that the attacks just keep coming. You need something to defend yourself.

Oh, sure, the arrows are being shot at you, and you can take a few arrows stuck into you, and you can dance around some others, but the bottom line is, if you don't have an effective shield, you're not going to be able to endure very long in the attack, and we just need something to prevent us from being a pincushion for the enemy. So you need that shield. Faith plays such an essential role in the defense that we have in spiritual warfare, and that's what the shield's all about, right? Defending yourself against these attacks.

So, friend, my simple question is for you, is do you have faith in God, and can you put it up at that critical moment of attack? Now, he may say, well, of course I have faith in God. I'm here this morning, aren't I,

Pastor? Of course I believe in God. Well, I want you to understand that in our culture, in our society, in our way of thinking right now, we make a huge mistake because we usually think that knowledge is equivalent to faith.

In other words, you may know a lot of spiritual facts. I think we have a very high level of knowledge in our congregation, and I commend you for that. I think we're a biblically literate and a biblically educated group of people.

I think there's amazing resources of spiritual knowledge right here in this room. If I were to give you a quiz and have you fill it out, I bet we'd get wonderful grading on it. But there's a difference between knowledge and faith, isn't there? Because you can intellectually know something, but faith makes it real in your life.

Faith says, I'm going to put my trust in this piece of knowledge. It's not just going to stay in this compartment in my brain titled things I know. Faith means things I believe and trust in.

So I'm not asking you to put up the shield of knowledge. Now please don't anybody think for a moment that I'm downgrading knowledge. I think you can't have true faith until you have knowledge.

How can you really trust in something until you know it? I'm just saying that knowledge in itself doesn't go far enough. Faith includes knowledge, but it goes beyond it. So don't put up the shield of knowledge.

Put up the shield of faith. That's what you need to do. God, I trust you.

God, I believe in you. I'm not trusting in myself. I'm not trusting in this friend or neighbor.

I'm not trusting in what I have. I'm not trusting in even what I know. I'm trusting in you, God.

Now, how can you tell whether or not you have this faith? Again, I think it's a hard thing to discern, because we so easily think that knowledge and faith are the same. And you may be measuring your level of faith by looking at how much knowledge you have. But no, let's talk about faith in your life.

How can you tell? Well, I think that if a person has faith in their life, there's going to be at least three characteristics, maybe many more than this, but three came to my mind as I was preparing for our talk this morning. First of all, I believe that if you have faith in your life, fear will not be entrenched in your life. Now, I'm not talking about passing fears.

We all deal with passing fears. But fear and faith are almost opposites. If a person has real fear, they don't have real faith in God.

And if fear is entrenched in your life, I don't think that you have the shield of faith that God wants you to have. Now, maybe you have a little bit of faith. Maybe you have a shield that's about the size of a dinner plate, and that's what you've been trying to defend yourself with.

But that's not what God really wants. And if fear is entrenched in your life, you should take that as a warning sign that you're really lacking in faith. Here's a second sign.

I think that when you really have faith, you have peace in the present. There's just a peace in your life. Ladies and gentlemen, God is in control.

He's enthroned in the heavens, and He controls everything that's around us. God is in charge. And if I really have a relationship of faith and trust with that God, how can I be without peace with what's going on right now? So again, if there is a conspicuous lack of peace in your life, I think that's an indicator that you don't have as much faith as you should.

Here's a third indicator. That you have a hope and an optimism about the future. Friends, that's how it is.

When you really believe God, you have a hope and an optimism about the future. I mean, you're excited because you know that in the end of the book, it says we win. That's how the story ends, folks.

Now, our future is more glorious in front of us. Even as good as God has been to us in the past, He only has good things in front of us. He wants to move us from glory to glory.

And you have that sense as an abiding hope and optimism in your life. Now, honestly, if you look at your life and say, well, fear is not entrenched. I don't think I measure it very well there.

I don't have much peace at the present. I don't have much hope and optimism about the future. Then I'm glad you're here because God wants to build more faith into your life.

And you're already off on the right foot because the Bible says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. And you're hearing it this morning. And God wants to build up more faith in you.

Now, look at how he says that faith functions in our life as the spiritual shield. It's in verse 16 again. He says, above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

You see, the idea is that there are these flaming arrows being shot at us. That's the idea of fiery darts. Don't think of a guy, you know, throwing darts at a dartboard and he lights one on fire and that's it.

It's a flaming arrow is what Paul's referring to. And imagine yourself in battle. And they used to do this in the ancient world.

Paul's drawing on a picture from ancient warfare. How when the two armies were gathered together and facing off against each other, that one of the armies or maybe both of them, they would get archers and they would shoot hundreds, if not thousands of fiery arrows to go and to go over the enemy lines. And to go right into the battle lines of the opposing troops.

And the idea behind shooting all of those flaming arrows was not simply to hope to injure another soldier by hitting them with the arrow. But you can imagine the sense of fear and panic and dread that those flaming arrows would cause among the troops as they started to rain down from the heavens among your troops. It would just make you terrified and fill you with a sense of panic and fear you would just want to run.

What does Paul say that we need to do when we have that sense? We need to take the shield of faith. Now they specifically constructed shields among Roman soldiers to defend against those flaming arrows. The shields were not made of metal.

They'd be made of wood or metal covered with strips of wood so that the flaming arrows would hit into the wood and be extinguished because they would even moisten the wood with water so they could extinguish these flaming arrows. And the soldiers would get all together and link their shields one with another so it

would be an impenetrable wall. And the flaming arrows would come and they'd either be knocked off or stuck into the wood which would extinguish them.

And they could stand strong against the flaming arrows of the enemy. Friends, how about you? Do you ever feel like that sometimes that a thousand flaming arrows are being shot at you right now? That your mind is filled with thoughts and feelings and imaginations and fears and lies and they just descend upon you a hundred times in a second? Lift up that shield of faith. Lift it up.

Take it. God's giving it to you right now. He says, this is my shield of faith.

Take that shield and all of those things. The thoughts, the feelings, the imaginations, the fears, the lies. Those are all examples of fiery darts shot at us and it's the shield of faith that will extinguish them.

Look how vulnerable we are without the shield of faith. You take that away and what are you trying to do? You're trying to dodge arrows? That's not going to work very well. Let me say when Satan shoots those flaming arrows at us, he's a pretty skilled marksman, isn't he? He knows our weak spots.

Satan knows my hot buttons. He knows the things that really get me annoyed or into the flesh and he knows how to aim right at those with a fiery arrow. Well, if I lift up the shield of faith, it'll never hit its intended target, but it'll be extinguished by the shield of faith.

I say, Lord, I believe in you. I trust in you. I trust in your word.

I'm lifting up the shield of faith. Well, there's a second aspect of this spiritual armor that we're to wear and he discusses that here in verse 17. He says, and take the helmet of salvation.

Well, the helmet is connected to salvation. Now, there's a few different ways I should say that we could talk about this. You could say, well, in what sense does he mean that salvation is like a helmet that protects our head? By the way, you shouldn't think of a metal helmet.

Most Roman soldiers didn't wear metal helmets. I mean, that was sort of pricey and expensive to outfit a whole army with metal helmets. Usually it would be like a leather cap that was studded with metal studs.

And so it would be almost as effective as a metal helmet, but not as heavy and cheaper to make for a whole army. Well, salvation covers your head like a helmet and no wise soldier is going to go into battle without a helmet. You pick that up and you put it on at the critical moment when the attack comes.

Now, in what sense does Paul mean that salvation is a helmet for us? You know, one of the best things you can do when you're reading the Bible is let the Bible interpret the Bible. And Paul tells us what he means by the helmet of salvation in another passage. It's 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 8. You don't have to turn there.

I'll read it for you. In that passage, he says this, 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. In other words, the helmet is connected to salvation and the hope of our ultimate salvation as seen in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 8. You see that passage again, as I just read, it speaks about the helmet of salvation connection to the hope of salvation.

Now, friends, when you have the hope of salvation in your mind, you're focused on the fact that God will triumph in your life and see you through to the end. Do you ever worry about that? Do you ever get so

discouraged that you wonder if you're ever going to make it? Have you ever thought of just turning your back on this whole Christian life and sort of checking out on it? Sometimes I meet people and they talk about their Christian experience in the past and they say something like that. Well, I tried that and they've given up on it.

It hurts when you talk to people like that. Well, friends, they needed to put on that helmet of salvation, of the hope of their salvation, and they need to say, I'm confident that what God says is true and he who began a good work in me will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. He began that work and he's going to complete it.

He's going to see me through to glory. I have that hope. I'm going to heaven.

And even though the flaming arrows come at me, even though the attack comes against me, God has not put my salvation in the devil's hands. He can't take away my salvation. Thank you, Jesus.

I have this hope of salvation and my rest, my hope, my comfort is in that. I'm going to heaven and nobody can take that away from me. And you start thinking about your heavenly destiny and the fact that right now, though the battle's hard and discouragement and despair comes against us, we know that we're going to win out.

And one day we'll look back on all of this today and have a smile on our face and rejoice in the work that God did on us. Well, I want you to think about yourself a million years from now. A million years from now, when you're in heaven's glory and you look back on the 60 or 70 or 80 or 90 years that you had walking this earth, it's going to seem like an eye blink.

You say, well, that was no time at all. That was five minutes before the whole game started. It didn't even matter.

I mean, right now it seems like this life will never end and your trials will never end and the discouragement will never end. Friends, in the standpoint of your whole existence throughout all eternity, this is the smallest piece of the pie that you can even imagine. And you can make it through.

You really can. Put that helmet of the hope of your salvation on. God is going to see you through to the end.

See, my friends, this is not just the assurance that we are saved, but it's the assurance that we will be saved and that God will triumph in our life. And one of Satan's most effective weapons against us is discouragement. You ever see those movies where they open up the weapons cabinet and all these marvelous weapons there in this cabinet or in this room? There they are mounted on the wall.

Well, Satan has a weapons cabinet or a weapons room, and he opens up the door and he looks and he says, oh, these are all my weapons. And he looks at some of his favorite weapons in there. Well, there's lust.

Oh, he likes that weapon, doesn't he? And there's no, there's fear. Oh, that's a good one. I've used that one very well.

But then I think right in the center, right in the center of his weapons, there's one of Satan's favorite weapons, his most effective weapon. It's discouraged. It's despair.

He wants you to feel discouraged. Like you'll never win. Like you'll never get over it.

Like God's victory will never be seen in your life. But friends, when you're properly equipped with the helmet of salvation, it's hard to stay discouraged. Well, you almost want to say to the devil, bring it on.

You can't do anything to me. Oh, sure, you can. You can hurt me.

You can torment me. You can make it difficult for me. But you shall not triumph in my life.

Because he who is in me is greater than he who is in the world. And he who began a good work in me will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. That's exciting news.

Well, so look how vulnerable we are without the helmet of salvation. Man, you take that away from us and we can so easily fall, so easily discouraged. Or when we fall into that place of discouragement, we get stuck in it.

Friends, let's face it. We all get discouraged, don't we? But with the helmet of salvation, we won't stay stuck there. We'll say, well, no, I'm going to put on.

I'm going to recognize my heavenly hope and rest in that. Well, finally, and far more quickly than we'd like to. Let's take a look at the third item of spiritual warfare.

Again, verse 17 and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Well, friends, I want you to see that the sword is connected to the word of God. God's word.

I don't have to put a fancy interpretation on this. It's what Paul says right there in verse 17. The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

The idea here is that the Holy Spirit provides a sword for you. And the sword is the word of God. So how are you going to use this sword in spiritual battle? Well, you're not going to run around the room and find the devil and chase him and beat him over the head with your Bible.

You can't use the Bible in a superstitious way. Now, some people are almost superstitious with their Bibles, where they put it in their house and how they treat it. And that means you don't need to be superstitious about the book, although I suppose it's not wrong to pay it some due reverence and some due respect.

But don't think that you can fight off the devil by taking a little Bible and tying it around your neck. You don't think it'll ward him off like a legend. Say the garlic ward off a vampire.

It doesn't work like that. Matter of fact, if the devil was coming right at you and you held the book up in front of him and go like this, that would matter nothing to him. But if you used the sword of the spirit, if you use the word of God against him and said right into his face, the principles and the promises and the words of scripture, he couldn't stand before that.

That's the idea. Now, in this sense, we see that the sword is both an offensive and a defensive weapon. That's important to emphasize.

The sword is defensive because we take blows from Satan. We block them with our sword to be sure. But then we also venture forth with the sword and administer offensive thrusts.

And that makes it unique among all the other spiritual armor, right? This is what we want to do. We want to take the word of God and stick it to the devil when he comes against us. It's really that simple, isn't it? So when temptation or despair or discouragement or fear or that black cloud descends upon you, then you battle back by filling your mind and your lips and your heart and your thinking with the word of God.

We take the word of God and we depend on it and we use it. Of course, the classic example of this is Jesus himself. Remember when he was tempted in the wilderness and Satan comes along and he says, well, since you're the son of God, why don't you take one of these stones and command it to be made bread? Of course, he was very hungry after 40 days of fasting, very vulnerable to that temptation.

Jesus didn't try to chase away the devil or say, no, or I don't believe you. What did he do? He got out the sword and he thrust them good with it. He said, the Bible says it is written.

Thou shalt not know man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Oh, that made Satan real bad. Now he came back again with the second temptation and a third temptation.

But each time Jesus answered back with the word of God and gave Satan a good strike back and sent him off. Not for good. Satan came back and tempted Jesus again.

But friends, he'll come back, but we can send him away with the word of God. Now to use the sword in spiritual battle, you need to remember a principle that Jesus spoke of in the gospel of John chapter 14. In verse 26, he'd made this promise to his disciples, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all the things that I said to you.

Understand that it's the Holy Spirit's job to bring to remembrance what we have learned with that sword. In other words, you can't just take this Bible and put it on your head and say, God, pour into me all of this truth. No, you've got to know it first.

And then at the critical moment, the Holy Spirit will do what? He'll bring it to your remembrance. He won't create the word of God in your mind. No, you need to know it first.

But he'll bring it to your remembrance at the critical moment. And then you take the sword and you administer that blow to Satan that will answer his every lie, his every attempt to deceive and discourage and to bring this sort of attack against us. I want you to think of a soldier or gladiator in training.

There he is. He's practicing the sword thrust, right? This move and that move. And there he is.

He's working through the whole routine. Now, he has to practice that beforehand. And if he's a good soldier, if he's an excellent fighter, when he's in actual combat, the memory of all that practice will come back to him like second nature, and he'll be able to use it.

Friends, that's why you need to be in the Bible. Not just here on Sunday morning, but in your daily life, you need to be in the word. That's when you're practicing your sword thrust.

And no, you're not in combat right at that moment, perhaps. But when the critical moment comes, you'll be able to take up the sword and use it just like you practiced in that critical moment. I guess my point is simply this.

Effectively using the sword takes practice. That's what you have to have. Effectively using the sword takes practice.

And as God teaches you in your word, you're going to be able to do it. So, friends, think of how vulnerable we are without the sword of the spirit, without the word of God. You can never put away the enemy.

Oh, you can block his blows and such, but you can't send him running without the word of God. So here we are. We're in the firehouse, right? Now, first of all, maybe some of you, you've never become firefighters.

So you need to become Christians. You need to become a follower of Jesus Christ. And then when you do, you'll be issued your equipment to have, right? The armor to have, the breastplate of righteousness, the belts of truth, the shoes or the combat boots of the gospel.

And you have those on. But now here we are all together in the fire station and the bell rings. The attack comes to you, doesn't it? What are we going to do? Well, we're going to take that armor that's made available to us in that moment of attack.

So we take up the shield of faith. We take up the helmet of salvation. We take up the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

And with those things, we stand in that moment of spiritual attack. Are you ready to do that? Are you ready to ask God, Lord, make this real in my life? Well, then let's pray together and ask him to do it. Friends, this will make a huge difference in our lives.

It'll make a difference in the relationship of trust that you have in the Lord. It'll also make a difference in your life by making you less of a burden to other people, more of a help to them. You know, you're going to deepen your relationship of trust in the Lord in this.

And you're going to be there to fight for others in their moment of need. Father, that's our prayer this morning. Lord, first of all, I pray that if there's anybody sort of standing outside of the fire station or the or the military camp that, Lord, you bring them in and you'd make them soldiers of Jesus Christ.

But, Lord, we who are soldiers help us to walk in the whole armor, in the full equipment that you give us. Lord, equip us this morning to take up the armor that we need at the moment of attack. Strengthen every discouraged, every depressed.

Every fearful, every believer here who senses that they're under attack. We come together now, Lord, and take up the armor. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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