

# The Christian's Complete Armor

by Paris Reidhead

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*The Christian's complete armor refers to the spiritual equipment and uniform that God has given to believers to enable them to stand against the enemy and fulfill their responsibilities.*

**Duration:** 42:13

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:11, John 5:39, Acts 17:11, Ephesians 6:14, Colossians 3:16, 2 Timothy 2:15, Hebrews 4:12

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses a metaphor of a man trying to direct traffic to illustrate the struggle of trying to make an impact in the world. The man feels small and insignificant, lacking the respect and authority to stop the traffic. He calls the captain for help, but realizes that he needs to put on his uniform and take action himself. The preacher emphasizes the importance of studying and meditating on the word of God, urging the congregation to develop a hunger for the truth and to engage in Bible classes.

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## Transcript

Last Lord's Day, I spoke to you concerning the perfecting of the saint, setting forth a relationship that is normal to the Christian. Today I want to have you consider with me the Christian's complete armor. Part of that armor of which I speak must be from a proper understanding of our relationship to the Lord.

I think I can illustrate this beginning in such a way as to assure your interest and your concern for that which is to follow. Can you imagine the consternation that would be created in our city if on some occasion a young policeman were to arise too late to properly put on his uniform, leaving his federal slippers on, and blue jeans, and a sports shirt, and carrying his badge in his pocket, and forget his hat, and leave his gun. And he goes out into the middle of the street where there's heavy traffic, not properly uniformed, not properly equipped, not understanding his responsibility.

He tries to direct the traffic, timid, hesitant, afraid. He puts the whistle in his teeth and just gently blows, and raises his hands reluctantly. And someone thinks he's waving at them, waves back.

And the trucks go right through, the cars pass one another, quizzed by him. This caricature, this this crowd in the middle of the street, trying to direct traffic. The pedestrians gather and are amused.

The people watch, wandering through the city, and traffic smiles and ties up and completely blocks in each direction. Stop, because they have this man in the middle of the street. And finally he puts his head down

on the radiator of one of the cars and sobs into his arm.

His first day, and he's made such a tragic mess of it all. And then a thought occurs to him. He goes over and takes the phone down off the post and calls the captain.

Can you imagine what's going to be told to him? The captain is going to say, do you have your uniform on? No, no, I don't have my uniform on. But that's not the problem, captain. These trucks, they're so big.

And these drivers are so, well they don't have any respect for me. And they look at me and say, who is he? And they blow the whistle for me to get out of the way. And I'm too small.

If I put my hand against any one of them, I couldn't stop them. They just run right over me. After all, who am I anyway to stop the traffic? I don't even have my television set paid for, and I haven't graduated from college.

And what right do the drivers have to respect me? I shouldn't be out here. Then you can hear the captain say, now look, just let it go. It'll get unstyled.

You go home and put your uniform on. Then you come by and I want to talk to you. You can see him go into the precinct office, and the captain say, now look, when you're out there, it doesn't make any difference whether you have your television set paid for, or your car paid for, or whether you've graduated from school.

That's not the importance. They don't care who you are at all. The important thing is the government behind the badge and the uniform you wear.

And when you step into that street and raise your hand, it's no longer an issue as to you, you count for nothing. You are representing the government. And when you put that whistle between your teeth and raise your hand, they stop, not because of your personality, or influence, or intelligence, but because you are the representative of the government.

Well we've had such a problem facing us in the church for a long time. We've been given a tremendous responsibility. The church of Jesus Christ was entrusted with the victory of the son of God.

He turned over his triumph to the Lord Jesus, just as the allies, to the church, his body, just as the allies turned over their conquest in Japan to some privates from Louisiana and from London. They signed a treaty of surrender, and then they sent out some replacements. Oh there were some older soldiers, but many of them were young men that had just been brought from this country, that came into Japan and were to enforce the peace.

Now that was what our Lord Jesus did. He conquered his enemy. We defeated Satan in open conflict.

He led captivity captive. And then he spoke to his body, the church, and said, now I am taking you into fellowship with me to become laborers together with me to enforce the victory that I have secured. And I've given to you a relationship to me.

And I've given to you a panoply, an armor, a uniform that will identify you as mine. And I've given to you a book of rules that you are to follow, you're to be successful in doing that which I now entrust to you. And the church of the Lord Jesus somehow did not believe that the Lord meant it when he said it.

And thought that our task was to, instead of enforce his victory in a great conflict which engaged him and took him to the grave, that we should, as it were, say well he died and was buried and rose again so that we could make daisy chains. We could play a kind of spiritual ring-around-the-rosy, moving in the offices of the church and going through the motions of activity and playing at our little organization. And for that, as the church, for God's great responsibility was entrusted to his body to enforce his victory over the defeated foe.

The consequence of it is then that the traffic out of hell, the trucks, the cars, the hit-and-run drivers from the pit, have driven back and forth through the church, through the mission field, through the homes of Christians, the business of Christians, wrecking, ravaging, ruining wherever is possible. And the children of God have stood there, having forgotten their armor, having forgotten their responsibility and their privileges and the provision of the captain of their salvation. And they shake their head and say, what can you do? What can you do? There's the enemy, there's his power, there's his strength.

Just four little weak Christians, what can they do when such a terrible enemy takes after them? But my friends, when we read this book, we discover that Paul said, our weapons are not carnal. Organization, education, exaltation of personality, and the use of means that disgrace the Lord for whom they're used, our weapons are not carnal, but they're mighty to the tearing down of strongholds. The church has forlacked the army, and turned its back on its uniform, and forgotten its privileges, and then has gone out robed, as it were, of caricatures of Christians, and tried to do its work in its own way, and wondered why the Lord couldn't bless, and why the hosts of hell didn't tremble.

My friends, there's no alternative for us. We must come back to New Testament Christianity. We must come back to realize that the Lord never wanted us to pit our feeble intelligences and our puny physical strength and the vacillating weakness of our personality against the foes that he sent us to engage.

But there's a way, a manner, a provision that he prepared for us to use. He gave evangelists, pastors, teachers, for the perfecting of the saints. This perfecting of the saints included a relationship to the Lord, being born of the spirit, being brought into union and identification with Christ, being filled unto all of the fullness of God.

This is imperative. You must understand your relationship to him. I dwell for just a moment on the matter of our identification with Christ.

I want you to see it as part of the equipment that the Lord gave to you for your service. When the Lord Jesus died for you, he drew you, as it were, to himself. He identified himself with you.

He took your sins. He was made to be sin for you. He became, in the eyes of his Father, what you are.

What you were, rather, for I'm speaking to those who are his children. And when the Lord Jesus went to Calvary, went to the cross, he went as you. He stood before the as you would stand.

He stood condemned with your guilt, laden with your corruption, and sentenced to your death. He was your representative and your substitute. When the Father saw him on the cross, he did to him what his righteousness demands that he do to you.

When the Lord Jesus died, he died for you, but since he was your substitute, your representative, you were in him and with him in the will of the Father, and you died with him. Thus Paul would write to the church at Rome and say, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ. In our union with Christ in

his death, crucified with him, thus he provided victory over the tyranny of ourselves.

For we were God's greatest competitor and God's greatest enemy, and hindered his work. But when the Lord Jesus died for us, and we thus died with him, he made it possible for us to be delivered from the bondage to ourselves. And union with Christ in his death, crucifixion with Christ, gives to us the means of victory over ourselves.

Our appetites, our traits, our tendencies, our attitudes. But not only did Christ die for us, not only was he crucified for us, but the scripture says he was buried for us. Taken from the tomb, cold in death, he was laid there, and thus was separated from the world.

That which men could do to him, see, the attractions, the allurements that the world could give to him, the enticements that it could direct at him, were, had no power whatever, he was dead. The world had no influence upon him. The scripture says that we were buried with him, since he was our substitute, crucified for us, and we crucified with him, so he was buried for us, and we were, in the mind of the father, buried with him.

When by faith you take your place, experientially, in union with Christ in burial, a gulf is fixed between you and the world, so that the allurements, the enticements, the world would direct at you through their power. What a marvelous provision it was of our heavenly father that we should no longer be shaken and driven and whipped and scurred by the things of the world. And thus the Lord Jesus in John 8 said abide in me, buried with me, that you may have victory over the world.

But not only was our Lord crucified for us, and we were crucified with him, and buried for us, we were buried with him. But it says in Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 5 that we were quickened together with Christ. When the father saw his son quickened, he saw us quickened.

When the father saw life return again to that body bruised and in death, he saw us as it were in him, for he was our substitute. And thus we were quickened together with Christ. And it goes in the next verse further to say that we were raised up together to return again, no longer the same person, but having experienced death and burial and quickening, we are now enabled to walk back into the world that one compelled us, one controlled us, and the Lord enticed us, we're enabled to walk back into the world and no longer be subject to it.

Our Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, ascended and sat down at the right hand of the throne on high, waiting the day till his enemy should be made his footstool. This we see, this we understand, all evangelical Christians hold it. But Ephesians the second chapter and the sixth verse state, he hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, seated in Christ.

Now unfortunately, most Christians have not understood that this is their present privilege. Most of us are living under the circumstances, rather than seated together with Christ in the heavens. What a thrilling thing it is to a child of God to have his spirit illuminated with the fact that the normal habitat for a child of God is seated in Christ in the heavens, looking down, seeing the world spread out below.

What a tragic thing it is for a child of God to feel himself somehow isolated from the Father, way off in the distant corners and reaches of space and heaven. And in the meantime, we're here. And over us, straddling us with scale covered limbs and fire and brimstone being breathed from his wicked nostrils, is the enemy striding over the church and crushing and breaking.

And from this perspective, looking up at a powerful enemy, it's the most disheartening, discouraging thing. But if you can simply get the right perspective, it changes everything. And by faith, you're prepared to let the Spirit of God show you that you are seated together in the heavenly, in Christ, that you begin to understand that for which Paul prayed in Ephesians 1, that we might know the greatness of his power to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him and you from the dead and set him and you at his own right hand in the heavenlies, are above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, also in that which is to come.

And has put all things under his feet. And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body. What part of Christ did he put all things under his feet? And his feet is part of his body.

The fullness of him that fills all in all. And it was the intention of the Lord Jesus that his body, the church, of which he is the head, and which he fills and empowers and controls, was to enforce his victory. For the members of his body, the church, were once the servile captives of Satan, bound by him, held by him, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince and the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

Such were we. But all the glory of it, the wonder of it, that the Lord Jesus went into the strongman's house and broke the hold of the strongman and led the one who held us captive, led him captive himself, led captivity captive. And then he said now, having defeated the enemy, having defeated the foe, I am going to turn the enforcement of my victory over to my body, the church.

And these who once were held by Satan, now are going to have the responsibility to enforce the victories and retrieve the rights that are mine. Now turn with me to Ephesians the sixth chapter, and the tenth verse. We have a relationship.

This relationship is imperative if we're to ever have the ministry God wants us to have. We must enter into it, become mature Christians, not babes tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. But men and women who understand and experience that which they understand.

First is the relationship, abide in me, crucified with me, buried with me, quickened with me, raised with me, seated with me. Abide in me and I in you. This is a relationship.

But in addition to our abiding in him, he has made provisions for us. The armor without the relationship is ineffectual. The relationship without the armor is equally ineffectual.

It's both ends. Some years ago, just the evening before the inauguration of President Eisenhower, so history records, President, ex-President Truman was having a party for some of his friends at the White House. And the word came in from the office that through neglect, two men that were to receive presidential pardon, were to, would have to have it signed by interrupting the party.

The papers were brought in. President Truman affixed his signature. The next day, the prison doors opened and these two men went out of federal prison.

If it had been seven or eight minutes later, it would have been too late. President Truman could have written his signature over every inch of space on those parties, and it would have opened no doors. You say, wouldn't his writing have been legible? Just as legible.

But what was the matter? Wouldn't they recognize it? Certainly. You see, it wasn't just his signature. It was his signature as President of the United States, which he ceased to be at the stroke of midnight.

He had to make the, fix the signature before the hour ceased. It wasn't just what he did, it was the capacity in which he did it. And so consequently, it isn't just what the church does, it is understanding the responsibilities and functions that devolve upon us from the Lord, and doing it as he wants, in the manner he wants, when he wants it done.

That we, what we have tried to do, is to do it all by might, by ability, by strength, and we fail to understand that it is not merely by what we possess, but by the relationship that we have to one that has authorized us to serve in his name. Thus we find here, that our ministry is to be certified not only by an interior relationship with the Lord, but by an exterior panoply or uniform that will identify us to those foes and forces with which we must contend. Verse 10 of Ephesians 6, finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on, this is in the imperative mood and it's inescapable, put on, get dressed, get dressed, put on the whole armor of God, without which you will be unable to stand against the wiles of the devil. Now this is so patently clear, you wonder why people haven't been as concerned about the armor of God as they've been about their Easter outfit. We're infinitely more concerned that our trousers should be pressed and lapels should be straight, than we are that we should have on the armor of God.

If we took a fraction of the time that we take to present ourselves to each other, to see to it that we are prepared to encounter an ancient foe that recognizes only the panoply that God authorized, we would not be driven and scourged and whipped and beaten as we are, but we've neglected, as a church, the armor of God. Notice our conflict isn't with people, our conflict isn't with men and their attitudes and ideas. I remember years ago, and first beginning in the pastorate in Minnesota, I visited a young man who jokingly said to me, you know if I could just have three public services, three funerals in this church, we'd have a good work here.

In other words, there were three individuals that he felt had antagonistic spirits to everything that was being done there, and that these men were in key positions, and if he could just have three public services, the work would be released and they'd go ahead and have a great time in God. And I said, no I'm afraid not, before you finish the public services, their successors would be appointed. I didn't know much about it, but I did know that the scripture said we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and power.

And if that is the case, then when he has lost the services of one, he'll appoint another. We recognize from this that our conflict, therefore, is not horizontal, as it were, with people. Though people may be the buffers that the enemy uses, they're not the one with whom we're contending.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principality, against power, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Now because your conflict is in this invisible realm, against demon personalities controlled by satan, that are moving in every nefarious wicked manner they know and possess, with every ability they can muster to hinder the work of God, you dare not contend on a natural physical material level. You must meet fire with fire, and this is an invisible fire by invisible personalities, therefore you must use spiritual means if you are to successfully advance the cause of the captain of your salvation.

Therefore, for this reason, because of the one with whom you are contending, take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, antihistamine. I like that. You ever heard of that? They take it right out of here, trade name picked right up out of the Greeks.

Come against so as to cause to stop, is the strength of the word. These things are already in motion, the enemy's already moving, coming up over the hill. In Xenophon's analysis, the word would be used in such a situation that the sergeant instructs the corporal with his platoon, you see the enemy's coming up over the hill, moving out toward us.

Go up and cause him to stop, antihistamine. That's what he said, so take unto yourself the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to cause him to stop. You aren't going to be able to run over him, destroy him, but take unto you the whole armor of God.

Stand therefore, that's the same word, stand against, so as to cause to stop. Stand therefore, having your loins girded by the truth. Oh my dear, if somehow the spirit of God can come down on us as a congregation, and get us to study the word, and to read the word, and meditate on the word, we take it on Sundays, and read our Sunday school lesson too often, and put it out the door, look at it again until we read next Sunday's lesson.

May God come down upon the gospel tabernacle church, its members, and its friends, and baptize us with an insatiable hunger for the truth of God's word. You know, for a year I've been praying God would start bible classes, and get you excited about the book, and reading in it. I almost made the tragic mistake of letting the bible class ministry become a program, and that would have been the kiss of death.

I'm trusting that it's going to become spontaneous, that your hearts are going to be so burdened, so desperately concerned, that you can't wait till Wednesday or Sunday, that you're going to say, come on over, and let's read, and let's study, and let's get into God's word. We want to have our loins girt about with truth. Sunday morning, Sunday night isn't enough.

Meditate on it when you ride on the subway on Monday morning, and read it when you have lunch, and think about it at night, and get some friends into the home the night that you have free, and say, let's read, let's study, let's look at God's word. Loins girt about with truth, understanding, putting it on, protecting, having on the breastplate of righteousness. This is not the righteousness in Christ imputed.

That isn't has anything to do with it. That has reference to our standing before God, and that's unaffected in the battle. We stand before him whole and complete and perfect in Christ, but we're wrestling with an enemy, and he is looking for chinks in the armor.

You say, well I know I gossip a little, but others do. I know I get angry, but that's not too bad. I know that I have a lascivious mind, but nobody's perfect.

I'll tell you something, my friend. You may think it's a little thing, but hell sends up a chorus of rejoicing when they see it, because it leaves an open place of chink, so that these fiery darts of the enemy can get in. That's why the scripture that I read says, neither give place to the devil.

When your breastplate is open, the fiery darts get in. Strike and tear and burn, and that's why you need your loins girt about with truth, so that you'll know wherein you please him. The breastplate of right righteousness is obedience to the will of God, and incidentally, it covers your breast.

It does not cover your back. He never intended you to flee from the enemy. There's no protection for your back.

Loins girt about with truth, the breastplate of obedience, the conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. And when your conscience is thus testified to by the Spirit of God, you can stand against him, and his fiery darts will not penetrate. But when there is sin, unconfessed, unforgiven sin in your life, then you're open to the arrows of Satan's throwing.

Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Interesting, isn't it, that here we have two sandals. And I think Paul identified these sandals when he took leave of the Ephesian elders, and he said, I was with you from house to house, night and day, teaching repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And everyone that ever comes to him comes this way. First step is repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And the preparation of the gospel of peace will enable you to teach others how to walk, and how to meet the Lord, having done so yourself.

Then above all, taking the shield of faith. But your faith is going to depend upon the degree to which you'll gird up about the loins with truth. For faith comes by hearing, hearing the word.

And only as you understand your privileges in Christ, and enter into those privileges, are you going to have the faith to stand. Therefore, it's imperative again, that if you're to take the shield of faith, it must be through your familiarity with God's work. Take the shield of faith, for which he shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy.

And when he pulls the arrows of doubt, and unbelief, and disobedience, you can leave there the shield, and it'll stop. Marvelous provision. Then he said, and take the helmet of salvation.

The helmet of salvation. And personally, I believe that this is our understanding of the protecting covering of the blood of Christ. It says in Revelation, they overcame him, Satan, through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.

And when you see your mind, for the helmet covers the mind. When you see your mind engaged with the marvelous blessings and privileges that are yours in Christ, your mind is protected. But when you pick up the books, lascivious and rude as they often are, their intent and purpose, and you read them, you flip the helmet on.

When your mind becomes critical, and censorious, and unbelieving, and doubting, and grieving, and all the other things, suspicious. Oh my, how suspicion between the members of the body of Christ lays their head bare to all the darts of the enemy. The helmet of salvation, occupied with Christ, concerned with him, concerned with his interest.

Where whatsoever things are pure, and true, and lovely, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things. The helmet of salvation, and then the sword of the spirit. This is your weapon of offense, to answer the attack.

Just as when our Lord Jesus was tempted to make bread, man shall not live by bread alone, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Every temptation was answered by the sword of the spirit. We need to understand it, know how to use it, and become skillful in it.

Reading the books of history of the Middle Ages, medieval period, you'll discover that the young man that was prepared to take his place as a nobleman in France or in England, was sent to the one who would instruct him in the use of the weapon, for every man carried his own weapon, the sword, a dagger, some other weapon that he would have about his person. The purpose? To, in the hour of emergency, to be able to defend himself. Hours were spent practicing, parrying, resisting, moving, striking, that they might be prepared.

And yet, dear children of God, let the Bibles be there, let the preachers pour their hearts out to them, go home, close the book, leave it there, pick it up next Sunday, and carry it. Not study it, not practice it, not meditate on it. And when the hour comes that the enemy would lunge at them, the instructions were given, the preparation was given, the teaching was given.

They ought to have been warned and armed, but because it went in one ear and just seemed to drift through or disappear, it didn't find its place, there wasn't any appropriation, any practice. The consequence was that they were defeated. Oh, may the Spirit of God show you that you're engaged with conflict with an enemy that'll do everything he can to make you indolent and careless, lazy, in order that he can trample over you and defeat you.

But if you will let your loins be girded about with truth, and have on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet charred with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and take the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and enter into your relationship, as Christ said, abide in me. Then, when you stand, the enemy will recognize not you, but the Christ whom you serve, and thus whom you represent. And when in faith, for your family, your home, your business, or the interest of the church, you by faith raise your hand as he's commanded you against the foes that move to destroy, and stand stopping these forces, they'll stop, not because of you, but because of the one you represent.

Oh dear Christian, dear child of God, don't be unprepared, don't be driven, and twisted, and torn. Find your relationship with him. We're here to counsel you, and guide you, and help you.

Take unto you the whole armor of God. Prepare your heart so that you'd no more think of going out without having consciously equipped yourself with the armor of God, than you would think of going out without having prepared yourself to face a critical public. The public isn't nearly as dangerous as the ancient enemy of our Lord Jesus, who recognizes only the Lord Jesus Christ, and will only stop when he sees that which has been authorized by Christ for your defensive protection, and your offensive victory.

The complete armor of the Christian. May God make it yours. Let us pray.

Father look down upon us as the people that are like little children in school, in the early grades, beginning to learn, but so much that we must learn. Grandfather that there shall come to the hearts of this people today a realization that this relationship with thee, this union with Christ, this identification with Christ, has practical implications as well as spiritual blessings. Grant Lord that this, that we shall recognize that this armor that thou has provided is essential if we are to stand against an ancient foe.

Move upon our hearts today Lord, with a irresistible, insatiable desire to not be children, but to be men and women growing up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. To that end we ask thee Lord to seal the word, the truth to our hearts, and grant Lord that there shall begin now and increase continuously an avid hunger on the part of this people to study the word, to meditate in it, meeting together in homes to discuss it and talk about it and pray over it until it becomes not just the book that we revere,

the inspiration of which we hold unquestioned, but that which has become bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. We ask it in the name and for the sake of our Lord amen.

Let us stand for the benediction. And now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in his that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord through whom be the glory now and forever. Amen.

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