



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Sunday, August 21-27 (B) – Ephesians 6:10-20

Focus: *Put On the Whole Armor of God*

word of life

“Put on the whole armor of God. . .” Ephesians 6:11 (NRSV)

Read Ephesians 6:10-20

As the correspondence to the Ephesians draws to a close, final words are given. “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of [God’s] power. Put on the whole armor of God. . .” (Ephesians 6:10-11 NRSV) The image of armor may or may not be appealing, but life is not intended to be a fashion show. Instead a war is being waged. It would be foolish to not wear the armor provided by God. It is God’s strength alone which will protect us from the enemy.

1. *When (if at all) have you heard this passage before?*
2. *When you get dressed in the morning, how do you arm yourself for the day?*

God alone provides armor. We simply need to remember to wear it and rely on God’s strength. Just like the Christian puts on a new life, so a Christian is instructed to be fully armed for the day. There is only one purpose for the armor, “. . . so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:11 NRSV) The battle is not just against a single person, but it is of epic and cosmic proportions. In other words, you don’t have a chance by yourself – not a chance.

3. *Give examples of wiles of the devil.*
4. *Describe this cosmic battle.*

The specifications of the armor are laid out. (It might be helpful to picture the outfit of a Roman soldier.) First, put on the belt of truth around your waist. “Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth. . .” may sound more familiar. (Ephesians 6:14 RSV) This belt is wide like a girdle and made of leather, metal or cloth. Truth is referenced several times in Ephesians including 1:13,4:21,25. Truth-telling is essential for the Christian.

Next comes the breastplate of righteousness to protect the heart, lungs, and throat. This battle is serious and you need full protection.

5. *What does it mean to you that God wants to protect you so thoroughly?*
6. *What are things you might do to protect your heart from the devil?*

Someone going into battle has to have sturdy shoes, but this might be surprising. “As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.” (Ephesians 6:15 NRSV) It is not about the size, color, or material. It is about becoming an active peace-maker. Note the irony. God dresses us for battle, so we might wage peace.

The armor includes the shield of faith to protect you from flames attached to the arrow shot by the enemy. The shield would have been made of wood and soaked in water. Do not forget the role of faith in protecting you from the enemy. In addition, put on the helmet of salvation. The last item is the sword of the Spirit, which is nothing less than the word of God.

Be ready for battle. Stand firm. Take on the whole armor. Trust in God. Despite being clothed, remember to pray, pray, and pray. Keep alert.

word *among us*

The military metaphor described in Ephesians 6:10-20 is powerful, but may not be for everybody. Take a moment to review the list of clothing to be worn:

- belt of truth
- breastplate of righteousness
- shoes to proclaim the gospel of peace
- shield of faith
- helmet of salvation
- sword of the word of God

Though the list is to help Christians fight a daily battle against the powers and principalities, it is also a basic list of Christian values. They are gifts given by God through the Holy Spirit. We are powerless without the Holy Spirit intervening on our behalf and providing the whole armor of God. Each day we are to be fully armed.

1. *As you reflect on the whole armor of God, what is helpful about this metaphor?*
2. *What (if anything) gives you problems?*
3. *What are helpful ways to remember the list?*

When we first hear about putting on the whole armor of God, there might be concerns about the armor becoming clumsy, uncomfortable, and burdensome.

4. *But as you think about your week, how might these battle clothes be beneficial to you?*
5. *How is daily existence a battle ground?*
6. *What part of the full armor do you hope to remember to wear this week?*

faith practice in daily life

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

The metaphor is all about preparing for the battle against the cosmic powers, but then there is a twist. “As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.” (Ephesians 6:15 NRSV) Not everyone has to wear the same type of shoes for the work of peace.

7. *Explain the openness to a variety of shoes for the work of peace.*
8. *What shoes work best for you as you work for peace?*

It is one thing to practice our faith in easy times, but this passage is a vivid and dramatic reminder of the tensions of daily life. Not all people know God or desire to follow a path of love. Not all have the best interest of others at heart. Christians are not to be naïve about our days on earth. Instead, be alert, pray, and take advantage of wearing the whole armor of God.

9. *What do you want to remember from this passage?*

Prayer

God, put your whole armor on us. Let us be strong in you. Clothe us with the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and shoes for peace. Give us a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Keep us alert in the name of Christ. Amen

last word

As you dress in the morning,
imagine putting on the whole armor of God,
naming each piece of clothing.