

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

I want to continue our study in Ephesians 6 on the Armour of God.

So far we have considered –

- The Belt of Truth.
- The Breastplate of Righteousness.
- The Sandals of Peace.
- The Shield of Faith.

This morning I want to look at the ‘Helmet of Salvation.’

The Roman soldier’s helmet was called the ‘Cassis’ or the ‘Galea.’

It was designed to protect the skull and neck area from the enemy’s blows or from any debris falling from above.

It was generally a kind of cap made from leather and strengthened and ornamented with plates or bosses of metal to give further protection.

In some cases it was fashioned from bronze or iron and included two hinged side pieces that protected the cheekbones and the jaw.

Horsehair plumes/crest adorned the top of the helmet. These were often dyed by colours that indicated and distinguished the soldier’s rank.

The helmet was vital in conflict.

While a soldier might survive a blow or wound to his arms or legs and even to his torso, it was highly unlikely that he would survive a blow on his head without some protection.

In spiritual warfare the helmet speaks of protection for our mind.

Like the physical head, the mind is crucial and must be protected.

What happens here will determine the ultimate outcome of that battle.

Whoever wins the battle in the realm of the mind, the ideas, the imagination, wins the war.

This is true for both individuals and for an entire culture.

The truth of this is well known and is the reason we have proverbs like –

“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

“There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time is come.”

They acknowledge the power of the mind, of ideas, of thinking in the cosmic struggle we are embroiled in.

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

I want to change the analogy for a minute and try and paint a picture for you to impress on you the importance of the mind in spiritual warfare.

The Bible sometimes likens us to cities.

Matthew 5:14

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Proverbs 25:28

“He who has no rule over his own spirit is like a broken down city without a wall.”

John Bunyan wrote a book that picked up on this analogy. He called it ‘Holy War.’ The city of ‘Mansoul’ had come under the rule of a tyrant and needed to be liberated.

Imagine your life as a fortified city.

The walls are in place and provide protection against the onslaughts of the enemy.

One of the most vital places in the life of an ancient city was its gates.

The gates were very strategic places.

The life of the city passed through the gates.

They were much more important than simply places of entry and egress.

In an ancient city the gates played a role that was equivalent to our civic centres.

It was here that –

- Business was conducted.
- Legalities were adjudicated.
- Legislation was enacted.
- Commercial enterprise was undertaken.
- It was the place of news and conversation.

The gates were the place of government.

When a person was said to ‘sit in the gates,’ it was the equivalent of saying that they were ‘City Counselors.’

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

What transpired at the gates shaped the life of the city.

Guards were posted at the gates to watch the flow of traffic and to ensure that those who passed through the gates were acceptable to the city fathers and magistrates.

The importance of the gates was magnified in times of warfare.

In ancient warfare scaling the high fortified walls wasn't usually an option for an attacking army.

As a result often the battle was focused very intensely around the gates.

Whoever won the contest at the gates won the city.

In this analogy of the city representing our lives – what do the gates speak of?

In Hebrew the word for gate is 'sha ar.'

It comes from a root word that means 'to split' or 'to open.'

A word that was derived from this root word came to mean 'to reason out, to estimate, to calculate, to render a decision, to think.'

It is used in **Proverbs 23:7**

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he..."

The gates of the city are equivalent to the role the mind plays in our lives.

The quality of life we enjoy or endure is in large measure determined by what transpires in our minds.

Whoever controls the mind shapes the city.

It is at this location, that for many of us, the battle is most intense.

Ezekiel 21:22 contains the record of the King of Babylon coming against Jerusalem.

It speaks of him setting up "**battering rams against the gates.**"

These rams would pound the gates and the surrounding walls until they collapsed under the barrage.

2 Samuel 20:15 gives another picture of the same process.

Joab battered the city walls and gates.

The Hebrew word for 'batter,' is 'shawkath,' and literally means 'to corrupt.'

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

It provides an accurate picture of what the enemy seeks to do to our minds.

1 Timothy 6:5 and **2 Timothy 3:8** both speak of men “**of corrupt minds.**”

These are men who have given way to the battering process of the enemy and the world’s pressure.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and expressed his concern that

[2 Corinthians 11:3]

“But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, so your thoughts should be **corrupted from the simplicity due to Christ.”**

In the spiritual warfare we face the enemy will focus on the area of our minds.

He knows that whoever controls the gates/the mind controls the city.

I suspect that all of us here know what it is like to have the mind assaulted.

We have all experienced season of intense struggle where the focus of the enemy has been around our thinking.

Our minds seem to be battered by a hellish onslaught.

- Uncontrollable thoughts.
- Confusion.
- Impurity – people allow their imaginations to engage in all kinds of sexual fantasy, often rationalizing it by saying, “**At least I’m not acting on it.**” [If the Sermon on the Mount means anything at all I suspect that it means that this will not be something that will provide us much of a defense in the face of God’s challenge to our thinking.]
- Fear.
- Anxiety.
- Prejudices.
- Bitterness.
- Fantasy and uncontrolled imaginations – in which we are always the hero.

William Law once commented,

“Imagination is the last and truest support of self. It lays unseen worlds at our feet and crowns us with secret revenges and fancied honours.”

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

How do we defend ourselves from these assaults of darkness?

Paul says, **“Take up the helmet of salvation,”**

Let me try and tease this out just a little.

Salvation is a word that touches on three tenses.

1. **Past** – we were saved from the penalty of sin [Justified]
2. **Present** – we are being saved from the pollution of sin. [Sanctified]
3. **Future** – we will be saved from the very presence of sin. [Glorified]

If we are going to win this battle of the mind we need to apply all three tenses of salvation to the struggle.

The past tense – We have been saved. We must see that in that act of being saved we went through a fundamental change of ownership.

The word ‘repentance’ has to do with a ‘change of mind.’

At salvation we did a 180 degree change of direction.

I heard a story once of a famous violinist who found a disused Stradivarius violin.

It had lain unused for many decades, but he immediately saw its beauty and potential.

He purchased the violin.

It underwent a fundamental change of ownership.

This was the first step in its salvage; its restoration; its salvation.

It was in once sense ‘saved’ at that point.

The salvation process isn’t finished at this point, but without this step it couldn’t even be started.

The Present tense – The violinist commented that now he owned the violin he would play it to wake it up.

“It is asleep,” he said, *“and I must wake it up until it comes to its proper form.”*

The Holy Spirit continues the salvage process in us.

He reawakens us to God’s purpose for our minds.

Romans 12:2 speaks about the

“Renewing [the renovation] of our minds...”

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

This renovation won't occur without some struggle and perseverance.

[Perseverance is stubbornness with a purpose.]

We will probably find that our mind is like an undisciplined child.

It has been allowed to have the 'run of the house' and when we try and curb it, it doesn't meekly submit.

'Open warfare' ensues.

This is a battle for survival and we must win it.

In **2 Corinthians 10:5** Paul speaks of

"...pulling down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ..."

The Message translation renders this as, **"...fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ."**

We are being salvaged.

The Future Tense – In **1 Thessalonians 5:8** Paul says,

"But let us, who are of the day, be calm, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and the hope of salvation for a helmet."

Psychiatrists tell us that in order to have good mental health people need three things –

1. Someone to love.
2. Something while to do.
3. Something to hope for.

Salvation gives us all three.

When the enemy comes to batter the gates of our minds with depression, anxiety, despair, futility and discouragement it is the power of hope that can fortify us and hold us strong.

We refuse to be narrowed so that all we can see is what is before us.

We don't look at things as they are but as God has promised they will be.

We have hope, a quality that this world knows so little about.

THE ARMOUR OF GOD – THE HELMET.

For most people in this world the best that they can hope for is that Friday night will roll around quickly.

We have a hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11

(GW) “I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope.”