

The Armour of God

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to the chapter we had, Ephesians, chapter 6. Ephesians, chapter 6. Taking in verses 10, of course, down to verse 20 of the chapter.

It's taking the first two verses, 10 and 11 for our text, but of course, taking in the whole section. Ephesians 6, verses 10 and verse 11. Finally be strong in the Lord, and the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. And so on, down to verse 20.

We've come to a text this evening that we have all heard, I'm sure, countless times. We've been here before in this very pulpit, and we said the same thing about other texts.

We were here before a few months ago, and we looked together at Psalm, a part of Psalm 23, and we said the same thing then. These texts, which we all know so well, I'm sure we could all rattle off the elements as to the armor of God quite easily.

[1 : 11] We had it in Sunday school, didn't we? We had it growing up. Some of us had drawings of it. I still have some somewhere in a folder from Sunday school days. Whilst it's good, of course, to know parts of Scripture so well, it also brings with it, doesn't it, a danger.

We become overly familiar with what we're reading. When it comes to our section here this evening, there's actually a danger. We're not just saying this to be dramatic.

There's actually a danger for us as Christians in not fully listening and perceiving, understanding what it is we're actually dealing with in these verses.

See, in these verses, we're not just here to build up the picture of what it is to be fully equipped in God's armor. Of course, that is the central point.

The question we often perhaps miss is, why do we actually need the armor? It's all good knowing what the armor is, and we'll cover that.

[2 : 11] We'll look into that shortly. But really, the question is, and the question for us this evening is, why do we need the armor? Well, we know the answer, don't we?

We know the answer. We have the answer in verse 11. Put on the whole armor of God. Why? In fact, you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

In this section, of course, Paul is writing, as we know, to a church in Ephesus. And like many of these young and small churches, Paul would write letters to Ephesus found themselves, the Ephesian Christians found themselves in Ephesus.

Because a place where there was, we know, of course, elsewhere in Scripture, there's no time for us this evening, but it's a good study. The life of the church in Ephesus is a great study.

They lived as Christians. They ministered. They sought to share the gospel in a place that was so full of evil. The town, the city of Ephesus, was known for its idol worship, known for its very rich culture of pagan idolatry.

[3 : 28] So, Paul writes these warnings to be prepared to fight against the devil in the armor of God. He's not just saying it to be theologically interesting to these Christians.

He's not just saying it to paint a nice picture for them. He's saying it to them because they need to hear it. They are actually facing real spiritual danger every second of every day of their lives whilst they seek to serve the Lord in Ephesus.

And here's a danger for us this evening. We come to this place and we come to this chapter. And because we're here on a Sunday evening, because we're here as part of even our routine as Christians, we perhaps be a wee bit to our shame, a bit blasey, a bit easy-ozy about what we're actually reading, what we're actually seeing.

What Paul presents here, what the Spirit working through Paul, of course, presents here, it's nothing short of military instructions. This is military instructions for us as Christians as we're

reminded this evening that we are engaged in spiritual warfare.

If that was true for the Christians in Ephesus, it is true for the Christians this evening in Barvis. Brothers and sisters, at this moment and in this place, you and I, as the Lord's beloved people, we are engaged truly and actually in spiritual warfare.

[5 : 00] At this moment, as we gather together to worship the Lord, as we read and look at His Word, we are engaging in serious and real and active spiritual warfare.

We're not here just for the sake of it. We're not reading these passages just to try and glean something from it. We are here to learn this evening, through the work of the Lord, what we are to know as we come face to face with the reality of evil, the reality of evil opposition to the work and the person of our Lord.

Do not, dear brother, dear sisters, do not underestimate the enemy. Do not underestimate His power, and we'll see that in a second.

Do not underestimate His tactics. Do not underestimate His willingness to attack. Do not underestimate His power, and we'll see later on that the power of the enemy, the tactics of the enemy, that they are unmatched by us, but they are nothing, of course, nothing compared to the power, the eternal power of our Lord.

First of all, looking, though, at the enemy, we have just three very general headings for ourselves this evening, looking at verses 10 down to verse 20. First of all, we can see the enemy in verses 10 down to verse 12, the enemy.

[6 : 30] Then verses 13, roughly down to verse 17, we can see the equipment. And then finally, verses 17, 18, down to verse 20, we can see the encouragement.

So the enemy, the equipment, and the encouragement. Starting, as we said, verses 10 down to verse 12, with the enemy.

If we're saying this is our, as it were, marching orders, the question then is, well, what is the enemy? Or who is the enemy? Who are we facing? What does he look like?

What skills does he have? We have to, of course, know what it is we're dealing with. And Paul gives us quite a short, but also, if we're honest, quite a terrifying look into the power and the reach and the ferocity of our enemy.

Let's look at verses 10 down to verse 12. We can see that Paul does not wear a sugar coat. He doesn't try and tell the Ephesian Christians that things aren't as bad as they think. The reality is things are worse than they can even begin to realize.

[7 : 45] Dear brothers, dear sisters, have no doubt the enemy is on the move. The enemy is on maneuvers. The enemy is on the attack. The reality is he never stops his maneuvers.

He never stops the attacks. The enemy has been on the move since he was first cast out of heaven in eternity past, but in time past, in time before our understanding.

Some point after creation, we know he was cast, as it were, from heaven. Sent away. Cast out. Cast out. From that very moment till now, he's been working his works against the Lord. Trying to, at least. To begin to look at verse 10, we are reminded, first and foremost, that something that every Christian here knows, if you've been a Christian for any length of time, you know this yourself, how often we all forget it.

When we come to face up with this enemy, we have zero power. Zero power in and of ourselves. Verse 10.

[8 : 56] Finally, be strong in the Lord, in the strength of his might. Not for a second, as Paul tells these Ephesian Christians, be strong in my advice.

Be strong in your own works. Be strong in how well you've come on as Christians. No. From the youngest Christian here in our faith, to the oldest Christian here in your faith.

It makes no difference. We are dealing with something, with someone so far beyond our power, so far beyond our strength. So what do we need?

We need strength and power, and a source of strength, and a source of power far greater than ours. Finally, be strong in the Lord, in the strength of his might.

We put on the power of the Lord. We'll see in a second, the armor, the equipment the Lord gives us. We must put it on.

[9 : 54] He's provided it for us. As we face off this enemy, as we face the evil one, who at this moment, is prowling as it were, who at this moment, dear brothers and sisters, is seeking for a way into this place, seeking for a way in to distract you, this very moment, from your place before the

Lord, from your love for the Lord, from your trust in the Lord, and so on and so on.

As you face all these realities against the evil one, you must, and I must do so with you, in the strength, and in the power, and the might, of the Lord.

And the Christians here, if we're honest, we'll confess, many of us, I'm sure all of us will confess, but our times as Christians, when we do our own thing, don't we? We think, well, I've done quite well now, I can do this bit myself.

And our prayer life begins to ebb away. Our Bible reading, our listening, however it is we do it, begins to stop.

Not on purpose, just we're quite confident, things are going okay, life is good. But slowly but surely, we begin to realize, and to think for ourselves, that I have might, I have strength, I can fight this enemy now.

[11 : 13] And how quickly, does that just fall, to bits? Fall to bits, the second the enemy, turns their face, and we realize, we have nothing, without the Lord.

Nothing, without the power, the strength, of the Lord. The Lord knows that, and because our God is gracious, because our God, does not send us into battle, as it were, without caring, and thinking for us, so carefully first, He has given us, this armor.

He has given us, all the equipment we need, to fight, the enemy. Only in standing, in the full power of the Lord, do we actually face the enemy.

Well how bad can it really be? How bad, can the enemy be? A bit dramatic aren't you? Standing up there, talking to the enemy, as if he's some kind of, danger to me.

There's a, there's a real problem, dear brothers, dear sisters, in our lives at times, and, although perhaps, we wouldn't quote, all of C.S. Lewis, and he has many things, perhaps we wouldn't want, to quote from a pulpit, but he had some very good, quite clear points he would make, in some of his writings.

[12 : 32] And C.S. Lewis, often, in his lectures, but also in his book, or books I should say, he often pointed out the fact, that Christians always tend, almost always tend, to go one way, or the other, when talking, and dealing, with the enemy.

Many Christians, pretend, he isn't there at all. Many Christians, live a life, pretending, they of course, believe the devil, it's real, scripture tells us that, but they live a life, that just, doesn't think about him.

He's there, whatever, fine. It's not real, it's real, I believe it's real, but it doesn't actually matter. They just, eyes forward, ignore the reality, around them.

Of course, the other extreme, is the Christians, who spend their whole lives, terrified, of the evil one, their whole lives, obsessing at times, about the evil one, which of course, is his own problem.

And in scripture, of course, we see, as you expect, a solid balance. On one side, scripture, makes clear, he is real, he is prowling, he seeks to kill, and steal, and destroy, to distract, and to distress, all that we have, and all that we are.

[13 : 44] But at the same time, we'll see in a second, scripture also makes clear, that he is no match, to the one whose power, we, work, and move, and live in.

The one whose power, is in his people. The one whose power, conquers the evil one. So before we come to that power, what else do we see, about the evil one, from these verses?

What else do we learn, about the enemy? Verses 11, and verse 12, we see a few facts, a few more facts, about this enemy, we're facing this evening.

At the end of verse 11, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand, what? To stand against, the schemes, of the devil. The schemes, of, the devil.

As we hear so often, there is no wasted words, in scripture, and the word scheme there, it is vital for us, to understand, and to acknowledge, and to see, what word is telling us. Stand against, the schemes, of, the devil.

[14 : 52] See, the enemy has, active measures, against us. Like the military around, like our own military, they have active measures. The enemy isn't random, in his attacks.

The enemy isn't just, hoping, and trying his best. No, the enemy, has real, schemes. Real, tactics. The same word, used there, in the Greek, it's the same word, that we see, outside of scripture, used, of course, in the day, for, for tactics, war tactics.

The devil, has, tactics. Do you remember, dear sister, you face an enemy, and I face an enemy, we face an enemy, this evening, who is ancient.

An enemy, who is older than us. An enemy, who has seen, humanity, who has seen, your grandparents, and your great grandparents. Who has seen, your people, from the start. An enemy, who has seen, all of humanity, from humanity's start. He knows, everything, basically, there is to know, about, what it is, to be human.

[16:04] He is ancient. An enemy, but is powerful. An enemy, but is logical. We see that here, for the word schemes. An enemy, that is logical, but is tactical.

It's a mistake, to think, the evil one, is somehow silly, or stupid. He is not. He is tactical, logical, ancient, powerful, evil.

And he is prowling, just now, as we know, like that lion. He is on, as we said, as we are active, maneuvers. And the reality is, here, as we see, again, and again, we are facing, levels of evil, verse 12.

Paul reminds, the Ephesians, we are not warring, against flesh, and blood, no, it's against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, over this present darkness, and spiritual forces of evil, in the heavenly places.

And the image we have, in verse 12, of rulers, and authorities, and that list, of authority, it paints a picture for us, of layers, of evil, of levels, we could say, of, of, almost levels, of command, you could say.

[17:33] Again, the evil one is organized, the evil one is real, and the evil one, has under his power, so many, so many, ones willing, to do his work.

Rulers, authorities, darknesses, and structures, of evil, over us, we have no understanding, no concept about, but they are there, and they are here.

We're not saying this, to frighten ourselves, this is not just, some make-believe thing, we're saying, it is here in front of us, in the word of God, the word of God, tells us, we are fighting, against, rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, present darkness, all that is gathered, against the worship, of the Lord, in this place, at this time, at this very moment, just now.

Note the wording, again of Paul, we must be ready, to do, the work that needs, to be done. Put on, the whole armor, of God, why?

So that you may be able, to stand against, the schemes, of the devil. Every, instruction here, every verse here, and we'll see this more, in a second, it's full, of, we call imperatives.

[19:03] I know for many of us, myself included, when you hear grammar, be mentioned, the brain turns off, but, it's important, to understand this, these verses, are littered, with imperatives.

What does that mean? Well, it tells us, that these are instructions, but more than that, in the context, of it being military, wording, and military imagery, they are commands.

Verses 10 to 20, are littered, are full, of God giving commands, to his people. That first command, be strong, it's a command, it's an imperative, it's a command.

Put on, the whole armor of God, that put on, it's a command. It's not a suggestion, from the Lord, the Lord is telling us, this evening, brothers and sisters, we must be ready, be strong, put on, the armor.

These commands, take us to, verses 13 to, verse 17. We begin to see, the equipment, the Lord, gives us, as his people. So, we've seen the enemy, the enemy is strong, the enemy is powerful, the enemy is ancient, the enemy is ready, and more than willing, and has greater desire, than you have, to do, his will, to do, the enemy's plans, he will carry his plans out, he will not tire, he prowls around, like a roaring lion.

[20:33] But praise the Lord, we're not stopping there, if we stopped there, we'd have no hope, would we? We in our, limitations, we who know ourselves, how weak, and how fragile we are, how useless we are, and even withstanding, our own sin, to remind, the power of this evil one.

The Lord cares for us, the Lord doesn't leave us, of course, on our own. And we see, the beauty of verses 13, down to verse 17, where we see, the equipment, that God, gives his people, to deal with, and to fight against, the enemy.

Because the glorious truth, and if nothing else, this evening, brothers and sisters, remember, for when God, calls his people, God also, equips his people.

You've heard that before, but it's a truth, we often forget. When God calls his people, he equips his people. When God calls us, to face the enemy, we've just described, this fearsome, ancient, powerful, truly terrifying enemy, God then equips us, to face him.

He gives us, everything, we need. And for all, we've said about the enemy, for all the truth, we've said, about the evil one, don't forget, he will have his end.

[21 : 58] Hell, will be prepared for him. He'll be cast into it. He has fallen already from heaven, will be cast out already, from the presence of the Lord.

And the day is coming, and soon approaching, when the enemy, will be cast into hell. He is a created creature. For all his power, for all his atrocity, for all his ancient tactics, and plans, for all his evil logic, and schemes, he is a created creature, who ultimately, has no power, over the one, who gives us, the armor, who gives us, the equipment we see, in these verses.

So day is coming, and he'll be cast into hell, but that day is not yet. So what, happens in the meantime, when we're called, in these verses, to face the enemy, to come before, and to face him, on the battlefield, of our lives, how can we begin, to face him?

How can we begin, to have any confidence, that we'll be safe, before him? Our gracious, and loving God, as we said, he equips the ones, he calls, and he's called you, dear brother, dear sister, he has called you, this evening, to face this evil one, to face the evil one, in the power of the Lord.

It takes us to these verses. Again, verses we know so well, but verses we shouldn't, begin to, just to glance over. Therefore, take up, in verse 13, the whole armor of God.

[23 : 40] Why? So that you may be able, to withstand an evil day, and having done, all, to stand firm. Therefore, take up, the whole armor, of God.

It's a lovely image, in verse 13, that word, take up, again, it's quite, beautiful, if you imagine it. The instruction there is, imagine you are, you are there, in the battlefield, shield, and the enemy is, as we said, in front of us.

And there you are, as you are just now, thinking, I can't face this enemy. Look at him. He is terrifying. He is powerful.

There are legions against me. And what do I have? I've got nothing. The Lord tells us, take up, the armor, the whole armor of God. Okay, the image is, you're there, and the whole armor, is in front of you, on the ground.

And it's all there for you. Every single piece, of armor, is laid out, for you, to make full, use of. All provided, for you. All in perfect, working order.

[24 : 55] Of course, you'll know this, in previous times, looking together, at these verses, but just to remind ourselves, Paul, of course, is in prison. We know he's in chains, writing these letters, or writing this letter, just now at least.

And Paul is using imagery, that the, of course, his listeners would have known, very well. He's using the imagery, of a well-equipped, Roman soldier. And using the imagery, of a Roman soldier, Paul is reminding, these Ephesians, these Ephesian brothers, and sisters, that you see, how well-equipped, they are, to deal with the enemy.

The Lord God, has given you, so much more. And his equipment, and the equipment, he's given you, is so much better, and so much stronger, than anything, even the best equipped, Roman soldier, has to hand.

And it's vital for us, it's vital for us, to stop for a second, and to make the point clear.

Although as Christians, we can be attacked, by the evil one. Although as Christians, we must, as we said, be strong in the Lord, and put on the whole armor of God. We have to acknowledge, as Christians, those who know Jesus, who love Jesus, who serve Jesus, that the evil one, will never, have us as his own.

[26 : 24] So we're not saying, for a second this evening, that if you, and I, fail to make full use, of the armor of God, then we will be lost forever. There's some, who might teach that, and there's some, who do in fact teach that, that the evil one, can triumph, and have you as his own, well, that's wrong.

But the truth is, if as a Christian, this evening, if we're not making, full use of the, equipment that the Lord, gives us, no, we won't be lost, no, we won't, end up with the devil, in hell, but our walk, will be so much, more difficult.

Your journey, will be so, much more, of a slog. Your journey, through this life, if you do not make, full use of the armor of God, that he gives to us, it will be so, so difficult.

Dear brothers, dear sisters, the Lord gives, us his armor, out of love, out of care for us. He has given this to us, it is there, for you to make use of, if you are struggling, this evening, and again, only you know this, if you are struggling, with the evil one, this evening, if you are finding yourself,

being dragged back, to perhaps, habitual, or pet sins, sins, which you can't quite, get away from, if you find yourself, this evening, so attacked, in your mind, and your soul, by the evil one, whatever your circumstances, are, you yourself know, but we can, sure say that, many of us here, know what it is, to be attacked, by the evil one, then, with respect, I think it's fair to say, that, nine times out of ten, it's because, we're not making full use, of your armor of God, you've stopped praying, you've stopped reading, God's word, you've stopped, fully enjoying, what it is, to be, one of the Lord's people, you've given up, you've taken off, part of the armor, there you are, in the battlefield, with God's full armor, given to you, and if you aren't, making use of, the whole armor of God, the full armor, and every arrow, of the devil, every blow, of the sword, from the evil one, it will hit you, it won't kill you, it won't destroy you, it will hit you, it will hurt you, it will slow you down, dear brother, dear sister, if you're struggling, this evening, if you're struggling, this evening, the answer is, never try harder, or look better, the answer is always, come back to Jesus, come back to the one, who has given you, the full armor, to make full use of, don't keep struggling on, in your own power, it will go down, and down, and down, come back, to the one, who equips you, with the full armor, to make use, of fully, so briefly, what of course, is the armor, because we've covered, as I'm sure, many times before, but just, a summary for us, it's good for us, to be reminded, as to what it is, we have, in the Lord, what does, the fully, equipped,

Christian, look like, first of all, we see, of course, moving down, to verse 14, stand, therefore, again, imagine your heads, the image, Paul is painting here, you're standing, on a battlefield, now, fully, fully equipped, standing there, in the full armor, of God, you put it all on, so what are you wearing, stand, therefore, having fastened on, the belt, of truth, the belt, of truth, one of the enemies, best, with respect, to, mildly, most love tactics, is that of lies, the enemy loves lies, lies to you, lies about the Lord, whatever lies look like, he loves, lies, and again, there's no point, being too specific, because you alone, know yourselves, to your brother, to your sister, what it is, in your life, but, if you've been on the road, for any length of time, you will know what it is, for the enemy, to put, these lies, in your way, we covered these lies, before, in our time together, a few months ago,

[30 : 54] I think that's when we were, looking at together, and, with Christ, as a high priest, and Hebrews, we talked to some of the lies, the devil uses, against us, it's all, it's all in your head, yes, God is real, but, you don't know him, you're just a Christian, because it's part of the culture, you're living, you're just a Christian, because you, you grew up in the church, really, you've been brainwashed, it's all rubbish, anyway, you're reading a book, that's thousand, three thousand odd years old, it's all rubbish, rubbish, what do we do, we face the lies, of the devil, do you argue back, with your superior intellect, you can try it, if you want, it won't last long, he's ancient, he is smart, and smarter than you and I, we take him, as it were, as our saviour did, to the word of God, to God's truth, take him to the word of God, to God's truth, when the devil pours down, his lies on you, dear brother, dear sister, go to the truth, it's the only thing you can do, is go to the word of God, that's why it's important, for you and I, to know the word, to get to know the word, to know God's promises, towards us, so when the devil's, lies come before us, we can say,

I know that's not true, because the Lord, tells me this, and this, and this, and this, and this, have around you, the belt, of truth, to counteract, the lies, and the evil, of the devil, so that's around us there, holding us together there, what next, for us, belt of truth, having put on, the breastplate, of righteousness, of course, there's so much more, we could have seen, so much more, we could apply, to all these, items of equipment, but just, just an overview, the breastplate, of righteousness, if you're a Christian, if you're such a good Christian, and how come, you struggle, with these sins, if you're such a good Christian, and how come, you made such a mess, of your life, how can you say, that thing, to that person, that thing, to that person, you had those thoughts, last week, remember, you spoke, so horribly, to that person, you did this, you did that, how on earth, can you be a Christian, says the evil one, to us, doesn't he, you're just not, good enough, are you, quite the opposite, in fact, you're awful, you're embarrassment, to the saviour, who's bought you, with his blood, and so on, and so on, and so on, to, these ongoing lies, and attacks, of evil one, what do we have, the breastplate, of righteousness, that tells us, that you know what, he's not wrong, we do, make a mess, of things, we are at times, awful examples, myself included, awful examples, of Christians, to our shame, we are, but to whose, finished work, do we cling, to whose righteousness, do we hold on to, whose righteousness, as it were, covers us, whose assurance, do we have, that it's not ours, it's that, of Christ, when the enemy comes, attacks, your assurance, when he reminds you, as to your sins, and your failings, at times, he's right, the truth is, yes, he sees your sins, and

he sees your failings, but so does the one, who saved you, dear Christian, so does your savior, he saw him, from before time itself, and yet, he sought, you out, he saved you, he calls you his own, when the enemy comes, and seeks, just to destroy, your hope, and confidence, in the Lord, remember you have, that breath, of righteousness, that assures you, that your righteousness, no longer relies, on yourself, and your works, and your efforts, but instead relies now, on the perfect, complete righteousness, of our glorious savior, here, moving on, briefly, and quickly, to the shoes, on our feet, and our shoes, for your feet, having put on, the readiness, verse 15, given by the gospel, of peace, again, here we have, the imagery, and there's, a lot we could say, about this, and a lot to unpack there, but, simply, and quite beautifully, this is the imagery, isn't it, we have in Isaiah, of the glorious, reality, of those, who have the great privilege, of bringing the gospel, and often, when Satan, comes to attack us, when the evil one, seeks to destroy us, one of the most beautiful, and simple tactics, of defeating him, is sharing the gospel, with those, who as of yet, don't know Jesus, put on as a word, the shoes of mission, we could say, the shoes of readiness, of the gospel, given by the gospel of peace, putting on that willingness, to go on, to share the gospel, the evil one attacks, you individually, attacks you, as a congregation, put on as a word, those shoes of readiness, be willing to share, the gospel, as you share, the glorious good news, to those around you, the enemy, the enemy, can't withstand it, can't hack it, and the pulpit, is no place, for sharing stories, so we won't go into details, but, there's times, and yourselves, had a faith mission here, even doing the, the free church camps, and camps in Hungary, and camps in Ukraine, over the years, and the faith mission, lads themselves, and brothers and sisters, will share stories too, if you ask them, the enemy loves, to try and disrupt, a good gospel situation, again, I'm sure your minister, will conform this too, you'd be shocked, and I really mean this, brothers and sisters, you'd be shocked, at the level, of spiritual oppression, that can take place, even the preparation, of a sermon, behind the scenes, the enemy hates, when the gospel goes out, hates it, and he will do anything, and everything, to disrupt that, so what do you do, in the face of that, you put on, as aware of these, gospel shoes, and you go, and you bring the good news, you share the good news, to those who need to hear it, he can do nothing, to stop you, he'll distract, he'll try and distress, and so on, but he cannot stop you, to just stand there, battling the enemy, you're pretty much, covered body wise, what's left, there's more, in all circumstances, at all times, and in all ways, take up, the shield of faith, the shield of faith, which you can extinguish, all the flaming darts, of the evil one, all the fiery arrows, of the evil one, dear friends, to brothers, to sisters, a reminder here, that we have no power, now we come, to face, the evil one, how small, do we find, and how small, do we feel our faith, often, he'll attack us, God, not, won't he, he'll attack us, and how useless, we are as Christians, and how small our faith is, and so on, and so on, the glorious thing, here is, that the faith, we have here, is something, the Lord, has given to us, your brother, your sister, when, or why, did you first believe, did you first believe, because you tried really hard, to believe, did you first believe, because, you really did your work, I'm sure you did, I'm sure you did, and praise the Lord, you did, but why did you first believe, why, are you here, this evening, praising, and worshipping, the Lord, where is your faith, founded, Ephesians 1, speaking, verses 3, and verse 4, just a reminder, to us just now, Ephesians 1, verse 3, and 4, blessed be the God, and Father of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who has blessed us, in Christ, the spiritual blessing, in heavenly places, when did God, first know you, dear brother, dear sister, when did he first love you, even as he chose us, in him, before the foundation, of the world, we should be holy, and blameless, before him, in love, he predestined us, for adoption, as sons, through Jesus Christ, and so on, the faith the Lord, gives you, is a faith, that you can know, for certain, that you have a God, who has known you, from before time itself, who has held you, who has kept you, up to this point, this morning, Ian, with McCritory, in his children's dress, there's a, no time for details, it was a rock, in Seveloch, a standing stone, directed in the, 80s or 90s, and on that rock, they put a wee plaque, with Ebenezer, of course on it, we all know why, up to this point, the Lord has helped you, dear Christian, every day of your life, every fight, against the evil one, every single second, you can see, as you're engaged, in the spiritual warfare, up until now, the Lord has helped me, has kept me, has sustained me, you have the shield of faith, the faith of knowing, the eternal Lord, of heaven and earth, the all knowing, sovereign God, he has you, you are his, he has known you, from before time itself, and he will keep you forever, one day, take you home, to be with himself, with that hope, with that knowledge, as aware as your shield, you can withstand, even the most, horrifying, attacks, of the evil one, as he fires, these darts, these arrows into you, these flaming arrows into you, these attacks, which can do

so much, to tear you down, and destroy you, and just ruin your assurance, and ruin your joy, and ruin your hope, in the face of all these attacks, remember, the shield of faith, remember what it is you believe, what it is you know, about the Lord, who knows all about you, the helmet, time is going, the helmet, then covers, as uncompleted, we could say, the armor itself, and take the helmet, of salvation, helmet of salvation, the glorious thing, about salvation, is it's not just, a current experience, is it, you were saved, at some point, in your experience, dear birds, sisters, at some point, the Lord, intervened in your life, and he transformed you, he met you, where you were, and we, give praise to God, for that, the glorious, and wonderful reality, of salvation, is that salvation, it's ongoing, isn't it, it's a one time event, yes, but also, it's ongoing, every second, of every day, the Lord, is keeping you, he is keeping you, as his precious, child, he is, as it were, saving you, and how often, we need that constant, ongoing, saving power, of the Lord, in our lives, that truth, that reminds us, that we are safe, and secure in him, and of course, to a true Christian, that doesn't make us, rest in our laurels, that doesn't help us, to relax, in terms of our work, the knowledge, that we are safe, and secure in the Lord, in fact, inspires us, to serve him, to glorify him, to worship him, that bit more, doesn't it, finally, the one we have, we could say, offensive weapon, we have, to our arsenal here, of our equipment, the sword of the spirit, which is, of course, the word of God, putting all the times, in the spirit, and so on, the one offensive weapon, we have here, is the sword, of the spirit, now, one thing to note, although we do have a weapon, we're not told, as it were, to advance into, the three, we're to serve the Lord, where we are, to serve him well, we're not to go, and just swing wildly, as it were, we're to stand, in the power of the Lord, to remain, we have anything, he comes towards us, we don't try, and engage him, we engage him, when he comes towards us, [44 : 25] we don't have to go, looking for a fight with him, that's not right, it's not wise, when the enemy, comes to us, we engage, with him, the sword, of the spirit, that last reminder, for us, as we think of the armor, that we have no power, in and of ourselves, we have no power, whatsoever, for the one power, we have, the one offensive weapon, that we can wield, it's the very spirit, of the Lord himself, and what a glorious hope, that is, for us this evening, as we fight, as we seek to fight, the evil one, to stand against, the evil one, we do it fully, and totally, in his power, in his strength, in his might, as we bring, our time to an end, we can end, looking at the last few verses, we have here, these last few verses, so important for us, not to ignore, verses 18, to the end, of course, we have the obvious, but the, obvious, you'd think, but, the point, that we often, so miss, so often miss, in our lives, as Christians, praying at all times, well of course, we need to pray, but Christian, do you pray, do I pray truly, at all times, no, we don't, praying at all times, in the spirit, of all prayer, and supplication, but note one thing, two things we could say, as time permits, what does Paul, remind these Christians, to pray, as we fight the battle, with full armor of God, and we fight, and we face the evil one, to pray, for all the saints, to remember, our brothers and sisters, we aren't fighting, this battle alone, there's no such thing, as a Christian, of course, serving on their own, yes, we all know, the Lord individually, yes, he saves us, individually, but there's no such thing, as a lone Christian, you can try it, if you want, and I did,

I'm sure some here, of us, who have tried that before, try going it alone, as it were, doing your own thing, thinking, the church, as it were, has nothing for you, that you're quite happy, just you and the Lord, serving him, in your own way, at your own time, and how quickly, and how often, that just goes, a complete disaster, doesn't it, we're made, to serve together, to that end, we should pray, for one another, pray for one another, as we serve, and battle, side by side, all battling, the same enemy, and here's one of the reasons, why it's so essential, we are united together, why disunity, oftentimes, caused by our own, our own arrogance, why disunity, is such a danger, to the gospel cause, that distracts us, from the reality, we're all fighting, the same enemy, when we let, personal divisions, destroy unity, amongst brothers, and sisters, we're not just, doing a disservice, to ourselves, we're actually, doing a disservice, to the work, that's going on, to fighting the enemy, whereas, we're breaking up, the ranks, we're causing issues, in the front lines, when we should be, united together, facing the enemy, in one spirit, but also note, one last thing, we have from these verses, making verse 18, end of verse 18, the last phrase, making supplication, for all the saints, yes, verse 19, and also, for me, says the apostle, Paul, praying also, for me, that words, may be given to me, in opening my mouth, boldly, to proclaim the mystery, of the gospel, pray for one another, pray for the saints, also, can I just say, please pray for your minister, pray for, not saying it's just about Myrtle, but, to perhaps whoever, may come after Myrtle, pray for your ministers, pray for those, who lead you, again, this is not a

place for stories, and we won't tell them, but just know that, there is much spiritual warfare, going on behind the scenes, I'm not saying this, with any knowledge, of anything specific, but I can guarantee, that, there is spiritual warfare, going on every single week, a sermon preparation, and ministry work, takes place in this congregation, to brother, to your sisters, if the apostle Paul, working in the full, work of the apostles, with the full power, of what it meant to be, an apostle, of all the privilege, of an apostle, if he is asking, these young,

Christians in Ephesus, to be praying for him, then how much more, do we need your prayers, congregation, please do pray, for your minister, follow the lead, of apostle Paul here, as he asks for prayers, for his work, pray for your minister, and his work, we all, are on a battlefield, together, some, on a battlefield, have different positions, to fight in, and different jobs, to do on a battlefield, and some, face a bit more, of the attack, than others, so please be in prayer, for those, who do face, perhaps at times, the brunt, of the attack, of the evil one, hard days, sure hard nights too, like the apostle Paul, tells, and encourages, and asks these Ephesians to do, to pray for him, will please be in prayer, for those, who lead, and who guide, and who seek to serve you, in this place, now all of this of course, last half hour, 40 minutes, was talking, to those here, who know the Lord, I want to assure you, there is no joy in saying this, please believe me, there is no joy in saying this, but the truth is, that all we've said, of course applies, to the Christians, we say, well where, am I in this thing, if you're here tonight, and you're saying, well I don't yet, know the Lord, I don't yet, I can't yet say, that Jesus is mine, I can't yet say, that I love Jesus, where am I, well the, sad, and the, to be honest, the deeply solemn truth is, you are in the front lines, you are in the front lines, but you're not inside of the Lord, you're on the other side, there is no sitting on the fence, in these matters, you're either with the Lord, or you are against the Lord, you either serve him, or you're still, at odds against him, and the glorious gospel truth, here this evening, is that you have something, the devil and his angels, will never have, they have many things, they have much power, much strength, much wisdom, and everything else, or knowledge at least, but you this evening, have something, they have never had, and will never have, you this evening, dear friend, have the offer of salvation, given to you, right now, you are fighting, against the Lord, and like the devil, will one day find out, like he will one day, find out, to fight against the Lord, is a battle, you will never win, you will never win, with life, with breath in your lungs, the time the Lord, has given you tonight, this evening God willing, and perhaps a few days, this new week, we don't know how long, the Lord will give us, don't waste any time, stop fighting, against the Lord, and come and join his side, come and know him, come and serve him, for yourself, come and have him, as Lord, and God, he promises to keep you, to give you his strength, to fight, alongside you, to lead you, and to guide you, take you home, to himself, yes, there's a battle, for Christians, but the one thing, the Christians here know, all the many years, we'll battle against the evil one, and his plans, the glorious truth is, the Lord wins, we know the end, the end of the battle, is not somehow, mystery to us, we know the end, of the warfare, we know the Lord wins, we know, how this all goes, in the end, at the end of days, our genuine desire, our genuine hope, our prayer, our genuine prayer, is that you, would be with the Lord, in glory, having fought, as it were, the good fight, having stood your ground, to the end, being fully equipped, the whole armor, of God, it's our heads now, a word of prayer,

[53 : 48] Lord, we come before you, Lord, we thank you, for the gift of your word, help us Lord, to apply all we heard, this evening, not just to be, healers Lord, but to be doers, to truly understand, what it is, to put on the full armor, of God, to understand fully, what it is, to be strong, in your strength, to stand in your might, to have no hope, but your eternal hope, to have no strength, but your eternal strength, Lord bless your people, as we fight against evil, one day after day, encourage us, and help us, be with us, Lord we ask, help us to make full use, of the great, glorious gift, of the armor you've given us, pray again for those, who as of yet, do not know you Lord, you bring them, to a saving knowledge, of yourself, even this evening, we ask all these things, in and through, and for Christ's, precious name's sake, Amen.

We can bring our time, of worship, this evening to a conclusion, by singing to God's praise, again singing from Psalm 116, we just sing from verses 13, down to verse 19, I don't know what's verse 9, but we sing from verse 13, Psalm 116, and verse 13, I'll off salvation, take the cup, on God's name will I call, I'll pay my vows, now to the Lord, before his people all, there in God's sight, is his saint's death, thy servant, Lord am I, thy servant, sure, thy handmaid son, my bands, thou didst untie, Psalm 116, verses 13, to the end, to God's praise, verse 13.

I love salvation in the cross, On what's in real life more?

I'll be my first hand to the Lord, Fear for his people all.

Dear God, sighted his saints dead, Thy servant, Lord, have my way.

[56 : 24] Thy servant, sure, thine ahmed son, My pants against untie.

Thy offerings I truly will give, And on God's name will come.

I'll be my first hand to the Lord, Before his people all.

Within the course of God's own house, Within the midst of thee, O city of Jerusalem, Praise to the Lord in heaven.

Amen. We'll close the red section. In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the thirst of the Holy Spirit, For for now and forevermore.

[58 : 05] Amen.