

The Belt of Truth

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, Ephesians chapter 6, Ephesians chapter 6, we're continuing our study in the whole armour of God, and we'll just read again at verse 10, Ephesians 6 at verse 10, where Paul writes, Finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand on the evil day, having done all to stand firm.

And then our focus this evening, stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. And so on. As you know, when it comes to the whole armour of God, a lot of ink has been spilt on the subject because there are many Puritans and there are many preachers who have written about the subject of the whole armour of God. The 17th century Puritan, William Gurnall, he wrote nearly 1,200 pages on his book called The Christian Incomplete Armour.

The 19th century preacher, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, he wrote two books based on a total of 52 sermons. Now, don't panic, I'm not going to preach 52 sermons on the whole armour of God. But he preached 52 sermons and they became two books. One was called The Christian Warfare and the other was The Christian Soldier. But there's one Puritan writer which I've always found quite comforting and yet also very challenging. And that's the Puritan Thomas Brooks. And although his book wasn't really a study on the whole armour of God, Thomas Brooks, he sought to lovingly present to us just what Paul is doing here. Thomas Brooks presented precious remedies against Satan's devices. It's a great book.

You can get it as a Puritan paperback. Precious remedies against Satan's devices. In fact, Thomas Brooks, he gave seven reasons as to why he put pen to paper. One reason, it was actually the first reason, was that Satan has a greater influence upon us and higher advantages over us than we realise.

And that's why Thomas Brooks, he wrote, in a way you could say, he wrote his whole book to the church.

[3 : 1 2] So precious remedies against Satan's devices was written to the church. And this is what he writes in his introduction. He says, beloved in our dearest Lord, Christ, the scripture, your own heart, and Satan's devices. They are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched.

If any cast off the study of these, he says, they cannot be safe here nor happy thereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as a watchman, to do my best to discover the fullness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, that's us, and the snares of the great deceiver. And with that, Thomas Brooks, he presents to us the precious remedies against Satan's devices. And just to name 10. Number one, walk by the rule of scripture. Number two, don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Number three, pursue heavenly wisdom. Number four, resist Satan's first attempts immediately. Number five, strive to be filled with the Spirit. Number six, remain humble. Number seven, maintain a strong and constant watch.

Number eight, maintain communion with God. Number nine, fight Satan in Christ's strength, not your own. And number 10, pray much. They're precious remedies against Satan's devices. So read it for yourself.

And we need all of them. We need all these precious remedies against Satan's devices. We need all of them and more because as Paul reminds us, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but

against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, verse 13, Paul says, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. And so with that, we come this evening to consider the first piece of equipment required in the Christian's armor.

And as we said, it's the belt of truth. The belt of truth, where Paul writes there in verse 14, stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth. Now, as you know, last Wednesday evening, we considered verses 10 down to verse 13. And we were looking at Paul's conclusion there, or the start of his conclusion to his letter to the church in Ephesus. And we saw there that the start of his conclusion, it just follows the flow of the second half of his letter, because it's just like chapters 4, 5, and the beginning of chapter 6. There are all these exhortations. And that's how the conclusion begins. It begins with an exhortation. The exhortation that Paul says there, right at verse 10, he says, Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes or the wiles of the devil. So Paul says he exhorts us, right at the start of his conclusion, he exhorts us to, he says, be strong in the Lord, or be strong in who you are in Christ. Be strong in who you are in Christ. Because as Paul has told us throughout his letter, he said, you are saved by grace, you're being called, you've been called to be a child of God, and you're being sanctified as a saint for glory. So be strong in the Lord, be strong in who you are in Christ, and be strong in what you have in Christ. Because what you have in Christ, as Paul says in chapter 1, you have received from the gracious and loving and merciful hand of King Jesus. You've received every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. So Paul exhorts us here in his conclusion, be strong in who you are in Christ, and what you have in Christ. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, put on the whole armor of God. And so having given the exhortation, then Paul reminded us, as we saw last week, he reminded us about the enemy. We're to know our enemy, because fighting the good fight of faith is a fight with the devil. It's, as we said last week, it's CQC, close quarter combat. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, and authorities, against spiritual forces in the heavenly places. But what Paul makes clear in his conclusion here, is that we are not fighting the good fight of faith for victory. We are fighting the good fight of faith from victory. We are not fighting the good fight of faith for victory.

[8 : 29] We're fighting the good fight of faith from victory. The victory has already been accomplished. the victory has already been achieved at the cruel cross of Calvary because it was at the cross of Calvary our Bible reminds us that Jesus put all his enemies under his feet sin was dealt with death was destroyed the grave was dismantled and the devil was defeated which means that we're not fighting the good fight of faith for victory we're not trying to win no we're fighting from victory Jesus has already been victorious and this is why Paul's concluding exhortation to engage with the enemy it comes with this encouragement the encouragement to pick up and to put on this necessary equipment because we're in a warfare we're in a warfare therefore we need armor we need to like we said last week Christian went into the armory at Palace Beautiful we need to go into the armory we need to prayerfully pick up and put on the whole armor of God we need to prayerfully pick up and put on the whole armor of God and as you can see in the list of equipment that Paul gives from verses 14 onwards you can see that it's actually quite a long list of equipment and I would say that there are actually eight items of equipment some would say there are six but I would think there are eight eight pieces of armor required to prayerfully put on the whole armor of God and there are eight pieces of armor because as we read there there's the belt of truth the breastplate of righteousness shoes of gospel peace the shield of faith the helmet of salvation the sword of the spirit then he says we need all prayer and all perseverance so the belt of truth breastplate of righteousness shoes of gospel peace shield of faith helmet of salvation sword of the spirit all prayer and all perseverance eight items of equipment eight pieces of armor required to put on the whole armor the whole armor of God and what you'll notice when you read it slowly sometimes sometimes we skip over all these pieces of armor but when you read each item of equipment you see that it emphasizes the character of the Christian soldier each item of equipment emphasizes the character of the Christian soldier in fact these eight items of equipment they not only emphasize the character of the

Christian soldier they also emphasize and even explain to us the character of Jesus because he is our champion he's our commander-in-chief and we are to reflect him the commander-in-chief as

Christians as followers of Christ as Christian soldiers following the commands of our commander-in-chief we are to possess a character that emulates Jesus and even emanates what Jesus is like we're to emanate as Paul says there truth so taking all the descriptions that he gives truth righteousness peace faith salvation the spirit prayer and perseverance we're to possess a character this is our Christ as Christians our Christian soldier our Christian character is to emulate Jesus and emanate truth righteousness peace faith salvation the spirit prayer and perseverance that's our Christian character as Christian soldiers now as you know Paul he bases the image and the illustration of the full armor of God he bases it all on the full armor of a Roman foot soldier and as we said the first item of equipment in the armor of God is the belt of truth the belt of truth which I suppose if we're honest and it's good to be honest especially because we're thinking about the belt of truth if we're honest the belt of truth doesn't really jump out at us as an important item of equipment maybe it's just me thinking this but it's not one that jumps out of out of me as an important item of equipment in the whole armor of God maybe that's because in my subconscious mind maybe in your subconscious mind well I have a negative view of what the belt is from my youth because the belt was always spoken of or even seen as something negative some of us I don't know if any of you ever got the belt in school if we didn't get the belt at school most of us probably got it at home

I remember when I was young we had a thick leather belt that hung in a prominent position in the kitchen it was always easy to reach readily available as it hung at the side of the stove ready to be used for any discipline that needed to be dished out but even that belt although that belt stood out for me as a child sometimes the belt of truth doesn't stand out for us because sometimes we think well Paul mentioned the belt of truth first just to get it out of the way because he was saving some of the best items of equipment until last like the sword of the spirit so he starts off with the belt of truth and he's almost working his way up to the best part the sword of the spirit but as you know the whole armor of God is needed and necessary for the Christian you can't leave a bit out in fact the belt of truth was needed for the sword of the spirit the belt of truth was needed for the sword of the spirit because as you can see there in the armor of a Roman soldier it was the belt that supported the shield and sheathed the sword in the armor of a Roman soldier it's the belt that supports the shield and sheaths the sword therefore without the belt a soldier was unable to be dressed and ready for battle the belt plays a key part in the armor now the belt that a Roman soldier wore it wasn't like a leather strap that well we would have around our waist to hold up our trousers no the belt of a Roman soldier was a thick and heavy leather belt with a metal as you can see there a metal band around it with a piece hanging down at the front and it was an important item of equipment in the soldier's armor it was known it's a Roman soldier we've got here so it was called the singular military singular military which simply means military belt and as we said it was worn in order to support the shield and sheath the sword but more than that this singular military the military belt of the Roman soldier it was actually worn as a status symbol for the soldier because it was only Roman soldiers who were allowed by Roman law to wear this unique belt if you weren't a Roman soldier you were not allowed to wear it and as a Roman soldier it was to be worn at all times whether you were on duty or off duty you were always wearing your singular military your military belt in fact the military belt of a Roman soldier it was seen as this status symbol where the more decorated the belt the more defined and the more dedicated a soldier you wear because the belt often represented rank it often represented rewards of the Roman soldier and this decoration it was often displayed the decoration part where your rank and reward was displayed was often displayed and dangled on the front bit of the belt covering the groin area which that bit wasn't actually for providing protection it was more about presenting position this is who you are as a Roman soldier within the Roman army and Paul is drawing our attention to this belt and saying it's the belt of truth because like the singular military the military belt of the Roman soldier the belt of truth as Paul explains it's to be prayerfully picked up and prayerfully put on and it's not only to support the shield the shield of faith and sheath the sword of the spirit but the belt of truth like it was for a Roman soldier the belt of truth is to be worn as a status symbol that we're in the Lord's army that we're soldiers we're Christian soldiers and we're Christian soldiers of truth and that whether we're on duty or off duty we are still Christian soldiers of truth and as we said each item of equipment in the whole armour of God it emphasises the character of the Christian soldier and that our character as a Christian soldier it's to emulate Jesus it's to emanate the character of Jesus therefore when we prayerfully pick up and put on the belt of truth our character as a Christian soldier is that we're to emulate Jesus as the truth and we're to emanate the

truth of Jesus so our character as a Christian soldier is that we're to emulate Jesus as the truth and we're to emanate the truth of Jesus because as you know

Jesus is truth he declared to his disciples in the upper room I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the Father except through me and so Jesus is the truth and our Bible tells us and teaches us he is trustworthy and true because he is full of grace and truth and our Bible explains to us you read through the Bible read through the Psalms it describes Jesus as one who delights in truth and he rejoices in the truth and he loves the truth and he speaks the truth and people said of him that no one ever spoke like him because he always spoke the truth and don't you find it remarkable even when you read through the Gospels the phrase that Jesus utters the most throughout his ministry is truly truly I say unto you or even Jesus used to always say I tell you the truth my friend

[19 : 43] Jesus is truth and as Christian soldiers who are to prayerfully pick up and put on the whole armour of God every day we are to emulate Jesus as a truth and we are to emanate the truth of Jesus because we are to be true Christian soldiers we're to be true Christian soldiers like Jesus and we're to be trustworthy and true we're to be people who are known for our integrity our honesty and our reliability we're to be truthful we're to be trustworthy Christian soldiers and we're to be Christian soldiers like Jesus who delight in the truth who rejoice in the truth, who love the truth, who speak the truth, who walk in truth, who worship, as Jesus said, who worship in spirit and in truth. Because we're being, as Jesus prayed in John 17, we're being sanctified by the truth and we've come to possess the spirit of truth. As Christian soldiers, we're to emanate and emulate the truth of Jesus. Because it's Jesus who said, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. And so this is important. This item of equipment is important. And it's important because going back to verse 12, we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places. The item of equipment is important because we have an enemy.

We're not wearing this as decoration. We're wearing it because we have an enemy. And as a Christian soldier, we're in, we are to fight the good fight of faith. We're to prayerfully pick up and put on the belt of truth because our fight, as we wear the belt of truth, our fight is with the father of lies. Our fight is with the father of lies. He's been, as the Bible says, he has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning. And as you know well, he's a pro at lying. And it comes naturally to him.

Because deceit and deception is his aim. And suppressing and silencing the truth is his game. Deceit and deception is his aim. And suppressing and silencing the truth is his game. And Satan, he's been censoring and silencing and smothering the truth since the very beginning, since the fall, way back in Genesis 3. You know, I read a quote the other day and I thought it was so fitting to what we're focusing on this evening. I don't know who said the quote, but this is what it said. The enemy didn't tempt Adam and Eve to murder, steal, or tell a lie. He tempted them to question the truth of God's word. As I know what Satan the serpent said to Eve, did God really say? Did God really say? He undermined the truth. He undervalued the truth of God's word.

And even when it came to the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, Satan did the same. He misquoted the truth. He misused the truth of God's word. He concealed the truth. He controlled the truth. He undermined and undervalued the truth of God's word. And the father of lies, he's been spreading lies for generations. And he's been spreading lies so long that people now look at lies and they love lies. And sometimes they live their lives as a lie. They spread, we hear it all the time, spread fake news. They speak godless gossip that has no foundation, has no truth, but they pass it on. Sometimes they even present and promote and portray themselves in such a way that what they're saying and speaking is false. And it's fake. That's why so many people actually regard Facebook as fake book. Because often what's presented and promoted and posted on the page and portrayed to others, it's false. And it's fake. It's not what's really going on at home, but what's going on in their life.

[24 : 31] It's not the truth. It's a lie. Do you know, if you look it up, Peter showed me recently, what's it called? Chat, GBT or something like that. Some AI thing. So I typed it in the other day. Most common lie. If you've never used it, have a go. Most common lie that's told in the world is one we all tell.

The most common lie told in the world is one that we all tell. And it's a lie when you're asked the question by someone, how are you? What do we all say? I'm fine. What a lie. We mask our true

feelings.

We mask what's really going on. We slap on the smile. We put on the front. We present the facade to people. We give a false and a fake presentation of ourselves when the truth is we're far from fine because we're broken people living broken lives in a broken world.

You know, it reminds me of the TV program, *Would I Lie to You?* If you've ever watched it, *Would I Lie to You?* Where out of three people in a team, one tells the truth and the other two are telling lies. And the other team has to try and work out who is telling the truth and who is lying.

But you know, Paul wants to remind us this evening that as a Christian soldier, as a Christian soldier who puts on their belt of truth every day, who picks it up, puts it on prayerfully every day, as a Christian soldier, no one should ever question or query whether you are telling the truth or not. No one should ever question or query if you are telling the truth or not.

[26 : 22] You should always, like Jesus, speak the truth. You should always speak the truth because when it comes to the belt of truth, we are to prayerfully pick it up and put it on every day. And we're to wear the belt of truth all day, every day, whether we're fighting on the front line or we're off duty.

Because as a Christian soldier, being trustworthy and true is of the utmost importance as a believer. If we can't speak the truth, how are they ever going to believe what we say?

And so without the belt of truth, the rest of the armour is ineffective, completely useless. There'd be no support for the shield of faith. There's no sheath for the sword of the spirit.

We would be, the armour is completely ineffective without the belt of truth. And we would be susceptible to the schemes and even the systems of the devil. One commentator said that if we have the sword of the spirit without the belt of truth, so if we have no sheath for the sword of the spirit, we will be like someone, as Paul mentions in 2 Timothy, someone who's carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men and their craftiness in deceitful schemes.

My friend, the belt of truth protects us and prepares us for battle. Why? Because the Christian life is not a playground. It's a battleground. And that we've been called to fight, not for victory, but from victory. And so whatever translation you're using this evening, Paul says to us, gird up your loins or buckle up or fasten on the belt of truth that you'll be able to stand firm against the deceit and the deceptions of the enemy. Put on the belt of truth.

[28 : 32] Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we give thanks this evening for reminding us in thy word that Jesus remains the truth, the way, the truth and the life. And help us, Lord, to imitate him. Help us, Lord, to emulate him and to emanate the truth that he reveals to us, that we would be people who walk in truth and who speak truth and who love the truth. And Lord, help us to prayerfully pick up and to put on every day the belt of truth, knowing that without it, we are not prepared for the day ahead.

We are not ready for the wiles and the attacks and the schemes of the evil one. But help us, Lord, to be prayerful in our preparation day by day, to go into every new day, knowing that, Lord, the one who has clothed us, the one who has given us this armour to put on, and help us then to put it on, to see the provision that the Lord has made, to protect us in the days that lie ahead. Keep us, Lord, we pray by thy grace. Watch over us, we ask, that we would always keep our eye towards our commander-in-chief, to the one who has put all his enemies under his feet, who has won the victory, who has defeated death, who has conquered the grave, who has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Lord, bless us together, then we ask, as Christian soldiers, that we would keep marching on to Zion, ever looking to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. Cleanse us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening. We're going to sing in Psalm 25. So Psalm 25, it's in the Scottish Psalter. It's the first version of the Psalm, page 231.

Psalm 25, we're singing from verse 4 down to the verse marked 10. As we said, all of our Psalms this evening, they focus upon the theme of truth.

And David prays there, again, another prayer of David. Prays in Psalm 25, at verse 4. Show me thy ways, O Lord, thy path, so teach thou me.

[31 : 05] And do thou lead me in thy truth, therein my teacher be. For thou art God that dost, to me salvation send. And I upon thee all the day, expecting, do attend.

And we'll sing on down to the verse marked 10. The whole paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure to those that do his covenant keep and testimonies pure.

So we'll sing Psalm 25 from verse 4 down to the verse marked 10. And we'll start to sing, if you're able, to God's praise. Psalm 25, we'll sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

Psalm 25, we'll sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

Psalm 25, we'll sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

[33 : 04] And loving kindness is for thee, a being of hope forever.

My sins and thoughts of you. My sins and thoughts of you. To thou, O Lord, forget.

After thy mercy, think on me, and for thy goodness, grace.

The good and the brightest, the way he'll send us sure.

The meek and judgment he will guide, and make his path to know.

[34 : 37] The home paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure.

To those that do his path to know. To those that do his path that keep and testimonies pure.

Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.