

The Helmet of Salvation

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[0 : 00] Well, with the Lord's help this evening, if you could turn to Paul's letter to the Ephesians and chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6.

We'll continue in our study of the last chapter of Paul's letter. Ephesians chapter 6.

And we'll read again. There in verse 10. Ephesians 6 and verse 10.

And 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 in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

[1 : 19] And as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.

And verse 17. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

But particularly the first half of verse 17, where Paul says, take the helmet of salvation.

Take the helmet of salvation. I want to begin this evening by asking the question, how's your mental health?

How's your mental health? As you know, it's a question which is much more common today than maybe in a previous generation. Because in the past, mental health was thought of as a taboo subject that wasn't ever really spoken about.

But over the past, as you know, 10 to 15 years, the stigma has significantly reduced, and mental health awareness has increased. Which has thankfully caused more open and more honest conversations about it.

[2 : 38] For many people, COVID was that turning point in how people thought about mental health and how people understood mental health. Because with everyone encountering and even experiencing isolation and uncertainty and even anxiety that was caused by the pandemic, it led to lots of discussion, healthy discussion about mental health and more awareness of its symptoms.

But even though we have only been talking about mental health and taking it seriously over the past number of years, the real and raw struggles people have with mental health has always been there. Ultimately because it's part of our sinful human existence and even our human experience. Now as you know, I'm not a psychologist.

I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm not even a counsellor. But I do know that our mental health can affect every area of our lives. Not just our mind, but also our body.

It can affect our soul. It can affect us spiritually. Because at the end of the day, even though we are fearfully and wonderfully made, we are also frail.

[3 : 56] We are also a fragile creation. We are human beings who are made up of mind, body and soul. And mind, body and soul, they're all interrelated and all interconnected.

Which means that just because we're Christians, just because we're Christians, it doesn't mean that we're free from the fragility and even the frailty of mental health. Because as you know, there are many Christians who struggle with their mental health.

In fact, sometimes I wonder if the mental health of a Christian is made even more severe. Because Satan is their enemy. Which is why, in many ways, Paul is once again calling us here to prayerfully pick up and put on the whole armour of God.

This evening we're considering, as we read verse 17, the helmet of salvation. And I want us to think about it under two headings. Where Paul tells us to protect your mind and protect your mission. Protect your mind and protect your mission. So first of all he says, protect your mind. Take up the helmet of salvation.

[5 : 10] As you know, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, it's full of encouragements. Full of encouragements right at the beginning. Chapters 1 to 3, full of encouragements. Then you come to chapters 4 to 6, it's full of exhortations to the Christian.

And as Paul comes to the last chapter, the conclusion of his whole letter, he has one final exhortation to us as Christians. He says, be strong in the Lord.

Be strong in who you are in Christ. And be strong in what you have in Christ. He says, finally, my brethren. Finally, you could say, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

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. So Paul says to us, as we've said many times before in our study, Paul is saying to us tonight, Christian soldier, have you put your armour on? Have you put your armour on today? Because the Christian life, it's not a playground. We're in a battleground. It's not a physical warfare, Paul explains to us.

[6 : 15] It's a spiritual warfare. Because we have an enemy. He's the enemy of our soul. He's the adversary. And he's the devil. He says there, 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.

You know, sometimes you wonder, it might be easier if it was a warfare of flesh and blood. But because it's a spiritual warfare. And because it's a warfare against the adversary, the devil. It's a difficult warfare. Therefore, Paul says, verse 13, Therefore, take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

So as Christian soldiers, we must stand firm. But we can only stand firm if we begin our day by going into God's armoury and prayerfully picking up and putting on the whole armour of God.

And we've gone through each piece of this armour. We've reminded ourselves that each piece of the armour, it emulates the character of Jesus. And each piece of armour, it emphasises that we are to emanate the character of Jesus in our lives.

[7 : 34] Because as Christian soldiers, our character, our conduct, and our conversation is to follow in the footsteps of our commander-in-chief. We are to follow him, the Lord Jesus.

The first piece of armour we prayerfully picked up and put on, as you know, was the belt of truth.

Because as Christians, we're to be soldiers that have integrity, honesty, and reliability.

We're to rejoice in truth. We are to speak the truth. We are to love the truth. We're to put on the belt of truth. Then we prayerfully picked up and put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Because through Calvary's great transaction, we have been made righteous by faith. So we must put on the breastplate of righteousness to protect our heart from the wickedness of sin and from the wiles of the devil.

Then we prayerfully picked up those gospel shoes of peace. Because the Lord cares about our feet and he cares about our footwear. Our footwear is to be gospel shoes. They're to be shalom shoes.

[8 : 39] We're to be ambassadors for Christ. We're to go with the gospel. And as Paul says there, we are always to have on the readiness. We're to be ready to give an answer for the reason of the hope that is within us.

The fourth piece of armour that we saw last time was the shield of faith. As Christian soldiers, we are people of faith. Therefore, our shield of faith, with our shield of faith, we're to stand together and we're to fight the good fight of faith together.

Because the devil, he wants to isolate us. He wants to take us off into a corner. He wants to separate us from all the other soldiers around us. But as we saw last time when we looked at that testudo, that formation that the Roman soldiers had, they all link their shields together.

That's what we're to do. We're to link our shields of faith. We're to keep formation, keep focused, and we're to keep looking to the author and the finisher of our faith.

So this evening, we come to the fifth piece of armour that we are to prayerfully pick up and put on, the helmet of salvation. And as we said, the helmet of salvation is to protect our mind.

[9 : 55] It's all about our mind. And that's a message Paul wants us to get across. That's what he wants to get across to us with the image and the illustration of this Roman soldier.

Now, we've all met Roddy the Roman before, and he's kitted out. He's kitted out with his belt of truth and his breastplate of righteousness, and there he has his gospel shoes and his shield of faith. And now we're also looking at his head, the helmet of salvation. Because as a Roman soldier, Roddy the Roman, he was gifted what was called a gallia.

That's what you called the helmet. A gallia. The type of helmet that he was wearing. A gallia, it had a distinct shape. It had a specific size.

It was a one-size-fits-all helmet. And it was designed, as you can guess, to protect the soldier's head. Typically, the gallia was made of iron. Sometimes it was made of bronze.

[10:53] But its rounded top and its broad brim and even its face guard, that's what gave it its distinct shape. And of course, as a helmet, you can look at it, you can see that it was designed to protect the head and also the neck as well as the face.

And even though it protects the head, the neck and the face, it also gives the soldier clear sight. He can see right in front of him. And although it may not look like it, you may think, Roddy, the Roman's a bit uncomfortable, but apparently they had to wear it all the time.

So the helmet had to be comfortable to wear. It had to be worn for long periods of time, whether it was during a battle or whether it was marching for days or even during other military duties.

They always had to have their helmet on. They had to keep their head protected. But for Roddy, the Roman, and all regular soldiers within the Roman army, the gallia, as you'd expect, it played a crucial role in the protection of the entire army.

It helped all the soldiers survive many brutal and barbaric attacks of their enemies while seeking to always keep that formation, to keep focused, to keep moving forward.

[12:14] They had to keep their head in order to keep moving forward, to keep focused, to keep formation, and to keep moving forward. And this is the reason Paul calls us to prayerfully pick up and put on our helmet of salvation.

Because the helmet of salvation is to protect our mind, is to protect our thoughts. Because as we all know, the devil, he's very good at ambushing and attacking and assaulting our mind.

We're all familiar with the attacks and the assaults and the ambushes of Satan. The helmet of salvation, therefore, is to guard our mental and emotional well-being.

And it's to guard it from being barraged and even bombarded by the enemy of our soul. Because as you know, the devil, he will always make us doubt. Always make us doubt.

He will even make us disengage from people and sometimes even despair about our salvation.

Now, I want to be clear. When Paul calls us to prayerfully pick up and put on the helmet of salvation, he is not giving us the answer and the antidote to deal with mental health.

[13:32] Sometimes our mental health needs medical intervention. Everyone knows that. But there are times in our Christian life when all we need is to redirect our mind and even retrain our mind and even refocus our mind upon what is good and what is godly rather than what is dangerous and what is detrimental to our soul.

Because the devil, he is so good, maybe we shouldn't say he's good at it, but he is good at it at making us doubt. He's good at making us doubt God and even doubt God's word.

In fact, the devil has been doing it since the very beginning. You remember after God had placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he was straight in there. Didn't take him long.

You see him there. Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden, chapter 2. And God says to them, you may eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, you shall not eat of it.

For in the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die. God was clear in chapter 2. You have a garden full of yes, but a single tree of no. Garden full of yes, single tree of no.

[14:47] And yet chapter 3, Satan straight in, Satan the serpent doesn't hold back. He comes to Eve and what does he do? Did God really say? He didn't take long.

Straight in with that doubt. Did God really say? Satan didn't even say God didn't say this. Instead, Satan made Eve doubt what God had actually said.

Did God really say? And that seed of doubt, you follow the narrative of Genesis 3, the seed of doubt led Adam and Eve to disobey.

And that disobedience, disobedience, it led them to being driven out of the Garden of Eden. And it ultimately, as God promised, it brought death upon all of mankind.

Doubt led to disobedience, led to being driven out, which ended in death. And it's all because the devil sowed a seed of doubt.

[15 : 48] And you know, that's a frightening thing about the devil. He can get deep into your mind and make you doubt God's word and disobey God's command.

Do you know, my greatest, I didn't plan on saying this, my greatest moment of doubt as a Christian was just about when I was standing to preach. I'll never forget that Sunday morning.

I wondered why we were doing what we were doing. opening the Bible, singing in a building that's 150 years old and we're singing to the walls and it's doing nothing.

Why are we here? The devil made me doubt. He can get deep into our mind and make us doubt and even disobey God's command.

And sadly, sometimes it drives people away from God. That's why the psalmist was praying for protection in Psalm 64. The great psalm.

[16 : 54] He was praying that he would be protected from the enemy. He was praying that he would be protected from the enemy because he knew that the enemy of his soul, and you see it there in verse 6, he knew that the enemy of his soul could attack him deep in his heart and in his mind.

That's what he knew he was most vulnerable. Not the outward. It was deep in his heart and in his mind. He knew that the enemy could cause doubts and disobedience and even death.

And it's so true, isn't it? It's so true. Do you ever catch yourself thinking things? Stupid things, horrible things.

Things that you'd never usually think of and you'd never say to anyone. You probably wouldn't dare say it to anyone. And you think to yourself, where on earth did that come from?

Why was I thinking that? That's so unlike me. And yet that's the enemy of your soul attacking you deep in your heart and your mind.

[18 : 04] And it should show you, it should even stress to you that you need to protect your mind because your mind is not a playground. It's a battleground. Your mind is not a playground.

It's a battleground. Which is why Paul is saying to us as Christian soldiers, prayerfully pick up your helmet. Your helmet of salvation.

Because you need to protect your mind. And secondly, he says you need to protect your mission. So protect your mind and protect your mission. Protect your mission.

Take up the helmet of salvation. As you know, throughout our study of the whole armor of God, we've repeatedly said that as Christian soldiers, we are fighting the good fight of faith.

That's what we're doing. We are fighting the good fight of faith. But we're not fighting for victory. We are fighting from victory. Because the victory has already been accomplished.

[19 : 04] It's already been achieved at the cross. Jesus has won the victory. He has put all his enemies under his feet. Sin has been dealt with. Death has been destroyed. The grave has been dismantled.

And the devil has ultimately been defeated. Therefore, we're not fighting the good fight of faith for victory. We're fighting from victory. But as you know, the victory was won only because our saviour was a soldier on the battlefield.

No, he doesn't send us out onto the battlefield and say, well, just get on with it. No, he was there first. He was there before us. So the victory was won only because our saviour was a soldier on the battlefield.

And this is what's interesting to see and important to notice. Because as we read there in Isaiah 59, Isaiah was prophesying there about, ultimately about Jesus.

Jesus as our saviour. And he describes him as a soldier on the battlefield. who is clothed, clothed in a breastplate of righteousness and also a helmet of salvation.

[20 : 10] And we mentioned Isaiah's prophecy when we were looking at, a number of weeks ago, we were looking at the breastplate of righteousness. Because when it comes to our breastplate of righteousness, Paul is showing us that we have been given Christ's very own breastplate of righteousness to be done.

We have received his breastplate of righteousness. Because he won the victory on our behalf. Paul reminds us he is the one who became sin for us, who knew no sin, all so that we would be made the righteousness of God in him.

So we become righteous by receiving Christ's breastplate of righteousness. righteousness. And Paul explains that the same is true also with the helmet of salvation.

We receive Christ's very own helmet of salvation. And we receive it through his work of salvation on the cross. Because as our saviour, as our soldier on the battlefield, Jesus wore his helmet of salvation at Calvary.

And when he did so, he defeated death. He conquered the grave. The Bible tells us he brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He brought salvation.

[21 : 27] But Paul, he draws attention to the language used in Isaiah 59 of the breastplate and the helmet of salvation. And he does so not just here in Ephesians chapter 6, but also in the other passage we read in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

We read there that Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 he's speaking about the second coming.

When Christ is coming again, he'll come like a thief in the night and we need to be ready.

But then he went on to say, Since we belong to the day and not of the night, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

I'll read it again. Since we belong to the day and not of the night, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

In other words, as Christian soldiers, you're to exhort one another and to encourage one another to keep focused, keep formation and keep moving forward.

[22 : 42] And you're to do that, you're to keep focused, keep formation, keep moving forward in order to protect your mission as a soldier in the Lord's army. Because the mission, as you know, the mission of the church is the message of salvation.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. So as soldiers in the Lord's army, we're to have assurance in the Lord's salvation. We're to have assurance that he is mighty to save.

And the mission of the church is the message of salvation. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. But when the devil gets in and when the devil deceives us to the point that we doubt God's word and we disregard God's promises and we detach ourselves from God's people or we even start disobeying God's commandments or we're discouraged by God's providence, what happens is we lose focus, we lose formation, we stop moving forward.

We lose sight of the need as Paul says there to stand firm. And this is why Paul is calling all of us as Christian soldiers, he's calling you to prayerfully pick up and put on your helmet of salvation so that you not only protect your mind but ultimately you're protecting the mission, the mission of the church and we're protecting our mind and the mission from the ambushes and the attacks and the assaults of Satan.

So prayerfully pick up and put on your helmets, he's Paul. And you know, and with this I'll conclude. You know, John Calvin, he often said win the battle of the mind.

[24 : 35] Win the battle of the mind. And that's the thing about Calvin. You know, we often think of Calvin as a 16th century reformer who wrote institutes that are thicker than the Bible and he wrote so many theological books.

And yet Calvin was a preacher. More than that, Calvin was a pastor. And as a pastor, Calvin would often say to his people, win the battle of the mind because it's what goes into your mind that makes you a strong Christian.

Win the battle of your mind because it's what goes into your mind that makes you a strong Christian. Therefore, my Christian friend, we need to be filling our minds with the Word, not numbing our minds with the world.

We need to be filling our minds with the Word, not numbing our minds with the world. And yet it's so easy for us, so easy for us to numb our mind with the world, so hard for us to fill our mind with the Word.

It's so easy to spend endless hours and I think when you actually stop and think about it, the endless hours, we can actually spend scrolling through social media or shopping online or for some playing game consoles or watching YouTube clips or shorts or whatever they are or even spending hours watching film or TV or listening to music.

[26 : 01] Nothing wrong with any of these things in their right and proper place and boundaries that keep us in place. But what we don't realise, and this is what happens when you read these things, what we don't actually realise is that many of these things that we see on our screen, they're there to suck us in so that we want more and we want more and we want more, we'll keep going back for more to the point that we need to keep scrolling and we need the next hit, we need the next bit of

information, we need the like, we need the share, we need the affirmation, we need the acclamation of others and for some it becomes such a need in their mind that they're dependent on it.

It's what keeps them going. It's the first thing they think about when they wake up in the morning, it's the last thing they do before they go to bed at night. They're almost addicted to it and if they don't get it, well it's detrimental, damaging and ultimately it's damaging to their mental health and you see that with so many young people today which is why Paul is showing us and stressing to us tonight protect your mind and when you protect your mind you'll protect your mission but if your time is spent numbing your mind with the world then that's what you'll have, you'll have a worldly mind but if your time is spent filling your mind with the word of God then you'll have a godly mind and it'll be no surprise to you when I say that that's the kind of mind Paul wants you to have a godly mind a mind that is set on Jesus set your affections then I'll oppose on things above where Christ is seated Paul doesn't want us to numb our minds with the world he wants us to fill our minds with God's word he wants us to prayerfully pick up and put on the helmet of salvation so that we are focused so that we're in formation so that we are moving forward looking to the one who is salvation the Lord Jesus Christ because he's our assurance he's our assurance when we are being ambushed and attacked and assaulted by Satan he's our protection because he has provided for us this helmet of salvation and so my Christian soldier as Calvin said win the battle of your mind because it's what goes into your mind that makes you a strong Christian win the battle of the mind take up the helmet of salvation well may the

Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray oh our father in heaven we confess oh lord that how our minds are often so weak and how they can run away with thoughts that are so far removed from what they ought to be but lord we plead with thee that thou wouldst enable us to put on that helmet of salvation day by day to protect our mind and lord we pray for those who do struggle with mental health we pray for those who for them it is a daily battle but we ask that thou wouldst give them the grace to cope grace that is always sufficient and even strength made perfect in weakness we thank thee lord for thy goodness and we pray that this armour would be on daily we confess oh lord how often we leave it behind when we walk out the door but lord help us we pray to stop and to take time to prayerfully put it on and to remind ourselves of what we are in

Christ and whose we are in Christ and lord remind us and reassure us that no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise up against us in judgment thou shall condemn it for it is the heritage of the servants of the lord and thy righteousness is of thee lord bless us we pray guide us we ask keep us by thy grace and by thy power and go before us we plead for Jesus sake amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening we're going to sing psalm 108 psalm 108 in the sing psalms version on page 146 psalm 108 psalm 108 I'm going to sing from verse 5 down to the verse marked 9.

[31 : 17] There's only two psalms that mention the word helmet. And what's quite interesting is it's the same verse that's repeated in both psalms. I can't remember what the other psalm was, so you can look it up yourself.

It's exactly the same as this verse in verse 8. And looking at it now, I'd love to know what that actually means. I haven't had time to look it up, but you can study it if you want as well.

So what it says there in verse 8. Mine is Gilead, mine Manasseh. Ephraim is my helmet through.

Judah I will make my scepter, and on Edom toss my shoe.

Very interesting to work out what all that means. But we're singing Psalm 108 from verse 5 down to the verse marked 9. Far above the highest heavens, be exalted, O my God.

And through all the earth around us, let your glory spread abroad. From verse 5 down to the end of the double verse, mark 9. To God's praise. To God's praise. To God's praise. Amen.

[32 : 44] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.