

SPIRITUAL ARMOR

How To Wake Up With Confidence!

Ecclesiastes 2, September 17, 2017, Pastor Bill Russell

☯ **QUESTION:** So I want to ask you as we begin,

“How do you wake up in the morning?”

Do you hit the snooze button several times before managing to get out of the bed? Do you need your coffee to jump start your body for the day? Do you take a cold shower to get yourself awake? Or do you wake up, feeling rested and refreshed, bounce from room to room, bathroom to kitchen, getting ready to face another day? “How do you wake up in the morning?”

Do you wake up in the morning and dread the start of another day?

Do you wake up in the morning with a lot on your mind, wondering HOW you will get everything done; HOW you will handle it all.

Or do you wake up, generally excited about the challenges and opportunities that await you?

“How do you wake up in the morning?”

Does it maybe depend on the morning?

Are Monday mornings harder than Friday mornings?

“How do you wake up in the morning?”

I think this can be a quite insightful question to ask ourselves, because if we have a personal relationship with Christ, that should impact how we wake up each day. Now if we wake up really tired each morning, than maybe we need to get a new mattress or maybe we are just getting to bed too late, which is something I know that I have to be careful of, getting adequate sleep.

☀ The thing is, I wonder when it comes to how we wake up each day, **what that says about us, reveals about us.** I wonder what it says about us, the day we will have and even the day we had previous?

Look with me at Psalm 57 a moment. I want you to hear what David has to say about how he woke up in the morning.

☪ **DAVID'S MORNING CONFIDENCE: [Psalm 57:7-8]**

Psalm 57:7-8 HCSB

My heart is confident, God, my heart is confident. I will sing; I will sing praises. 8 Wake up, my soul! Wake up, harp and lyre! I will wake up the dawn.

☀ **Circle that word confident!** I wonder does that word describe the way you bound out of bed each morning? Does it describe the way you face the day? Do you wake up with great confidence as you approach the day in front of you? Or are you still reliving, possibly reeling from the day behind you?

Now keep in mind, that David, like you and me, goes through different seasons of life. I don't mean to imply that David ALWAYS woke up with such a confident attitude. But here is what is interesting about the above verse. David wrote this as he was hiding out in a cave and on the run from Saul who was trying to kill Him. You see...

☀ **David woke with confidence in the face of his enemy:**

That was the season He was in when he spoke about rising early with such confidence. In fact I love the way the David expresses his confidence. I will wake up the dawn. Now THAT is getting up early. David gets up and yells at the sun, "hey its time to get up, we've got a life to live." Now that's what I call getting up in the morning!

Now I want to give you the **BIG IDEA** this morning behind this message. I have a very simple statement that I want to build this message on and it is this.

TODAY'S BIG IDEA

To face the day with confidence!

*It's not as much about **WHAT** we face but **WHO** we face*

What I want us to consider this morning, is that we can get up with the exact same confidence everyday, no matter what we are facing. You see, it is not so much WHAT we may be facing but WHO we are facing. So often we focus on WHAT we are going through and not WHO we are dealing with. WHO are we dealing with? The Bible says we have an enemy Satan who is out to get us. The Bible says that everyday we are in a spiritual battle, as Satan is trying knock us out, take us down, discourage, deter and defeat us. What we learn from David though, is that even when the enemy is trying to defeat us, even when the enemy wants to take us out as it were, we can still wake up fully confident in the Victory that is ours in Christ.

What I want to do this morning then is take us to Ephesians 6 and I want us to look at the Spiritual Armor God has for us.

God lays out the Spiritual armor we need to put on so that we can wake up confidently and go forward optimistically.

If every morning we can get in the habit of getting up and dressing ourselves in God's spiritual armor, we will wake up more confident and go forward more optimistically! We will wake up, more than ready to face the day and to face it successfully.

Ephesians 6:10-18 ESV

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore 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. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Now let's break this down, piece by piece and truth by truth. Understand here that Paul is describing a Roman soldier or more specifically a Roman legionnaire, a specific band of soldiers, with whom Paul had much contact. For the most part these Roman legionnaires were a positive force in Paul's life, literally saving him on occasion and protecting him on other occasions. This Roman legionnaires had armor with 7 pieces, all of which Paul describes for us in today's text.

So let's consider...

How to wake up and face the day with Confidence...

PUTTING ON THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR OF GOD

Now I am using a different translation here than the one I read a moment ago. I like some of the way that the Solomon Bible actually describes these pieces of armor. In case you note a difference.

1. WE NEED THE TRUTH TO COMBAT SATAN'S LIES V.14

"with truth like a belt around your waist"

Again it is not so much WHAT we are facing but WHO we are facing. And we are facing the premier liar. We are facing the one that Jesus said was the FATHER of lies. We are facing the one who the first time we meet him in scripture he is caught lying and in a very destructive way.

Now I want you to think of Satan's lies with me in two ways this morning.

■ ■ Satan's lies are **PERSONAL!** Satan's lies are directed at you, they are spoken directly to you, He whispers them in your ear. Satan lies to keep us disengaged from the battle altogether. In fact Satan's biggest lie is that he himself is not really real, he's like a cartoon figure, not someone we need to be overly concerned with. All the while he lies to us and he makes his lies very personal. I put together a list of some of the common lies that Satan speaks to us and note the personal pronouns that I have used.

I know I have done something similar in the past, but I think it is powerful to consider the lies that Satan whispers in our ear. As I go through these check any that seem particularly personal or relevant to your life.

Common Lies Satan Tells Us!

<input type="checkbox"/> God doesn't really love you	<input type="checkbox"/> It doesn't matter.
<input type="checkbox"/> You are all alone.	<input type="checkbox"/> No one will get hurt.
<input type="checkbox"/> No one understands your situation.	<input type="checkbox"/> No one will find out.
<input type="checkbox"/> Life is hopeless.	<input type="checkbox"/> It's just a little lie.
<input type="checkbox"/> If God loved you then this wouldn't be happening.	<input type="checkbox"/> It's not that big of a deal.
	<input type="checkbox"/> This will ease the pain.
<input type="checkbox"/> You aren't good enough for God.	<input type="checkbox"/> There's no other way.
<input type="checkbox"/> You will never beat that behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> You have tomorrow.
<input type="checkbox"/> You aren't able or capable.	<input type="checkbox"/> God's not coming back.
<input type="checkbox"/> God didn't really say that.	<input type="checkbox"/> The Bible is out-of-date.
<input type="checkbox"/> They deserve it.	<input type="checkbox"/> The Bible is unreliable.

Now the chances are, you checked every box!

The thing is Satan's lies are personal and one of the things they are designed to do is to take away our confidence. You know that confidence that David had that got him up early to wake the day. God wants you to have that same confidence and security, Satan doesn't - so he lies to us.

That means than...

■ ■ [That] Satan's lies are also **FOUNDATIONAL!** Satan's lies attack the very nature of Who GOD is and by extension who WE ARE in Christ. His lies also attack the Word of God, which is supposed to be our very foundation. Now think about that a moment. Satan lies about God's Word which means that Satan directly lies about God's TRUTH! Whatever God says is true, Satan lies about it and says it is not.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| - <i>Creation! Not true!</i> | - <i>Christ's Return! Not true!</i> |
| - <i>God's love! Not true!</i> | - <i>Church! Not important!</i> |
| - <i>The Gospel! Not true!</i> | - <i>Truth itself! No such thing!</i> |

You see it is God's Word, God's truth that is supposed to provide stability for our lives and so Satan wants to tear that stability down. In 2 Peter, Peter writes about those who will twist the Words of Scripture around and those who will outright lie about God's Word. Listen to the admonition that Peter gives to his readers.

2 Peter 3:17-18 ESV

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

One of the issues Peter was dealing with in this passage was the fact that Jesus had not returned yet and some were making false accusations about Jesus, the scriptures and His promise to return. Peter said that buying into these lies would make for a very unstable life. God's Truth brings stability because we know what He promised and we believe that He will indeed be true to His Word. Without God's truth we end up riding life's emotional roller-coaster.

The first piece of armor then, is the belt of Truth that combats the lies of Satan.

We put on this belt by simply picking up God's Word first thing in the morning and reading a few verses to get our day grounded in the truth. How about the testimony of David again.

Psalm 63:1 HCSB

O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.

 *Pick up **THE WORD** and put on the belt of **TRUTH**.*

Let's look at the second piece of armor.

2. WE NEED THE RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT GUARDS OUR HEART. V.14

“with... righteousness like armor on your chest”

What is the breastplate of righteousness? What is meant by righteousness? Is this speaking of **our** personal integrity, right choices and Godly living?

Do I find protection when I live a life of integrity that is above reproach and accusation? Not necessarily. Now let me clarify. It is true that unrighteous living has its consequences, so I can protect myself from negative consequences by doing what is right. In fact it is also true that there are verses in the Proverbs that talk about the benefits of living a life of personal integrity.

Proverbs 2:7 ESV

he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

The issue here though, is the issue of a spiritual armor that protects me and in this case

■ ■ Paul is speaking of **GOD’S** Righteousness not **OUR** own.

There is a BIG difference between my righteousness and the righteousness I have in Christ. I appreciate the commentary in the...

Charles Hodge commentary 1856:

“What is that righteousness, which in the spiritual armour answers to the cuirass? (or breastplate) Many say it is our own righteousness, integrity, or rectitude of mind. But this is no protection. It cannot resist the accusations of conscience, the whispers of despondency, the power of temptation, much less the severity of the law, or the assaults of Satan.

<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hodge/ephesians.iii.vi.html>

The fact is we often define integrity by our righteousness actions. We define being a man of integrity as being a man of your word who does the right thing. Integrity for the Christian, as I have shared before, goes to a much higher standard. Integrity for the man or woman of God is not simply being a man (or woman) of your word, it is being a man (or woman) of God's Word, and it is an integrity that is ultimately based on HIS righteousness. As a Christian if I am a man of integrity that means I am true to God's Word as well as true to the Christ-Life with in me. It is not simply being true to myself. Understand?

If you want some homework this week, just read Philippians 3, because Paul himself, the one who has written to us about the spiritual armor understood as well as anyone the difference between HIS OWN righteousness and that righteousness that was from CHRIST!

Unflattering!

■ ■ The thing is there is a word for when WE are righteous apart from God and that is called being SELF-RIGHTEOUS and that is NOT a flattering term. In fact if you are self-righteous you won't be able to fight off Satan's fiery darts and in fact it simply means that you have been struck by one.

So we need the righteousness that Guards our heart.

Consider what it says in Proverbs 4... this is a simpler translation...

Proverbs 4:20-23 NLT

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. 21 Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, 22 for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. 23 Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

⚙ **We guard our heart by listening to God's Word!** You see it is God's Word that reminds me that my righteousness is found in, based upon Christ! It is God's Word that reinforces my identity in Christ. It is God's Word that tells me I am righteous even when I maybe don't feel like it. At the same time, it is God's Word that keeps my pride in check, We guard our heart by reinforcing our righteousness as we let God's Word feed our soul and saturate our spirit. We guard our heart when we let God's Word remind us it is not WHAT we are facing but WHO!

SATAN'S FOUR FIERY DARTS

In his book *By Grace Alone*, Sinclair Ferguson identifies four major "fiery darts" Satan uses to unsettle believers and rob them of their assurance and peace in the gospel:

- Fiery Dart 1: "God is against you," Satan says. "He is not really for you. How can you believe he is for you when you see the things that are happening in your life?"
- Fiery Dart 2: "I have accusations I will bring against you because of your sins," Satan argues. "What can you say in defense? Nothing."
- Fiery Dart 3: "You can say you are forgiven, but there is a payback day coming—a condemnation day," Satan insinuates. "How will you defend yourself then?"
- Fiery Dart 4: "Given your track record, what hope is there that you will persevere to the end?" Satan asks.

Sinclair Ferguson, By Grace Alone (Reformation Trust, 2010), p. 68; submitted by Van Morris, Mt. Washington, Kentucky

*We need the TRUTH of God to combat the lies of Satan...
The Righteousness of Christ to guard our heart...*

3. WE NEED THE GOSPEL THAT GIVES US SIGNIFICANCE. V.14

"your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace."

The next thing Paul watches this Roman Legionnaire put on is His Sandals. These are the Sandals that Paul describes with the Gospel of Peace.

The idea here, is that wherever we go we need to be ready with the Gospel. This is similar to what we read last week from Peter.

1 Peter 3:15 ESV

...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...

Paul is saying that we need to be ready with the Gospel. In fact we need to be ready with the Gospel on two fronts.

■ ■ **First the Gospel is the REALITY we LIVE-IN.** It starts here after our salvation. The Gospel doesn't just save us and it ends there, no the Gospel is just the beginning as the Gospel becomes our reality. Our entire existence no matter what happens to us or around us, is supposed to be GOOD NEWS! It will be if we live-in the reality of the Gospel.

Listen to what Isaiah says about the Gospel.

Isaiah 52:7-8 HCSB

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." 8 The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion.

Now note this, we just read 3 different scriptures, where...

- *Peter describes the Gospel as a HOPE that we have.*
- *Paul describes the Gospel as a PEACE that we know.*
- *Isaiah describes the Gospel as a Joy that we show.*

The thing is as we go about our life, our hope and peace and joy should be so compelling that people are drawn to us and that they ask us, where do you get your hope and peace and Joy. Is your life that compelling?

The Gospel is a reality we need to live-in. Understand that know one can take the Gospel or our salvation from us. No matter WHAT we go through, or the WHO that we face (Satan), nothing or no one can take the Gospel from us. Nothing or no one can steal our hope, joy and peace. Satan can only make you THINK He has, but He can't!

■ ■ **Second the Gospel is the SIGNIFICANCE we LIVE-OUT.** You see, the Good News when we **share** it, brings an incredible **significance** to our lives we can find no where else. There is nothing more significant that you can do for someone then to offer them eternity.

When we share the Gospel it adds significance to our lives and at the same time it is significant for the person we share it with. Nothing is more significant than altering someones eternal reality. Nothing is more significant than giving someone the gift of Hope, Peace and Joy that can never be taken away.

In fact think about that a moment.

*The Gospel is called Good News, because it is!
It is the Best News ever!*

*In the end, the Gospel as armor pushes back against the **INSIGNIFICANT** lives that we can often and easily live.*

4. WE NEED THE FAITH THAT GIVES US CONFIDENCE! V.14

“take the shield of faith”

The shield of faith would tend to make us think of protection, deflecting the fiery arrows of Satan. While that is true, this is also true...

Sometimes the Best defense is a Good offense!

The thing is, this shield of faith is actually what allows us to go forward in battle.

- ■ It is faith that allows us to advance into the **ENEMIES TERRITORY** and to pursue **GOD’S AGENDA!**

You see, not only do we NOT believe the lies of Satan, but we march forward with the Truth. Like the Israelites marching in and through the Promised Land claiming the land in God’s name; we can likewise march forward taking the significance of the gospel with us. I mean what is God’s number one agenda, but the advancement of the gospel into the enemies territory.

With the shield of faith, when Satan says that there is no way we can see a way in faith. We can move forward into new territories, gaining ground for God and expanding our outreach.

The truth is we are in this building today because we moved forward in faith. Satan took a lot of shots at us, especially in this last year. His goal was to discourage us. He was not successful and here we are today.

The thing is, and I'm just being honest, but Satan has not stopped fight and neither must we. Satan will keep trying to discourage us. We just need to remind him that Christ has already WON the victory and whatever God calls us to do will be successful if we simply trust God and follow Him.

May I also add that what is true for us as a church is true for your own life as well. If you trust God in your home, standing firmly behind the shield of faith, your family will never be better off. Satan will shoot His fiery darts, darts of doubt, discouragement, despair and even fear, but behind the shield of your faith in Christ you can withstand them all!

Paul goes on next to talk about piece #5, the "The helmet of salvation."

5. WE NEED THE SALVATION THAT SHAPES OUR THINKING. V.14

"Take the helmet of salvation"

Now this may sound like what we talked about earlier and it is clearly similar. The Gospel and our salvation are very similar. Here though, is how I want to frame this for you in a helpful way.

We said earlier the Gospel is the significance that we LIVE-OUT and the reality that we LIVE-IN. So think about the sandals that are the gospel of peace as the significance that we live-out and think about the helmet of salvation more as the reality that we live in.

Up here (point to head) let your mind be controlled with the reality of your salvation. Let your thoughts be peaceful, hopeful and joyful.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 HCSB

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul describes this helmet specifically as the HOPE of Salvation.

■ ■ The helmet of Salvation is when our thoughts and our mindset is controlled not by what we experience here on earth but what is promised to us in heaven! There is a HOPE we have in Heaven. The Bible calls it the blessed hope when Christ raptures us away to Heaven. Paul is saying for the Christian, whether we are alive or dead, we have this hope.

STEPHEN KING THINKS HEAVEN WILL BE BORING

In fall 2014, Rolling Stone magazine interviewed Stephen King, who has spent his career writing about death. When the interviewer asked, "Do you hope to go to heaven?" he responded, "I don't want to go to the heaven that I learned about when I was a kid. To me, it seems boring. The idea that you're going to lounge around on a cloud all day and listen to guys play harps? I don't want to listen to harps. I want to listen to Jerry Lee Lewis!"

Possible Preaching Angles: Eternal Life; Heaven—Levi Lusko comments: "That's why it's a mistake to allow unbiblical imagery, perpetuated by cartoons, comic books, and well-intentioned but misinformed Sunday school teachers, to color our thinking. I am with Stephen King 100 percent. I don't want to go to such a heaven either! Fortunately no such heaven is actually to be found in the Bible."

Levi Lusko, Through the Eyes of a Lion (Thomas Nelson, 2015), page 73

Author Peter Kreeft asks us to imagine the day when sin, death, and evil are finally defeated by Christ

HOW YOU'D LIVE AFTER A PEEK INTO HEAVEN

Suppose God took you on a crystal ball trip into your future and you saw with indubitable certainty that despite everything—your sin, your smallness, your stupidity—you could have free for the asking your whole crazy heart's deepest desire: heaven, eternal joy. Would you not return fearless and singing? What can earth do to you, if you are guaranteed heaven? To fear the worst earthly loss would be like a millionaire fearing the loss of a penny—less, a scratch on a penny.

Quoted in Tullian Tchividjian, Glorious Ruin (David C. Cook, 2012), page 175

The Helmet of Salvation is when the reality of our future hope outweighs the burdens of this present world and shape our thinking accordingly!

Next Paul takes us to the the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

6. WE NEED THE WORD OF GOD TO FIGHT THE ENEMY. V.14

“...and the sword of the Spirit”

By now you can see that much of this armor is intertwined. We have talked about the Word of God already and how it works in conjunction as the belt of truth around our waist and the righteousness guarding our chest.

The Word of God is specifically important to us though in this battle, in part because

■ ■ **The Word of God exposes the enemy to us.** It exposes Satan’s tactics, it exposes his attacks in our life and it describes the armor we need to put on. At the same time,

■ ■ **The Word of God is how we fight the enemy; it is how we specifically fight back at TEMPTATION & SIN! and Satan’s attempts to take us down.** *Listen to Hebrews 4 a moment...*

Hebrews 4:12-13 HCSB

For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart. 13 No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

Note what it says about God’s Word, how it can penetrate the heart, pierce the soul, dissect a man’s Spirit. It is able to discern what a man thinks and feels. It can discern what is going on inside of us.

You know the government has built this massive data collection system in I think it is Utah. They are storing there every email we send, each call we make, any message we text. Now they claim they will never read them it is just in case of criminal or terrorist activity they are looking at. I don't think the average person believes that, as we understand what is going on and what the Bible tells us is coming someday.

The thing is God knows so much more than any government data collection agency can know. He knows the motives and intents behind our deepest thoughts. He not only hears our words he knows our thoughts.

Now note from this passage in Hebrews that...

■ ■ The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God is very **PERSONAL**.

How many times have I not heard someone say on a Sunday, "I felt like in your message that you were speaking directly to me." That's because I was, sort of. You see The Word of God is personal, and the Holy Spirit takes The Word, and it pierces your heart, and cuts you open in a way that you can see what God sees. The Holy Spirit exposes you to yourself.

Now think about it this way as well. You may ask well how is this a piece of protective armor?

Think a moment about those fiery darts of Satan. Lets say He hits you with one of his darts and you give into some temptation and a certain sin starts coursing though your body. Now I know we are forgiven of all our sins, so the sin is not their in a spiritual or literal sense, but the consequential affects of that sin can impact us. That fiery dart or sin can infect you with something like a spiritual cancer that starts running through your body. Think about a specific sin, maybe it is something that you struggle with. Imagine that sin, unchecked and ignored spreading through your body like a cancer.

- *Maybe it is the sin of greed because you worship money.*
- *Maybe it is the sin of anger, hate and bitterness because you refuse to forgive and let go of your past.*
- *Maybe it is the sin of lust because some behavior is out of control or...*
- *Maybe it is the sin of a substance abuse because you struggle with an addiction.*
- *You have this sin cancer in your body and it is the Word of God that serves more like a scalpel than a sword as it cuts that cancer out of your life and in essence allows for healing to begin.*

The thing is, it is hard to fight in the spiritual battle if I am physically compromised with some cancerous sin. We need the sword of the Spirit, to fight the enemy with truth all while bring conviction to me of my own sin.

Finally Paul ends with one last piece of armor.

7. WE NEED THE PRAYER THAT EMPOWERS US. V.14

"Pray at all times in the Spirit"

- *Prayer is likened to the 7th piece of armor of the legionnaires, there spear.*
- *A spear is designed to be thrown from a distance. Like when we pray for someone from a distance. At the same time though...*
- *There was also a smaller spear or dagger. It can also be more targeted when thrown as it aims at a more specific area, like when we pray. The truth is we can pray very specific prayers for very specific needs. Prayer needs to be a part of spiritual arsenal.*
- *Let my say that starting this Wednesday at 10:00 I am having a prayer meeting here at the church for anyone that can come. I have a couple of people who are going me and anyone is welcome. This has been one of our bigger weaknesses for sometime as a church. This time can possible be adjusted if you are interested or that time doesn't work for you. I would love to get a prayer team up and going here at the church to help us fight in the spiritual battle we are in!*

- Note that Paul uses the phrase *ALL Times*. Here is what Paul means when he says praying at *ALL TIMES* in the Spirit. It means that

⚙️ ALL TIMES = Everything is Prayer-worthy!

We may set aside time for a special prayer meeting and that is GOOD, but the truth is, anytime is the right time to pray. Also may I add this. I know I have shared this before, but praying in the Spirit does not need to be confusing, mystical or supernatural...

⚙️ Praying in the Spirit simply means not praying in the FLESH! The fact is, the evidence of the Spirit in us, is not some strange behavior or speech, but Christlike behavior and attitudes.

So there you have it. 7 pieces of armor (maybe 8) with the two spears and they are all designed to help us wake up each and every day with an attitude of confidence. Each of these pieces of armor also remind us, that...

TODAY'S BIG IDEA

To face the day with confidence!

*It's not as much about **WHAT** we face but **WHO** we face*

Know your ENEMY and know your VICTOR as well.

Know that Christ has already won the ultimate victory as well.

I want to show you one last think though, this morning to encourage you...

Look at the end of this passage, verses 18-20...

Ephesians 6:18-20 ESV

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication **for all the saints**, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

☯ **CLOSE: *Let's simply remember, that we are in the battle together.***

Let's lift each other up in prayer.

Let's life up our church in prayer.

Let's encourage each other in the spiritual battles that we face.

Application Et Transformation

- Which piece of armor do you need to pay greater attention to?*
- Which lie(s) of Satan are you most susceptible to?*
- What was most encouraging about this mornings message?*
- What was most challenging about this mornings message?*

KNOWING THE BEST DEFENSE

In the United States, mountain lions are the animal regarded as the number one human predator. Author and naturalist Craig Childs was on foot doing research on the lions in Arizona's Blue Range Wilderness. As he approaches a water hole from downwind, he spots a mountain lion drinking water. The lion does not notice his presence. When it finishes drinking, it walks slowly away into a cluster of junipers.

After a few minutes, Childs walks to the water hole to identify tracks in the mud and record notes. Just before he bends down to look closer, he scans the perimeter, and there among the shadows of the junipers, 30 feet away, he sees a pair of eyes. He expects the lion to run away, but it walks into the sunlight toward him. Childs pulls his knife and stares into the eyes of the lion. He knows what he must do. More importantly, he knows what he must not do. He writes:

Mountain lions are known to take down animals six, seven, and eight times their size. Their method: attack from behind, clamp onto the spine at the base of the prey's skull, snap the spine. The top few vertebrae are the target, housing respiratory and motor skills that cease instantly when the cord is cut...Mountain lions have stalked people for miles. One woman survived an attack and escaped by foot on a road. The lion shortcut the road several miles farther and killed her from behind....

I hold firm to my ground and do not even intimate that I will back off. If I run, it is certain. I will have a mountain lion all over me. If I give it my back, I will only briefly feel its weight on me against the ground. The canine teeth will open my vertebrae without breaking a single bone....

The mountain lion begins to move to my left, and I turn, keeping my face on it, my knife at my right side. It paces to my right, trying to get around on my other side, to get behind me. I turn right, staring at it....My stare is about the only defense I have.

Childs maintains that defense as the mountain lion continues to try to provoke him to run, turning left, then right, back and forth again and again, now just ten feet away. Finally, the standoff ends. The lion turns and walks away—defeated by a man who knew what never to do in its presence.

Paul the apostle had a similar knowledge of his greatest adversaries, Satan and his demons. Because he knew Satan's methods, he knew how to defend himself.

Craig Brian Larson, editor of PreachingToday.com; source: Craig Childs, *The Animal Dialogues* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2007); as seen in *The Week* (2-8-08), pp. 40-41

HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR AN ANACONDA ATTACK

According to pastor and author John Ortberg, a fictitious manual for Peace Corp volunteers headed for South America offers advice on how to handle a chance encounter with an anaconda (a large type of boa constrictor). This is the list of instructions under the heading "What to Do If Attacked by an Anaconda":

- 1. If you're attacked by an anaconda, do not run; the snake is faster than you are.
- 2. Lie flat on the ground.
- 3. Put your arms tight at your sides and your legs tight against one another.
- 4. The snake will begin to climb over your body.
- 5. Do not panic.
- 6. The snake will begin to swallow you from the feet end.
- 7. Step 6 will take a long time.
- 8. After awhile, slowly and with as little movement as possible, reach down, take your knife, and very gently slide it into the snake's mouth. Then suddenly sever the snake's head.
- 9. Be sure your knife is sharp.
- 10. Be sure you have your knife.

John Ortberg quotes these humorous instructions and then makes a serious point: "You never really know what curves life will throw at you, what's lurking around the corner ... But when you are called, and you will be called, you need to know what to do. If you wait until a crisis hits, because it will hit, you have waited too long. You need to be prepared first." *John Ortberg, "The Daniel Project—Part 3," (November 15, 2009); submitted by Kevin Miller, Wheaton, Illinois*