

Ephesians 6:10-20^{vi}

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, 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 armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

^{vi} **About Ephesians 6:10-20**

Suddenly, after the quiet consideration of domestic matters (5:21-6:9), today's reading sounds a call to battle. Christians are to "be strong," not from their own resources but by the strength of the Lord that fills them from baptism.

Christians are to put on "the whole armor of God" (v. 11) in order to battle the spiritual forces of evil. These are active both in the world and in the supernatural realm, although in Christ's victory the decisive battle is already won (1:20-22; Colossians 2:15). Paul had a strong sense of the world as being under the domination of evil powers. The struggle of Christian freedom is to overcome this evil domination and live under the domination or rule of God.

The description of the “whole armor” (vv. 13-17) for Christians to use is drawn from the image of the armor worn by God (Isaiah 59:17) and by the messianic king (Isaiah 11:5). The list here also reflects the equipment of Roman soldiers. The breastplate protected the vital areas of heart and lungs. The half-shoes of the Roman soldier gave a solid stance for combat. The long shield, covered with several layers of leather and soaked in water, was an effective aid even against incendiary darts. The helmet protected the head, and a decorated one denoted victory.

The short, straight sword is the only offensive weapon mentioned. Through the word of God (Hosea 6:5; Hebrews 4:12), the Christian can not only defend but make conquests. The setting for the battle is persevering prayer and preaching (Colossians 4:2-4).