

FULL ARMOR OF GOD, EPHESIANS 6:10-20

MESSAGE 2-24-08

Good morning. We are finishing our Full Armor of God series. We are going to read Ephesians, Chapter 6 one more time today. Some of you may be thinking well, why do we have to read this again? Let me ask you, if you are in basic training how many times do they get you to do your rifle. Take it apart and put it together. You know you want to make sure; you want to make sure you know what's going on in the most important things in life. So I pray that it won't be like the oxygen mask explanation on the airplane; that it will sink in again in a very deep way. Repetition is learning. So let's pray for the Holy Spirit to do that, to drive these thoughts home. We are going to look at the last three pieces of armor today. But even more than that, I want to challenge each of us to use the armor in a new way. So let's pray:

Let's pray before we look into God's word.

Holy God, thank you for this time and your word, thank you that you allow us to study it and to learn from it and to live by it. I pray God that this time would be profitable for us that the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts together would be acceptable to you. Speak to us Lord, for we have come to listen

Lord, thank you for the Holy Spirit that comes to lead us in the truth. We pray that as we read this text again about how to win at the battle called life that we will apply what we learn, and we pray Lord Jesus that whatever battles we are facing you would help us to know that there is hope in you and we ask it in Christ's name.

Amen.

Sermon Text: [Ephesians 6:10-20](#) (16-20)

Okay, Ephesians, Chapter 6:10-20. We are focusing on the last part of this text a little bit more today.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. **In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish 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. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.**"

Years ago 20/20 ran a feature in which two very ordinary guys were outfitted with \$500 suits, a new hairstyle and a Ferrari and they followed them around as they encountered different people and different shops and that kind of thing and the results were pretty predictable. They wanted to just see how people would interact and what the difference would be as they encountered people who gave

this kind of image forth. People were falling all over themselves to be very helpful and responsive, because of the way they appeared and how they were dressed. In the same kind of way we are saying in this series that just as clothes make the person; clothes make the man, and make a difference in human encounters at some level, our spiritual wardrobe makes all the difference in the world in our spiritual encounters. If we understand this armor and what it means and how to apply it, it means spiritual growth and progress. If we don't understand it and we don't apply it, we don't put it on, then it means spiritual stagnation and a sense of defeat. And so, last week we looked at the three pieces about truth and righteousness and peace and saw that Jesus gives us everything that we need to combat those feelings of condemnation that we can experience within ourselves. We were talking about the internal battle last week.

Today I want to talk more with these next three pieces about the external battle, about being more proactive in the battle. The armor is not given for us just to stand our ground, just to ward off problems. The armor is given to us so that we will go forward **on the offensive for the kingdom of God**; that we will take the message of Jesus to the streets, that we will go forth and invite anybody who will listen to experience the love of God made known through Jesus Christ our Lord. Today some of us are fighting battles that are very challenging and for some of us we are not sure if we can keep it up. For others even if you think you can keep it up, it still gets tiresome and we want to quit or we want to throw in the towel. But today I want to share with you that again in Jesus Christ we can win any battle that we are facing. Now winning, winning means a lot of things, but most of all it provides that sense of stability and calm and center no matter what we are going through.

The main idea today is that commitment to Christ requires spiritual initiative, moving forward for Jesus Christ, trying to figure out how to be a good soldier in Christ.

Are you fighting some kind of battle this morning? Some are facing a moral struggle. Some of you are facing relational problems, some financial, some physical. I have been facing a battle or two for these last few months. Pastor Bill has been facing physical battles and I am really happy to say that because of your prayers and the prayers of others that Pastor Bill's health is getting better and better and that I am getting on top of some of that stuff. But there is another battle that I keep wrestling with in these days and I pose this question to myself. Is there anything keeping me from fulfilling the mission statement Jesus gave us as we anticipate growth as a congregation? Matthew 28:19

19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

I mean we are in a time, I think most of us who have been around here where we are going to shed one shell like a lobster and take on a another one. Not that the essence of what we do is going to change, but God is going to bring new people. Am I doing everything I can including the use of my time and resources to be prepared for that?

Jesus said, "Be on guard against every form of greed for a man's life, a person's life does not consist of his possessions." Now I don't consider myself to be a greedy person. We have been entrusted; we have been blessed with some resources that can seduce us from greater faithfulness to the mission Jesus gave me. And at a

time that is so critical in the life of this church, I don't want to be lagging behind. I want to be there. I want to be ready. You may be battling something in some way today or maybe not, you may be battling something tomorrow, but either way I want you to know this, that that spiritual struggle, whatever it is, is intended to neutralize you and me from the greatest cause on this earth, which is fulfilling the great commission of Jesus Christ our Lord to go and make disciples of all people. Everything about the battle is designed to neutralize you and me, to get us caught up in things that don't make us effective.

That is why Paul says we must put on the armor of God. The man who expressed this biblical metaphor was telling us how to win against principalities and powers determined to defeat us. We are in a war for hearts and minds of people. We hear that all the time. He was in chains, but he was asking while he was sitting in prison for greater boldness to fight the battle. He was engaged in a cause so much greater than himself that he was willing to risk everything to gain the most precious thing of all, which is freedom in Christ and freedom for others in Christ as we share with them. And what I share with you today take it to the streets, go on the offensive, be bold. I know the reaction, because my own reaction is like that is too risky. I am afraid I will lose something in my life. Now why do those words sound so familiar? See, the enemy says, "Don't stand out. Don't be bold. Don't make problems by telling people about what they need in Jesus Christ, as you explain what God has done for you." And yet Jesus said the exact opposite. Those who try to find their life, to save their life are going to lose it, but those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Do I sell everything out for this chance or do I not? We have been given so much to wage this war, let me just remind you of the final three pieces of armor. The first one in Verse 16 or the next one he says, "In addition to all these things that I have already told you about Jesus, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." This is the only piece of armor that it specifies a usage that's exact. It was probably a full body shield that was made of wood and leather and iron and it was dipped in water for the battle. You had to be strong to hold this armor, because the enemy would dip arrows in tar and light them afire and then they would shoot them and this shield was enabled to extinguish the arrows. It is called the Shield of Faith, but like all the other armor that we have looked at, it is not just about how much faith we have. If I had a shield of faith based on just how much faith I had, it would be about the size of a quarter, okay? It wouldn't be able to do much of anything. But listen to it this way, "Take up the shield of God's faithfulness." That's huge.

So, faith is the shield of the Christian soldier, defending him from the fierce attacks of the foe from within and without. The shield of faith is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. This shield cannot be pierced or destroyed by the fiercest fires of hatred or malice. The arrows of the evil one, though flaming with cruelty, are stopped by the shield and extinguished.

By the help of the Lord, I want to strengthen your faith. I want you to go from this building feeling stronger in faith than when you entered.

There are so many things which work to destroy our faith in God. The skepticism and the doubts voiced by an unbelieving world are often used by Satan to shake the faith of the best of God's people.

Again, the unfaithful lives of Christians are often used by the Devil to wreck faith. Therefore, we need to know some very simple but fundamental things about faith and what it can do for us.

I. WHAT IS FAITH?

Simply defined, faith is belief and trust. It is believing God and trusting God. Both elements must be present to make faith.

It was a good answer that was once given by a poor woman to a minister who asked her, "What is faith?" She replied, "I'm ignorant, and I cannot answer well, but I think it is taking God at His Word."

Faith is the foundation of all Christian graces. Dr. Arthur Pink says, "The beginning of faith is faith in the beginning." The Word tells us, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

There is no true faith that does not begin at recognition of God as Creator. We must believe that before we can believe anything else.

After the acceptance of God, we must accept the way for coming to God. This is the blood-sprinkled way. No one can come to God except through Jesus Christ. This must be accepted by faith.

After salvation, it is necessary that we walk and work by faith. Someone may be asking even now, "How can I get faith, and how can my faith be increased?" This answer is given us in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of

God." The beginning, progress and strength of faith are by hearing. God gives faith, but it is by the Word as the instrument.

If we are to have faith, we must hear and believe His Word. It is not hearing the enticing words of man's wisdom, but the Word of God which will increase faith. And how must we hear it? We must hear it as the Word of God. Believe the Word, read the Word, hear the Word is the way for faith to increase. Read His precious promises and rest upon them. There is no other way to get faith but this way.

II. WHAT FAITH DOES NOT DO

There are disappointed and disillusioned Christians all about us because they misinterpreted the working of faith.

As an example, I heard a man say not too long ago, "Since I became a Christian, it seems that everything has gone wrong. We have had sickness and suffering. I have lost my job. We have had much trouble, but through it all God has been good and has helped us."

Notice some things that faith does not do:

A. Does not shield from physical suffering. 2 Cor.11:24-27.

B. Does not shield from loss of earthly possessions. I firmly believe that God does bless those who believe in Him and are honest with Him. I have seen this proven many times. But we do not put our faith in Christ and serve Him simply so that we can prosper in a material way.

Some Christians seem to think that because they believe in God and Christ that they must prosper greatly; and if they lose their

earthly possessions, they become rebellious and feel that God has failed. We can find the records of many great Christians who were stripped of every possession; for in it all, God had a definite purpose.

C. Does not guarantee ease. Turn to Hebrews 11, that great chapter of faith, and you will see that those whose names grace God's honor roll suffered much.

Moses, chosen of God, turned from the ease and luxury of Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Heb. 11:36-38.

36Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. 37They were stoned^[a]; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

How did they do this? Through faith in God.

D. Does not shield from grief. We will have grief in life, for death is all about us. Our loved ones will be separated from us. God does not promise anything else, for saints and sinners come to die. He does not say that we can simply have faith and live on in this life. Or that we can have faith and sustain the lives of others.

These are some things that faith does not do. Now, may we turn to the positive side of the matter.

III. WHAT FAITH DOES

A. Faith saves. (Eph. 2:8,9)

Salvation is not by works; it is not by doing, but it is by believing. God has put salvation in such a place that it can be reached by all men.

B. Faith justifies (Rom. 5:1)

When we are justified, we are made right in the sight of God.

C. Faith stabilizes.

In the same passage, Ephesians 6, the apostle speaks again and again of standing, being steadfast in our warfare. It is faith that makes us steadfast when the battle is raging hot. It is faith that gives us the courage to stand when the flesh desires to run.

Compare I Corinthians 16:13; 13Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

Psalm 125:1

*1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be shaken but endures forever*

The shield will be sufficient to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

D. Faith strengthens. (Phil. 4:13). When we have faith in God, no task is too hard. God has the power for our lives, if we will tie on to Him. In ourselves we can do nothing; through Him we can do all things.

E. Faith sings. When I mentioned a moment ago the many hardships that Christians can expect in this life, I did not exaggerate one bit. That is the common portion of man. But I want to emphasize this: though we have physical suffering, loss of possessions, hardships and grief, we can have a song in our hearts in the midst of the darkest night. It was faith that made Paul sing at the midnight hour. They were not singing because they feared the darkness or the hand of the Roman government. They sang because their hearts were full of faith and they knew that God was with them. Take this motto for your life: "Rejoice evermore." Rest on the promises. Rejoice in the Lord.

6. Faith sends us out. It is faith that makes us messengers and witnesses for Christ. What God has done for us, He can do for others. The same Christ who saved me can save any lost one who will come in repentance and faith to Him.

I have faith in the willingness of Christ to save anyone who will receive Him as Saviour. Whether that person be in the heart of Africa or in our own city, His promise is, ". . . him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

We can have faith in the power of Christ to save to the utter-most. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Therefore, it is my faith in the blessed Saviour which sends me into the field to witness. "Above all, taking the shield of faith His promises are true. He will save you now, if you will only believe. Not a fiery dart of the wicked has ever pierced the shield of faith. No

one has ever been lost who has stood behind that shield. It is yours today for the taking.

The shield of God's faithfulness will cover you every single time. It defends us against the arrows of the evil one. What are the arrows of the evil one? Well in some places it could be persecution. In other places its anything positive that lures us away from the battle. Just ask yourself this question to put it in to a different way of looking at it; what is it that keeps any of us at any time from full blown commitment to Jesus Christ? I mean if we were to sell out to Jesus completely in every way, what is it that keeps us from doing that? Whatever the answers are, those are the arrows, those are the fiery arrows. Well I am afraid I will lose something. I am afraid of what others will think. I am afraid that maybe God won't be able to be there or can't be trusted; whatever they are those are the arrows that God intends to extinguish ; he is the shield of faithfulness who will cover us as we follow him. And to not do that is what causes us to settle or negotiate and when we settle, we disregard and don't experience life as it was intended to be.

Cal Thomas once said that:

"In our world someone can worship trees, whales or cinnamon toast and no one will bother them at all. But seek to serve Jesus and live a godly life and share your faith, and you will find plenty of opposition."

One of the greatest examples of this attitude is found in a hero of faith who was encouraged to take up real armor, but decided against it in favor of spiritual armor. When David faced Goliath, do you remember what Goliath said that was intended to cause David to run in fear? Here is what Goliath's words were: "Come here you

little (pip-squeak) and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beast of the field." Nine feet tall, here is what David said to him, you talk about somebody putting on the armor of God spiritually; "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel who you have defied. You think you are going to give me to the birds of the air, I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel." How is that for a foreshadowing of the great commission? All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's and he will get all of you in to our hands." Whenever we fear loss, or whenever those fiery arrows come think about what that same David wrote only a short time later in [Psalm 84:11 and 12](#); "For the Lord God is a son and a shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing will he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O Lord and mighty blessed is the person who trusts in you. Trust in him in your battle." That is the shield of faithfulness.

The next necessary piece of spiritual armor is the *helmet of salvation*. Should your shield of faith be a little leaky and your daily victory elusive, be confident that the helmet of salvation guarantees your eternal victory. In the metaphor of armor, the helmet also secures coverage for the most critical part of your anatomy: your mind, where spiritual battles are either won or lost. As you struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil on a daily basis, stand firm knowing that your salvation does not come and go with your success or failure in spiritual battle; your salvation is your eternal possession. You are a child of God, and nothing can separate you from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35).

People experiencing spiritual conflict tend to question their salvation or doubt their identity in Christ. Satan may disrupt your daily victory, but he can do nothing to disrupt your position in Christ. However, if he can get you to believe that you are not in Christ, you will live as though you are not, even though you are secure in Him.

The Christian warrior wears the helmet of salvation in the sense that he is the receiver and possessor of deliverance, clothed and armed in the victory of his Head, Jesus Christ. Satan is the ruler of this world, and the whole world is in his power (John 12:31; 1 John 5:19). Therefore we are still in his territory as long as we are present in our physical bodies. But since we are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, the devil has no legitimate claim on us, for Christ has "delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13). The helmet of our position in Christ assures us of ultimate victory over Satan.

The helmet of salvation reminds us that the battle has already been won. It was the victory helmet; the one when the Roman soldiers came down in their chariots and people saw the helmet. They just didn't cheer on the person wearing the helmet, they cheered because the battle had been won. They were coming back from all of the wars they had been in and they saw them and everybody cheered. Some of you may have seen newsreels ticker tape of VE , Victory in Europe Day or VJ , Victory over Japan day after WWII and people dancing and jumping in the streets and kissing everybody and it was just wonderful. It was the victory was won and life would be different. And so, Paul is saying, "Let no uncertainty cause your mind to waiver, because we are more than conquerors through Christ whose headdress when he walked this

earth was a crown of thorns and he exchanged it for a victory helmet in his resurrection and for those who believe in him, we now sing crown him with many crowns, that victory dress that he has won for us." And so Paul says, "Protect your mind, protect your mind."

And then lastly Paul mentions the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

WHAT IS THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT?

The Sword of the Spirit, some people might envision a preacher or evangelist standing in the pulpit with their Bible raised high in one hand... as though it was a sword. However, most Christians who are familiar with this passage of scripture will agree that "the Bible" in its entirety is considered to be the Sword of the Spirit. But is that too general? What was the disciple Paul really trying to tell us in this passage?

Take a moment to look at the true biblical text (Eph. 6: 17b, KJV), ***"... and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God."***

Did Paul intend for Christians to have only one sword to take into battle? The common understanding that the *Sword of the Spirit* is "the entire Bible itself... as one big sword" is limited and weakens a Christian's ability to fight effectively in spiritual warfare. Read it again, Paul is saying much more in this verse.

The key point Paul is trying to share is that ***"each particular, relevant individual scripture is a sword unto itself - and very***

effective in battling Satan and temptation". Think about it! Not one sword, but THOUSANDS OF SWORDS!

Just as historical [functional swords](#) were designed for specific fighting styles, each Bible verse can be very powerful depending upon the situation. Historical swords varied greatly in their size, design and the techniques required to master their use. Pick the right verse for the right temptation... the best **Sword of the Spirit** for the battle at hand.

The broad mindset that *the Bible is one sword* is what Satan would prefer Christians use in spiritual warfare. Satan wants us to believe we don't need to spend time memorizing scripture - and that is the lie! The key point in spiritual warfare is for **"Christians to memorize key verses in the Bible so you can have them ready for immediate use when your mind and thoughts are under attack"**.

THE BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

By now you are either saying to yourself, "this is right on the button!" or "where on Earth does this idea come from?" This idea is founded upon the example and words of Jesus Christ himself during his own temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11) as He uses specific scripture, relevant to the temptation, to repel Satan's attack.

There are hundreds of sermons and books addressing the temptations of Christ. Today we will only focus on Christ's use of scripture and His response is specific to each temptation... each being a different *Sword of the Spirit*.

Of course, this spiritual attack does not come when Jesus is at His physical best (strong, alert and refreshed). The temptation of Christ comes at the beginning of His ministry and after being in the wilderness for 40 days fasting.

Attacking the body's physical desire is a primary strategy in temptation. We are told in Matthew 4:2 that Jesus was very hungry after His fasting 40 days. Satan says to Christ, *"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."* Christ responds with a verse that focuses instead on the spiritual needs of man, *"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* (Deuteronomy 8:3).

The next temptation Jesus had dealt with proving he was the Son of God. Satan said, *"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone'."* (Psalms 91:11-12) Notice Satan using scripture to justify the temptation?

Jesus does not get into a debate or argument as we might. Christ simply selects a specific verse best for the occasion, *"It is written again, Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God."* (Deuteronomy 6:16)

In the third temptation, Satan shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and says, *"All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me"*. Here is a chance for Jesus to skip the physical pain and suffering of the cross and thousands of years of waiting for a chance to be ruler of the world. But that is not the motive of Christ. Jesus came into this world to provide a path for people to gain forgiveness for their sins and be reunited in their relationship with God. This is achieved by asking God for forgiveness of your sins, proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God and asking Him to become your personal Lord and Savior.

The response of Jesus is swift, commanding and direct, *"Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."* (Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20; Joshua 24:14; 1 Samuel 7:3)

People are easily driven by temptation towards immediate gratification. For years now we hear how the US culture has been eroded by immediate gratification. People no longer work and wait for things they want. Instead, things are obtained as quickly as possible - regardless of the consequences. It's been said that people will kick, scratch and claw their way to the top of the corporate ladder only to find it unsatisfying at the top... they still want more. There is no lasting peace or joy in our lives unless we find it through God.

Satan the accuser and tempter. He is focused on tempting you to make the decision to commit sin (which God can't look at and judges). So if you do not feel scripture is helping, how do you continue to fight temptation?

The answer is more simple than you would think. Remember to claim the victory we have through the death, resurrection and life of Jesus Christ. As a Christian, we are marked as the property of God. **Let Jesus rebuke the devil and deal with the issue for you.** Even the Archangel Michael let Jesus deal directly with Satan as mentioned in *Jude verse 9*, "... when contending with the devil... he dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke thee'."

Satan also does not want you to glorify God with praise, worship, etc. A secondary strategy to fight temptation would also include praising God. Simply start listing in your mind everything you are thankful for (God's blessings, forgiveness, etc.). When you feel tempted, **focus your thoughts on praising God. Use them to replace thoughts based in temptation.**

We each have our own weak areas of attack by temptation, but they are not necessarily the same for each person. Where some are very vulnerable, others are not as tempted. The areas we are tempted in can change minute by minute, and others remain the same throughout our lives. The list of physical areas subject to

attack is long. The full list of all areas subject to temptation is even longer.

For people today, we need to look within ourselves to identify our own areas which have become targets for temptation and spiritual warfare. Next, find scripture that specifically addresses this weak area and memorize it (one verse or several). The goal is to prepare your mind in advance with specific Bible verses, each serving as a *Sword of the Spirit* for each specific area of attack.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Here Paul the bold asks for boldness. Is there anybody who seemed like they wouldn't need prayers for boldness? I mean he is just the most bold person. He would do anything or go anywhere or say anything and yet he asks for boldness, because he knows that when we pray something gets set in motion. Something happens in the spiritual realm.

I read about a pastor who said he saw a car broken down on the side of the street. There were little kids staring out the back window. The hood was up and the door was open on the curbside. He said he went blowing past there and he starts thinking that somebody ought to do something about that you know? Maybe I should make a call; no, somebody has probably already called, no, the driver has probably already walked up the street and gotten

help; it's going to be okay. So this word in his head, just make the call, just make the call. So he called 911 and there is no answer. There was no answer to 911 and he said like whoa that doesn't fill me with a whole lot of confidence. But then just as soon as he hung up the phone rang, the 911 operator called back obviously they had caller ID and she said, "How can I help you?" and he explained the situation and she goes, "I will dispatch an officer right away."

And so, he figures that within a few minutes somebody was on that scene if they hadn't already contacted someone. Now here is what he got to thinking . Just think about that in relation to prayer. The people in that car did not know; maybe they didn't know that that call had been made and something was set in motion to help them even though they might have been feeling really despairing. You may be here today saying, "What's the use, what's the use, why pray? It is not going to do any good." And you could be just sitting in a broken-down state, not realizing that prayers are already, the messages are already going out. People are already responding to you. You can't see them yet, but they are already responding. God is already doing something. That is the call to prayer that Paul is talking about. Or you may feel that nothing is happening in response to your cries to God for help. How many times do we hear people say "I am not going to believe in God, because he doesn't answer the way I want." He answers in the way that will make his glory known.

In your bulletin you will find a reminder of

PUTTING ON THE ARMOR OF GOD

Maybe keep it in your Bible, or on the refig, or over your bed so it is the first thing you see when you wake. We face spiritual battles everyday, God knew this and that is why is has given us this armor, we need to use it.

Ephesians 6:1 0-18

"I put on God's armor now."

"I put on the Belt of Truth, that today I will hear and speak only the truth of God"

"I put on the Breastplate of Righteousness, that my heart will be protected by God, that I will have a right standing before God and His throne today."

"I shod my feet with the Gospel of Peace, so that everywhere I step, God's peace will abound."

"I take up the Shield of Faith to ward off the fiery darts of the enemy. Jesus, I proclaim you to be my Shield, a shield that I can kneel down behind and seek protection from the enemy."

""I put on the Helmet of Salvation, that my mind will be protected by God. Lord, transform my mind into the mind of Christ this day, that all thoughts that I have will be the thoughts of Jesus Himself." "I take up the Sword of the Spirit ... the Word of God, to wield against the enemy in time of warfare. I also pray that the Sword may be used to circumcise my own fleshly heart, and to give me the strength this day to rise above the sin that abounds always in this

life.

"Lord, I thank you for protecting my backside as stated in Isaiah 58:8. I proclaim that Your Glory is my rear guard! I pray that God will give me a message when I am ready to speak, so I speak boldly about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Take up the great cause

my challenge to you today is to put on that full armor of God, take on for some of you today its coming to Jesus so that the internal sin and the internal struggle can be taking care of. For others it is saying that God only you can help me with what I am facing today and I am determined to follow you. It makes all the difference. I challenge you to commit yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ who alone can bring the freedom in this life as it was meant to be. We celebrate the victory of the strong man Jesus today.

Will we live by the Word or won't we? Will we settle knowing that we are going against the Word and find defeat or will we offer ourselves again today and say, "God, where you lead I will follow. What you say I will do."

Let's pray: Lord God, we surrender to you in obedience, trusting God that you have our best interest in mind. God there are areas in all of our lives that we know need to come into submission to you and to your will, and God as we spend these next few minutes with you, we ask that you would give us the courage to look deep within ourselves to recognize what you are calling us to, to hear your voice, to be in that conversation with you and to come with submissive, willing, humble spirits believing and trusting that in you and because of what Christ has done the victory is ours. Thank you God so much and we ask that you would bless this time now in Jesus' name. Amen.