

Ephesians 6:17

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[0 : 00] And turn if you will to Ephesians 6. And we're looking at on Sunday night, for Ephesians 6, one more to go.

How do we withstand the power of Satan? And Paul tells us we do that by putting on the armour of God. And we've been looking at the pieces of armour.

We've tried to, my aim has been really to kind of give you a Puritan sermon where you look through the lens of the passage and you try to experience all of the gospel.

In many ways, lots of the things that I'm saying are the same. But Paul has deliberately put them provocatively and in picture format. And so last time we saw the shield of faith.

The time before that, we saw the shoes fitted with the readiness of the gospel. The time before that, we saw the breastplate of righteousness.

[1 : 05] And we've seen the belt of truth. As we come to that very important part of the body, the head. Two and a half months ago, I was in a late meeting in Broadway.

I decided that I was cycling home. I was a little bit hungry, so I popped into McDonald's. Got a double cheeseburger. Large fries. Chocolate and a milkshake.

No hot apple pie. And then cycled up the road. You know the road. It's going up to Springbridge Road Carpath by McDonald's. I got a quarter of the way off.

And I don't really know what happened. The next thing is I woke up on the side of the road with my helmet in two beside me. And so I got knocked off my bike.

I think my head had hit the curb. The helmet was split in two. The police were there. The woman who had knocked me off, who was absolutely terrified, was there and greatly relieved. And at about half twelve, I was staying at the Ealing Hospital for concussion.

[2 : 06] I was right at three. Got into bed and I was half one. Claire said, where have you been? And I've been right at three ever since. But if I hadn't been wearing the helmet, well we don't know do we, but I would have cracked my head open for certain.

And done great damage. It was like two segments of an orange. And I should have kept it for tonight's sermon. Because if you don't wear your helmet when you're cycling, you're in big danger on you.

You have a big crash without wearing your helmet. Your life is in danger. That'll be a lesson to you. But here, Paul says to me at the start of Job 6 verse 17, take the helmet of salvation.

I have three thoughts tonight. The helmet of hope. Secondly, the helmet of the hope of complete salvation. And third, the ground and fruit of that hope. The hope of salvation.

The hope of complete salvation. The ground and the fruit of that hope. I don't need to, I think, try and persuade you the importance of the piece of armour that Paul presents us with.

[3 : 13] Everyone understands that they, that a soldier in the thick of battle without his helmet is open for disaster. No matter how well the rest of your body is protected, if the head is uncovered, well your chances of survival are very slim.

And therefore a soldier must wear his helmet. And Paul has been speaking as in need of the soldier's outfit. And he's using that to spiritualise how we are to live.

So the kind of helmet that he was thinking about is what we spoke about with the children. A leather one with plates of metal to make it stronger. And it's that helmet he's got in his mind.

A helmet which protects. And that must be worn by a Christian soldier. There are such soldiers today in combat, don't they? And they still wear helmets. And so why does Paul call this helmet the helmet of salvation?

What does he mean by that word? Well commentators differ. Older commentators will say it means you can have assurance in your mind. It's protecting your brains so that you can have assurance in

your mind that you are saved.

[4 : 20] And that gives you strength in the battle to know whom you believe. And there may be some merit to that. Maybe possible. But I think more recent commentators have rightly argued that we get the meaning of the phrase by comparing scripture with scripture.

And so we find that Paul uses the same expression elsewhere. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 and verse 8. Paul says to the Thessalonians, that church in Thessalonica, they're really discouraged because Jesus had not yet returned.

As they'd hoped. That's a great thing to be discouraged about, isn't it? But listen to what it says. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.

The hope of salvation. That is what I think Paul is getting at here. A soldier who is going out in need of his brain protected, he needs to go out with hope.

The hope of salvation. The hope of deliverance. The hope of victory. Or else he won't be able to put one foot in front of the other. So we've seen with the other different pieces of armour that Paul is dealing with.

[5 : 35] The weakness we have by nature. And here we can say that here the helmet of salvation is designed to counteract the tendency in God's people, I think, to be discouraged.

To get into thinking patterns that lead ultimately, if they're not checked, to kind of spiritual depression. And so if you are a child of God, if you are a Christian, you'll know what I mean. You'll know that it's very easy, isn't it, to become discouraged in the Christian life. And particularly discouragement that comes from your mind.

It goes something a bit like this. And look who you are. You've been a Christian for 10 years, 20 years, 30 years. And look how little progress you've made.

Have you made any progress? And the mind begins to talk to the Christian in this way. Look how sad a condition this is. How serious this is. Serious this is.

[6 : 38] You've sinned, don't you, so easily still. What's the use? What's the point in seeking after God? You've been in this battle. You've been in this holy war, as Bunyan puts it, for a long time.

And you've made very little headway. And besides, you've stumbled again and again. And you've stumbled in your mind. There's no use in trying. And so Satan plants those thoughts.

Thoughts which are prone to get us down. And his goal is to persuade you and I. There is no, really no sense in persevering. In searching for God.

In following Him. In pursuing Him. In using the means of grace that God has given. And Satan says to you, well you're not going to make it anyway. You, you are a child of God.

Why should anyone pay attention to you? You're not worth it. You're useless. You're a sinner. You've got a bad record and a bad heart. So use.

[7 : 37] All your attempts to live a holy life. They're vain and hopeless. You're still so unbelieving. You still don't trust God. So the devil says you get into trouble. And the first thing you do is try to solve the problem yourself.

You're wallowing in that unbelief. And unbelief is like a mother's sin. Which gives birth to others. You've got too much guilt on your conscience to be encouraged. Too many bad habits.

Too many weaknesses. Too many vows have been broken. And besides all this, what do you really know of Jesus Christ? You know so little about him.

He seems to be hidden for you. And when you come to church, other people, they seem to get so much out of it. They seem to respond. But you don't. There's no hope for you. No hope in God.

And you may as well just give in. To the temptations of sin. After all. There's no hope for you. That God would ever work in such a person as you are.

[8 : 39] And so look at your life. And look at your family. Look at the church. Look at the headlines on the paper. And you've got every reason to be discouraged.

And you know there's some people that you love. And you've shared the gospel with. And they've not believed. And they've maybe left the church. And for some of you, parents of children have gone away. The devil comes to you, doesn't he?

And the devil says, what kind of parent were you? And on and on and on it goes. And Satan uses certainly one form of reasoning after another to discourage us.

In fighting this Christian warfare. He wants to discourage us in the Christian battle. And putting on our helmet of salvation. He wants to discourage us from thinking God glorifying thoughts.

And going out in the battle of the Lord. And we're not on our own. Asaph says. In that psalm. Psalm 73. In vain have I kept my heart clean.

[9 : 42] In vain. It's been a waste of time washing my hands in innocence. The wicked don't have the troubles. Or the godly do. Everything seems against me. Truly I washed my hands in vain.

I can't do anything right. Asaph was tempted. As we are. Sometimes to drop out altogether. To get out of the Christian life altogether.

To be a deserter. I don't know. They still call it. They used to call it AWOL didn't they? Absent without leave. Satan says go AWOL. Be absent.

From when the people of God meet. Be absent from the presence of God. Go absent without leave. Satan is pretty powerful isn't he? His discouragements are pretty intense.

Some of us have to battle. Those discouragements more than others. Our temperaments. Certainly play a role.

[10 : 41] I'm sure they do. I think our calling plays a role. Our elders have discouragements. That other people don't. Deacons have discouragements.

That other people in the church don't. Preachers I think too. The devil comes to me. Pretty much every Monday morning. And he says words. Words. Words. So many words.

What's the point? The devil comes and says. What's the use? You've been preaching 16 years.

How long has it been since somebody was converted? You put so much work in.

So little reward. Why try so hard? It's not worth it. Doesn't God say that to you? Doesn't the devil say that to you? And you feel in your own life.

Don't you? As I talk about this. You feel areas of discouragement. And he tries to get your brain. He wants your mind. He knows that if you can get your mind under control. You can get your whole body under control. And what you do and what you say.

[11 : 40] Is a reflection of what you think. Isn't that true? Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones was first a doctor. He then became a minister. And he often said. The heart of Christianity lies in the mind.

If you listen to any of his tips. A mindless Christianity is a spineless Christianity. That's what you would say. A mindless Christianity is a spineless Christianity.

A Christian who won't put on a helmet. Is a Christian who won't walk worthy. Well I think that's the problem I think Paul's trying to address with this little phrase.

And the answer to the problem of discouragement. Is the putting on of the hope of salvation. The helmet of hope. The hope of glory. The hope of a future. Everyone has hope of course.

We know don't we. The terrible consequences of when people don't have hope. That when people don't have any hope at all. They take their lives. But there's a great deal of what.

[12 : 39] A culture that we live in calls hope. That's focused on temporary things. But the Christian's hope is based on eternal things. Enduring things. What's Paul thinking of here?

It is this hope of a future salvation. It's the hope of glory that he calls in Romans 8. And so when Satan comes. Satan comes and he tempts us. About our present circumstances.

He tempts us about the disappointing things around us. And even more so the disappointing things that are within us. And he tries to take those disappointing things.

And project them into our future. Future without God. So that we see ourselves growing more and more. Into this pit of discouragement.

Now. Of course that's the way our natural hearts are inclined. Don't they? Do you remember? Children. Twelve spies were sent to start spying Canaan.

[13 : 40] Ten were. Two were. Good. What did they see to spy in Canaan? Ten were. Two were.

Some soldiers are giants. Tough and tall. You know the story. Alright. Okay. Do you remember?

They saw the Amalekites. And they said. These people are giants.

They are massive. And do you know what? We're like little tiny. Grasshoppers. And they were discouraged. There were two spies. The one there.

Joshua and Caleb. And they had their helmet of salvation on. And they were thinking right. And they said. Do you know what? They are absolutely massive. They are mighty people.

And they are strong cities. And the defences are great. And it will be a tough battle. But our God has promised victory. And they say. They are going to be like bread to us.

[14 : 33] Great saying. Our victory is sure. Because the word of God is sure. And God is sure. And you see. That is right thinking. That is the helmet of salvation. We have hope for the future.

Because our God lives. And our God is almighty. And our God will never forsake the work of his own hands. And so you put on the helmet of hope. And Paul says. You want to be a Christian soldier. You grab your helmet. And you put on the helmet of hope for the future. There is no hope in you. Absolutely none. There never has been. But there is hope in him. And so. You shall call his name Jesus. For he will. Save his people from their sins. He is salvation. He is your hope. You are all in all. Your future. So you trust in him. You put on the helmet of hope. And you take it. And you don't let it slip from your side. You keep it on. But I think what I found really helpful.

[15:31] In studying just these verses. Over the last few weeks. Is that Paul is acknowledging. Throughout this passage. That the Christian life is not easy. And the Christian life is a battle.

And it's always been a battle. And God never promises you an easy life. And every believer is engaged with this battle. And besides that we know Jesus didn't paint a rosy picture. He said there will be trials and tribulations. And temptations and battles. And that's what my followers should expect. But Jesus also said something else. Didn't he? He said be of good cheer. He said cheer up.

Don't get spiritually discouraged. Because I have overcome the world. And in your own strength. You cannot overcome. You've tried it a thousand times. Hasn't you? And yet you've fallen for it a thousand times.

But when you go to him for strength. When you put on the helmet of salvation. And you hope in the Lord of glory. You find a strength. And an optimism. And you find a good cheer. That fills your mind with strength.

[16:33] To go forward. No the Holy Spirit. He is the one who indwells us. He is the one who monitors our thinking.

He is the one who encourages us. When we are discouraged. There's something so beautiful about this. Let me try and explain it to you. And so in our experience. What the Holy Spirit does.

Is he takes the things of the Lord Jesus. And he reveals them to us. So just about. When we think I can't go on. I can't take another step. The Holy Spirit uses one means or another.

To lift us up and to encourage us. Maybe it's a verse from the Bible. Maybe it's a hymn that you learnt. Maybe it's a phrase from a sermon. Maybe it's a conversation with another Christian. Maybe it's you remember you took the Lord's Supper. And the Holy Spirit gets us back on our track. In our thinking. By showing us something of Jesus. And usually what the Holy Spirit does.

[17:36] Is he shows us. The very thing of Jesus. That's most suitable. As an answer for our discouragement. Let me try and give you an example.

I'm really down because my prayer life is horrendous. You know that feeling. You wouldn't dare let anyone else know. How bad it is. How tired the Lord must be of your prayers.

And you might even say. It's better that I don't even try. I don't even start. But the Holy Spirit directs you to a verse in the Bible.

Maybe in Romans 8 or Hebrews chapter 7. About how Jesus ever lives to make intercession for you. And suddenly you've got clear thinking again. That you realise I'm going down the wrong path. I'm looking at my prayer life. Instead of his prayer life. And what his prayers mean for me. And you put on the helmet of salvation.

[18:33] And you think that he ever lives to make intercession. And you say to yourself hope in God. Ed Edmund Clowney was a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary.

His son Paul Clowney. Lots of you know him. He was an elder here. Ed Clowney had a daughter called Debbie. She went away from the Lord. She rejected the gospel.

And she broke Ed Clowney and his wife's heart. And Ed Clowney is working in the library. In Westminster Theological Seminary. And Professor John Murray comes up to Ed Clowney. And says how are you Ed? And Ed pours out his heart about Debbie. Breaks his heart in front of John Murray. And John Murray prays. For Ed Clowney and the family.

And Ed Clowney says. That prayer got me through the next six months. And he said then I remembered. That I have another elder brother. Who prays for me.

[19:31] And they're going through. And we can be so discouraged can't we with our prayer lives. But we don't look at our prayer lives. We look at his prayer life. We remember there is an elder brother in heaven who intercedes for you today.

And you say to yourself hope in God. For I shall yet praise him. And the intercession of Jesus picks you up and carries you forward. And you go out with the helmet of salvation on your head.

And you engage in the fight again. You can do that with every aspect of Jesus' ministry to us. I was going to talk about his humiliation and his exaltation my end up time.

And the Holy Spirit encourages us with who Jesus is. And what he's done. That he is our prophet and our priest and our king. And all we need is in him in those three things.

And the spirit takes the things of Jesus and he reorders the discouraged. So that we get encouraged in the Lord. Think of David in the cave of Adulam.

[20 : 32] Dimitri used to call the cave of Adulam Adulam. It's great isn't it? The cave of Adulam. David is there. He's in the cave of Adulam. And he's sad and discouraged. There's no future.

He's in the dark with a bunch of misfits and oddballs. The outcasts. The rejects. They gather with him in the cave. And what future does David have? And the Bible says.

1 Samuel 30 verse 6. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He put on the helmet of salvation. And he started thinking of his God.

And how faithful his God was. And that gave him courage. And that is how the Holy Spirit works. To encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. The helmet of hope secondly.

Is the hope of a complete salvation. The word means deliverance doesn't it? It means to be saved from sin. To be delivered from the greatest evil.

[21 : 29] And brought to the supreme good. Which is to know God. To know God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And the helmet of hope that we wear.

It gives us a sense of past salvation. So we look back don't we? And we recognise the Holy Spirit has worked in my heart. And God has saved me by his grace.

Praise to his name. The death of Christ has accomplished my salvation. And it gives me a sense of present salvation. That in the kindness of God.

Even though I'm discouraged. Even though I'm down. God has not forsaken me. And God has not cast me out. And I live out of him. And I couldn't go one day without him.

So I know present salvation. But what Paul has in mind in Ephesians 6. Is what the Bible sometimes called complete salvation. Full salvation. Because future salvation will be when God's work is complete.

[22 : 32] When you and I trusted in Christ. We will enter into the joy of the Lord. And we will be delivered from all the enemies. Once and for all. Forever and ever. Future salvation. And so what Paul is saying.

When you put on the helmet of hope. You think not only of the past and the present. But you also think of the future. You think past. What has Christ done for me?

When you think of the present. What Christ is for you. That right now. He is at the right hand of God. And when you think of the future. You think of him coming again. And your hope is in him.

There's something future orientated about hope. But when you say you're hoping for something. You're looking to the future. You hope something will happen. Hoping is something that you don't fully realise.

But it's hopeful. You hope for it. Now there's differences there. Between the world's hope. And the Christian's hope. Christian's hope is a sure hope.

[23 : 36] So when the world says. I'm hoping they're maybe 20%. 30% 40% sure. They think it's likely. Hopefully. But the Christian's hope is 100%.

I find faith and hope. Very difficult to distinguish between. They're so much alike.

One writer says. Faith is the mother. And hope is the daughter. I think. And I might be wrong on this. Faith is normally past. And present.

Oriented. Faith is trust now. Hope is for the future. Will. That might be wrong. Hope is more on what God will do. Than what he has done.

And is doing. That's the emphasis of hope. So Paul says. Put on this helmet of hope. This helmet of future salvation. Glorious. Complete salvation. Look forward to it. Believe in it.

[24 : 34] Trust in it. Be like the Thessalonians. If you're going to be disappointed. In something this week. Be disappointed. Jesus doesn't come back. And long for the day when he comes.

We are all in process. Aren't we? Every single one of us. But one day we shall be complete. One day all shall be well.

It isn't all well now. That's our hope. You might say to me. Paul. If you really knew me.

You would know how little progress I've made in the Christian life. If you know. If you knew Paul. Where I am in the Christian life. There's no ends.

Is there. To our ifs. If you knew. If. If. If. If. If. If. If. get rid of the ifs will you put on the helmet of salvation the helmet of hope in your saviour you're not perfect are you, you have lots of sin but there is a solid hope a hope that is outside of yourself and it's not just wishful thinking and so think about salvation salvation is pictured as a chain it's a chain from eternity past to eternity future and that chain that God has made that chain of salvation is unbreakable it cannot break and it is all bound together there is hope in God so we think he will not forsake the work of his hands and understand that God never fails so those verses we love Romans 8, 8-28 we know that for those who love God all things work together for good but for those who are called according to his purpose and then it tells us about the golden chain for those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be that's alright

[26 : 33] Romans 8, 29 let me read this here for those and we know that those who love God all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the first among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified so think about this verse for a moment whatever God is doing in your life whatever might be discouraging you God is using that to make you more like the image of his son and so whatever it is tonight you think God is using this to bring me closer to him it's not that God is against you and so you have this amazing picture in that verse don't you of eternity past to eternity future and so those who be predestined in eternity past he also called in the present and those whom he called he also justified in the present and those whom he justified and here's the shock he also glorified so certain is that event in the future glorification that Paul makes a grammatical mistake and says you've been glorified to show you that it's absolutely certain it's already happened and so what I want to show you is this

I'm trying to explain it is that this salvation it is a chain that goes from eternity past to eternity present and it's unbreakable and so don't isolate the past and the present from the future God doesn't give bits of salvation he doesn't give isolated blessings detached from each other you have all spiritual blessings of Christ Ephesians 1 and once God has set his love upon you he'll never turn it back he's loved you from eternity past to eternity future I have loved you in an everlasting love and so there's love in choosing you in calling you in keeping you in glorifying you and so what reason do we have for being discouraged you can say with the psalmist why are you cast down on my soul hope in God trust the Lord Jesus says no man shall pluck them out of my father's hand or my hand as if you are a child of God you are in the hand of the father and you are in the hand of the son and in the hand of the Holy Spirit safe hands and so don't be discouraged put on the hope of salvation what should we say if God be for us who can be against us you reach for the helmet you reach for those promises you hold on to those promises and you cling to the hope of salvation I'll try and be really quick my final point is the ground and fruit of hope the ground of hope is the resurrection of Jesus Christ at the heart of the Christian hope is the resurrection of Jesus Paul makes that point very plainly in 1 Corinthians 15 he says if we only have hope in life if we have hope in this life only well if Christianity is just about this life we're to be pitied but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep in Christ so Christ is the first and we follow on and we enter into his joy each in his own order first Christ who raised from the dead and then we who go to glory Peter echoes that in 1 Peter 1 3 and 4 he says we are born again to a living hope in the resurrection of Jesus Jesus is alive and the Lord is risen indeed isn't he that is the Christian hope and so we live out of the resurrection we count everything as lost and that we might know him and the power of his resurrection and so we put on the helmet of salvation and we go forward in the strength of the Lord our God what is the fruit of hope when I put on the helmet of salvation this week what should I expect to grow in my life well it will give you a stability and a confidence and an optimism the true Christian when he's or she is in the right place living before God walking in the light of his God is not a miserable man or woman someone full of hope gives us unashamed patience in difficulty that's what

Paul says in Romans 3 Romans 5 hope that gives Christ centred hope and so if you have the helmet of hope on there is no tribulation that you can't face hope in Christ and you can face death hope in Christ and you can face the heart attack hope in Christ and you can face cancer hope in Christ and you can face the loss of a child hope in Christ and you can face all the difficulties of

singleness and all the difficulties of marriage there's nothing too great I was in a bathroom a couple of weeks ago and somebody put on the sign there which said God will not place too many cares on the shoulders of his children I like that God will not place too many cares on the shoulders of his children hope rises above them all and what God does is incredibly beautiful he takes the very things that discourage us and he turns them on their head and he uses those things to mature us we bring those things to him and we hope in him and in those things and through those things like the trials and the difficulties we find our hope strengthened that's a beautiful thing there's this wonderful fruit of perseverance in prayer

I think God ties the effectiveness of our prayer with the circumstances of our lives most of our prayers are motivated by our circumstances let me try and explain that so I don't know about you but if everything goes your way and you never have any troubles or trials and God gives you everything you want right away I wonder what your prayer life would be like if you had everything that you wanted in the present and God held nothing back from you I think if you're honest you would probably not need the Lord at all and you take him for granted that's been my experience certainly and God gives us this need just the amount of affliction and sorrow and trial we need to keep us on praying ground to keep us trusting in Christ and so put on the helmet of salvation trust the Lord Jesus and know that in the end at the end of the day all will be well and you shall enter into the joy of your Lord without spot and without wrinkle hope will not make you ashamed blessed are those who hope in the Lord

[34 : 17] Amen