*Introduction*

The story of David versus Goliath is an epic picture of good winning over evil. The giant being slain by the underdog. The fully equipped man of war defeated by a small shepherd boy.

But when we look at the story as it unfolds, we see that David was offered the Kings personal armour for his protection against Goliath. But he could not wear it, it had not been made for him, it did not fit him and it was, for him, unwieldy.

So he discarded it. That did not deter him, because he went forward to meet his foe, not in a suit of armour that would have weighed him down, prevented him from being agile and fast, but in the name of the God of Israel.

The result, God used the years of practice with the sling to make sure that with one shot, David hit Goliath between the eyes and slew him with his own sword.

The victory was the Lord's.

We have seen that as a Christian we are in the army of God and therefore at war with the forces of Satan.

These dark forces are highly organised and have their headquarters in the heavenly realms. The battleground on which this war is being fought is the minds of humanity.

Satan has built strongholds of prejudice and unbelief in peoples minds to keep them from receiving the truth of the Gospel.

Our task is to break down these strongholds in order that people can be set free from the deception of Satan and become children of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Our ability to carry out this God-given task relies on two things.

The first, is that we realise and accept clearly from the Scriptures that the Cross of Christ has totally defeated Satan on our behalf and that it is now our responsibility to demonstrate and administer the victory that Jesus has ALREADY won.

The second thing, is that we are to make proper use of the necessary spiritual weaponry which God has provided for us.

Weapons of defence and weapons of attack.

**LET US READ our Scriptural basis for this: EPH 6: 10-17**

At the beginning of this passage we read the words

***13 Therefore put on the full armour 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.***

This morning we will deal with 'putting on the FULL ARMOUR of GOD.

Derek Prince always used to say - 'where there is a "therefore" you need to find out why its " there for".

It is there because of the preceding verse where Paul says:

***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.***

It is there because we are in a daily spiritual life-and-death struggle with the evil forces of Satan's kingdom and we owe it to ourselves, and because Scripture requires it, to put on the full armour of God.

Paul gives us another reason for wearing the armour in v13

***so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground,***

Notice the phrase he uses ***the day of evil***. I do not believe Paul is referring to the Great Tribulation, for I am persuaded that we will be caught up to Heaven before that day, or some prophetic disaster, although there will be disasters.

In this context it appears to suggest that we as Christians, individually, will have an 'evil day' a time when we individually come up against the forces of evil, when our faith is challenged, and where the forces of opposition and problems will be loosed against them.

The way he writes indicates that this will be a certainty and not an option, and we will have to face it.

Jesus himself stated that we will be persecuted

***Mark 10:29“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.***

If we are to STAND as Christians, not move forward, but just to stand, we are to put on the FULL armour of God in order to protect ourselves.

The parable of the wise and foolish builders shows us that it was not the tests that the two houses were subjected to that meant one stood and the other collapsed, because both had the same tests, wind, storm, flood. No, it was the foundation upon which they were built that made the difference.

Therefore we as Christians need to be firmly grounded in Christ and His word,

His Word states that we will be persecuted and tested and that we need to put on the full armour He provides.

Paul takes his picture of the armour from the Roman legionary of the day and he gives us six pieces of armour we are to put on daily. With this armour you will be protected from the top of your head to your feet. The only exception is the back.

Let us briefly look at each item in order to understand what Paul meant.

The Belt of TRUTH.

The Roman soldier wore a loose fitting tunic which was okay for normal day to day use, but when he needed to fight, he had to tuck the tunic away, so that it did not get in the way and prevent him from using his arms.

It is no coincidence that Paul comes to the belt of truth first, because when we find ourselves coming up against the forces of evil, we need to tuck the tunic into the belt of truth.

Paul is not talking about abstract, theological truth, but truth in every day living.

He is talking of honesty, sincerity, openness and frankness.

Religious people are often surrounded by sham and hypocrisy, they do not say what is the truth but what sounds good, what people want to hear.

This is why so often hear insincere clichés that bring no comfort or mean nothing of value. People see through it straight away.

Paul calls us to put away the sham, the hypocrisy the cliches, and say and do the truth.

Be the person God wants you to be - Put on the belt of truth.

The breastplate of righteousness

The breastplate protects our most vital organ, the heart.

***Prov 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.***

What you have in your heart will ultimately determine the course of your life, for good or for evil.

Therefore it is vitally important that we protect it from all kinds of evil.

Now what does Paul mean by righteousness?

***1 Thess 5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.***

If we bring the two phrases Paul uses together we see that the breastplate of righteousness is a breastplate of faith and love.

In other words it is not our righteousness but Christ's.

He sums this up in

***Phil 3:9and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.***

Our faith must come from Christ alone and be in Christ alone.

1 Cor 13 tells us that love never fails

***6Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.8Love never fails.***

When you wear the breastplate of faith that works by love, it will always protect you, it will keep you heart from every attack and attempt of Satan to penetrate that vital area of your life.

Your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

The Roman soldiers footwear was light and strong. A sandal with leather thongs that came half way up the calf.

It enabled the soldier to be mobile and walk at speed. He could easily be deployed by his commander to any area he was required.

The enemy is very mobile and we do not know where the battle lines will be from moment to moment. The soldiers would sleep with their shoes on, so that at a moments notice in the dead of night they could respond.

We to, need to be shod at all times. We need to be instantly available and mobile when the Master calls.

We are called to wear the sandals of the Gospel of peace.

Are we always ready - prepared, to give an account of the hope that lies within us, to tell others about Jesus?

It is the Gospel of peace. When we know Jesus as Saviour, we have His peace and we can, if we are ready, impart that peace to others in any situation.

When you come into contact with a person that needs the peace that only Christ can give, are you ready to communicate the Gospel to them?

The shield of faith.

In the Greek New Testament there are 2 words used for 'shield'. The first describes a small round shield which would only protect a small part of you.

The other word is taken from the word for a door, because it describes a large oblong type shape - like a door. This is the word Paul uses to describe the 'Shield of faith'.

The Roman Soldier had such a shield and he would make sure that all his body was behind it so that no arrows or missiles could touch him, he would be completely protected.

When we come into contact with the forces of Satan, be sure of this, he will attack. He will attack everything that you have authority over - he will attack our minds, our hearts, our bodies, our finances. If we are married he will attack our spouse. So everything needs to be behind the Shield of faith.

We said earlier that the breastplate was of faith and love. That was for our personal use. The breastplate covers our hearts. The Shield of faith covers everything that God has committed to us.

The Helmet of Salvation

A helmet is a piece of equipment that protects the head or in spiritual terms, the mind.

The mind is subject to alot of things, many people suffer from depression, and of course Satan will attack the mind and try and put al sorts of thoughts there...

'you're not good enough'

'you couldn't do that'

The helmet of Salvation is designed to conquer these things and protects us.

But again, what is Paul talking about?

***Rom 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.***

What does he mean ' more than conquerors'?

It means that we not only win the battle, but we come out of it with more than we had before we went into it.

There is a parallel passage that Paul has written that gives us more of a clue about this helmet

***1 Thess 5:8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.***

The helmet is the 'hope' of salvation.

The protection for the heart is faith, but the protection for the mind is hope.

They are of course connected.

Faith is our hearts protection and we believe which makes us righteous, but the writer of the Hebrews goes on to say

***Heb 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.***

Our hope is our minds protection.

Hope is a quiet, steady expectation of good based on the promises of God's Word. It takes us to the Romans 8:28 promise "all things work for good"

Ephesians 2:12 tells us that before we knew Christ, we had no hope.

but

***Col 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

*Conclusion*

The armour we have looked at so far are purely defensive, they are protective, The last piece of armour is not just defensive, but attacking. We will discuss this further next time because we need time to see what it is.

This coming week we will face the forces of evil. They will attack everything that we have authority over. He will hit us hard, so we need to be ready, we need to put on the armour of God - in order to just STAND!

Every car you buy comes with seatbelts to protect you in case of an accident. But they are totally useless if you do not put them on. When the accident happens, they will not save you and you will get the full force of the impact.

In the same way, when Satan comes against you, if you do not put on the FULL armour of GOD, you will not stand against the onslaught.

The victory is already one, now go and win the battle - in JESUS' name.

Amen.