*Introduction*

Two weeks ago we looked at the Armour of God and especially the defensive pieces, seeing that we were fully protected in the battle with the forces of evil that roam the spiritual realm.

We saw that in the story of David versus Goliath the 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 Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, which we shall read again in a moment, implores us to put the armour of God on, so that when the day of evil comes, and we briefly saw that Paul was probably referring to the day when we as individuals come into the cross-hares of the sights of Satan and he focuses his forces against us, that we will be able to stand.

The victory is the Lord's.

Satan uses many tactics against us, such as building strongholds in our mindsets, deception, lies and the like. 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.

We have seen that 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.

So this week, DV, we shall look at the weapons that we have at our disposal to attack the enemy, namely the Sword of the Spirit and prayer.

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

The first thing we are commanded to do is to 'TAKE' the Sword of the Spirit. It is not an option, the Born again believer cannot do anything without it.

You cannot be a conscientious objector in this war. If you want to stand in this war, in each battle you face, you must be dressed correctly and armed correctly.

The Sword of the Spirit is the WORD of GOD. What is the Word of God? It is the Scriptures - OLD and NEW Testaments.

***Matt 4: 4Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.***

Jesus when he was tempted by Satan states that it is every word, now if Jesus needs every word, so do we.

***Hebrews 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.***

The words of Jesus are as powerful as His Fathers, why? because they are one.

Therefore what God says in the Old Testament and Jesus says in the New Testament hold equal weight and power.

***2 Cor 10:4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.***

The sword of the Spirit has DIVINE power and it can demolish strongholds, it can put the enemy to flight.

In the book of James, the writer is talking of not being double minded, of coming near to God and getting rid of the sin in your lives, he says

***James 4:7-8 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you***

The writers of other scriptures clearly shows this double edged sword:

***Rev 1:16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.***

***Rev 2:12“To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.***

***Psa 149:6  May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands,***

***Prov 5: 1-6 My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.
She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it.***

The writer here clearly shows that bad words can also pierce like a double edged sword, if we allow them into our lives they will pierce our inmost being.

The devil uses Gods word to lure us away by misquoting it. He did it with Eve in the garden of Eden, He said "Did God say?" he cast doubt into Eve's mind and she strayed.

We are seeing in our Churches today many Pastors and Leaders in various ministries who use the word of God to their own ends and lead people astray by it.

They use it to make you feel guilty and get you to part with your money, but they also use it to spread false doctrine.

Why does Paul use a sword to describe the Word of God.

There are other weapons he could have used, after all, when a Roman Legionnaire was behind his large door like shield he could use a spear to stick out and keep the enemy at bay.

We went a couple of weeks ago to see an enactment of the British Civil war, there, they had pike men, soldiers who had really long spears . These spears were effective at keeping the enemy and especially cavalry at a distance and protecting those behind them.

But no, Paul uses a sword because it can be easily manoeuvred , it is light and deadly.

It is double edged because it is used to pierce rather than slash, it goes straight to where it has to go.

***Heb 4:11Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.***

***12For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.***

The sword also intimates hand to hand combat, a place of in your face, personal fighting.

The devils tactics come from all sides and he will get as close as he can, he will attack every part of you and therefore you need to be able to use the sword in this way. Something a spear could not do.

Once you are inside the arc of the spear it is useless as a weapon, but the sword is not.

**So how do we use the Sword of the Spirit?**

After all, you could not just pick up a sword and use it effectively, could you. You need to be trained in its use.

The Word of God is always the Word of God.

But for it to become the Sword of the Spirit it must have something added to it.

It is the Holy Spirit, that gives the God given word its power. Therefore if you are not a born again believer, you cannot do any more than speak the word. For you it will have no power because you do not have the Holy Spirit.

But the Born again believer, who has committed their lives to Christ and is daily following Him, is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and gives the spoken word of God its power.

This is shown in a demonic confrontation in the book of Acts:

***Acts 19:13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.***

The sons of Sceva did not have the power of the Holy Spirit, and as such could not even use the name of the Lord Jesus.

It is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes all the difference.

Just like the rest of the Armour of God, in the same way that you are to put on each part, so with the sword you are to 'take it'.

That means you have to use it, read it, understand it, otherwise you are like a soldier that has a rifle but does not load it, doesn't learn how to fire it so that it is effective.

***2 Tim 3:15and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

We are to be equipped by learning the Word, but it is the Holy Spirit that transforms that very word into a double edged, piercing sword.

When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, he had three encounters with the devil, each time we read that Jesus answered the devil with the correct Scriptures and their correct application (Matt 4)

***Duet 8:3He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.***

***Psalms 91;11-12 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;  they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.***

The devil used the correct scripture, but in the wrong way and Jesus put him right.

***Deut 6:13Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.***

Jesus had been brought up to observe and read the Torah, he knew it and could recite it correctly.

We also need to know the Scriptures so that the Holy Spirit can use it as a sword.

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit cannot gives us a word that we do not know, but we are expected to do our part on the whole.

Lastly, Paul tells us

***Eph 6:18 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 Lord’s people.***

None of us pray as much as we should I am sure.

But we are directed by the Apostle to pray all the time, in every situation, for all sorts of things - and to pray for all the Lords People.

We are to pray for each other - always.

Sometimes the Spirit of God lays a name upon our hearts and we are to pray for them at that time.

I have told this story before, but when I was down on the south coast, getting ready to preach, the Spirit just came down upon a lady who stopped the meeting to pray for a member of the church in hospital. It was an amazing moment as prayers were offered. Little did we know at that very time, the woman was on the operating theatre and had literally just died. She is alive today and rejoicing that God, through the prayers of His people.

Pray

Pray

Pray

Jesus prayed and they are recorded many times in scripture, so we should to.

*Conclusion*

As we close, just close your eyes for a moment and imagine yourself clothed with the armour of God, the belt of truth, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel, the shield of faith covering your body and the sword of the Spirit. All of a sudden you are rushed by demons of all kinds, they are snapping at you, trying to get at you.

But you are standing your ground, you are protected and your are fighting them in hand to hand combat. You stand and they flee.

You have the victory! Hallelujah!

It has been won for you by Christ Jesus upon the cross.

You have stood, and you are still standing.... because you are clothed in the armour of God.

Put it on Christian...

Put it on Christian...

And stand against the day of evil.

Amen