

## Rules of Engagement

### THE Helmet OF salvation

#### Small Group Questions

**Opening:** Can you share with the group your salvation experience? What were the major influences that led you to faith in Christ?

1. Satan's strategy is to strike doubt in us. What are some of the Biblical or theological questions that have caused difficulty for your faith? How have these difficulties been resolved?
  
2. Is it ok for a believer to doubt? Read Mark 9:23-24. How would you explain the tension between believing and struggling to believe?
  
3. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. What is a stronghold? What strongholds do believers fight against in their lives?
  
4. "God could never forgive someone like me."  
 "It's impossible for me to change."  
 "Life will never get any better."  
 Which of these three statements do you relate to most?
  
5. Describe the three aspects of Salvation.  
 Justification  
 Sanctification  
 Glorification  
  
 How do each of these three aspects offer assurance for the believer?
  
6. Three rules of engaging the spiritual battle when it comes to doubt is  
 Rest in the finished work of Christ.  
 Walk in the power of the Spirit.  
 Live in light of tomorrow.  
  
 Which one of these do you need to focus on?  
 If you were counseling another believer in one of these areas what scripture passages would you use to strengthen their faith?
  
7. What is the most important and practical principle you learned from this teaching on the Shield of Faith?

**Ephesians 6:10-17, (P. 979)**

We're talking this morning about the helmet of salvation. This later today many of you will be watching grown men running around in helmets and for good reason, these men are large and strong and fast and when they hit each other it hurts. And it is a very sobering moment when the crowd watches one of these elite athletes carried out on a stretcher with their head strapped to a board. Whether it's a child who has fallen off the monkey bars or a bicyclist tumbling onto the asphalt or a car crash with no airbag; we all know the vital importance of protecting the head. And what is true in the physical realm corresponds to the spiritual realm.

**Ephesians 6:10-16, (P. 979)**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation,

The Belt of Truth

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The Shoes of Peace

The Shield of Faith

The Helmet of Salvation

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (P. 969)**

Paul tells us in Ephesians to stand against the schemes of the devil. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 he warns us not to be ignorant of those schemes, and in this passage he exposes one of those schemes:

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

We've talked about this before. What's a stronghold? A stronghold is a fortress in the mind, a thought pattern, a belief system, something that grips your thinking that in turn controls your attitudes and behaviors - and its objective is to rob you of abundant life. You are what you think. You do what you think. Satan tries to deceive you so that he can control you. He lies to you. And if you're not aware of that strategy, if you're not vigilant with regard to falsehood and deception, if you're not equipped with the armor of God - you're allowing Satan to construct a stronghold in your mind seeking to control you and ultimately to destroy you.

<sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

**1 Corinthians 14:15** says to worship with your mind.

**Romans 12:2** says that spiritual transformation starts with the renewal of your mind.

**Philippians 4:8** says to think, focus your mind on all the things that reflect the character of God.

If you don't take your thoughts captive, your thoughts will take you captive. I used to have a statement posted by my computer that read: stop listening to yourself and start talking to yourself. What does that mean? Well, I don't think I'm unusual or unique in my dysfunctional, destructive thinking. I don't know about you but my mind can go anywhere at any time for any reason. And usually those places are not good, healthy or honoring to God. That's why, I believe, Paul started with the belt of truth and ends with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Truth is both a defensive and offensive. Next week, we're going to learn how to use the Word of God offensively. But for today, let's look at a particular stronghold Satan attempts to construct in your mind.

### **Satan's Arsenal: DOUBT**

#### **Genesis 3:1**

Satan says to Eve, "Did God really say?" And Eve began to doubt. He tempts us to question everything. We question the existence of God, the goodness of God, the power of God, the plan of God. He wants us to doubt God's presence and provision. He wants us to doubt God's faithfulness. He wants us to doubt God's sovereignty. He wants us to doubt God's love for us, God's acceptance of us, God's good purpose for us. Paul says put on the helmet of Salvation. There are two particular purposes of the helmet:

1. It identifies you. The Roman helmet was elaborate and ornate. It was often sculpted with images that reflected the empire. It told everyone who encountered a roman soldier just who he was and what kingdom he belonged too. The helmet of salvation, identifies you.
2. The helmet protects you. The Roman helmet was made of bronze. It was thick and impenetrable protecting the soldier from personal attack.

### **The Believer's Armor:**

#### **Romans 13:14 (ESV)**

#### **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ**

**Matthew 1:21** says, They shall his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua meaning, God is salvation.

**Psalm 27:1** the Lord is my light and my salvation

**Psalm 68:19** God is our salvation

Paul says, put on Jesus like a helmet of salvation. The bible teaches us about three aspects to salvation: Salvation past, present and future. You have been saved, you are being saved and you will be saved. Another word for salvation is deliverance. So, deliverance from what, what are we saved from. This is what the Bible teaches: You have been saved from the penalty of sin. You are being saved from the power of sin. You will be saved from the presence of sin. You could say: God's grace pardons you, empowers you and perfects you. The helmet of salvation captures all three of these components. So, we need to understand salvation in the fullest sense of the word.

### **1. JUSTIFICATION**

We've already looked at this doctrine when we learned about the breastplate of righteousness.

#### **Ephesians 2:8 (ESV)**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith.**

At the point you placed your faith in Jesus you were forgiven and cleansed of your sins, you were spiritually reborn. Because of the cross, God sees us justified, just as if I'd never sinned.

## **2. SANCTIFICATION**

### **1 Corinthians 1:18 (ESV)**

**For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

"Who are being saved." This carries the idea that we are being freed more and more from the power of sin in our everyday lives. The Bible speaks volumes about the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

## **3. GLORIFICATION**

### **Hebrews 9:28 (ESV)**

**so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

Jesus secured our initial salvation the first time, the second time he secures our final salvation, taking us to heaven.

### **The Rules of Engagement:**

Paul says to put on the helmet of salvation. You have been saved: you have a new beginning. You are being saved: you have a new power. You will be saved: you have a new hope. Satan tempts us to doubt all three aspects of our salvation. We question, "Can God really forgive a person like me?" We question, "Can God really change a person like me?" We question, "Can God really make all of this better?" He's creating a stronghold in your mind that says: I'll never be good enough, I'll never change, it will never get any better. When we give into his lies, he robs us of peace, confidence and hope. Paul says, put on the helmet of salvation.

### **1. Rest in the Work Of Christ**

When Jesus hung on the cross and said, it is finished, he meant what he said. But some of you are still paralyzed by guilt. You believe in Jesus, you've accepted His grace but you can't seem to get over your past. And some of the past is very dark and shameful. Satan loves to remind us of our past.

### **Psalms 103:12 (NIV)**

**For as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed out transgressions from us.**

### **Isaiah 43:25 (NIV)**

**I am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.**

**Micah 7:19** says that God will cast our sin into the depths of the sea.

The highest point on earth is Mount Everest at 29,000 ft. above sea level. The lowest point on earth is the Marianas Trench that measures over 34,000 ft below sea level. So throw mount Everest into the sea and God has it covered by over 5000 feet. That's two and a half times the Sears Tower. The truth is: God's grace is greater than all our sin. Satan loves to stand on the mountain and broadcast every bad thing you've ever done. But that mountain is no match for the depths of God's grace. Satan will say whatever he wants. But when you have the helmet of salvation on you can rest in the finished work of Christ. God sees you 'in Christ.' Not in guilt.

## **2. Walk in the Power of the Spirit**

God's grace pardons us. God's grace empowers us.

### **1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)**

<sup>3</sup> **His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.**

And yet Satan tempts us to doubt God's ability to change us. I see it all the time.

Believers who know they've been forgiven but they can't seem to get over their habits and hang ups. And they've bought into the lie that they will never be different.

They're not happy with the way they are but they have little hope of changing. Lie a weight around their ankles. What is it for you? Pride. Greed. Lust. Addictive behaviors with alcohol, drugs, sex, food, money. And Satan is feeding you the line: stop kidding yourself, you'll never change.

John Stott wrote: Is God really able to change human nature, to make cruel people kind, selfish people unselfish, immoral people self-controlled, sour people sweet? Is he able to take people dead to spiritual reality and make them alive to Christ?

That's the gospel. Do you believe the gospel? Jesus didn't just pardon you, he empowered you; not just for eternal life, but for abundant living: righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

**2 Corinthians 5:17** says, when you become a Christian you became a new creature. A new creation. Think about that. A new creation: that's your spiritual reality.

CS Lewis wrote: God became man to turn creatures into sons. Not simply to produce better men of the old kind, but to produce a new kind of man. It is not like teaching a horse to jump better and better but like turning a horse into a winged creature.

He's not fixing the car, friends, he's inventing a new kind of transportation. That's what sanctification is all about: God's grace empowers us.

## **3. Live in Light of Tomorrow**

### **2 Corinthians 5:4**

Satan wants us to doubt that we are good enough for God. He wants us to doubt that we could ever change. And he wants us to doubt that things will ever get better.

### **Romans 8 (P. 944)**

What I appreciate about the Bible is that it does not hide or sugar coat the frustrations of those who call God their father. Abraham, Moses, David, all the of the prophets, the Apostle Paul. You read through the Psalms, Psalm 6:3, 13:1; 35:17; 89:46; 90:13: How long O Lord, How long. Some have called it the dark night of the soul, the oppressive dread of feeling as if God has abandoned us. As if our whole life is being lived behind the eight ball. The eighth chapter of Romans was an awesome beginning.

**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.!**

God's grace pardons us. Drop down to verse 18 and Paul starts dealing with the harsh realities of life.

<sup>18</sup> **I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.**

Verse 22: He talks about creation, the earth itself groaning under the curse of sin.

The word groan in the Greek lexicon is a word for moaning, or sighing. When someone is living under the weight of difficult and undesirable circumstances and they long to be delivered. It's the word in the Septuagint that described the Israelites in Egypt groaning under the weight of slavery, longing for deliverance. They're longing to be saved.

Because of the curse, the earth longs to be saved. Just as we, starting in verse 23, **And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.**

Paul talked about this groaning in 2 Corinthians because we live in earthly tents and we long to be clothed in a spiritual house, the redemption of our bodies. Why? Well, you tell me. What in this world works right? We've messed up everything. Everything is broken. This world is falling apart. But God is our salvation.

**<sup>24</sup> For in this hope we were saved.**

Paul says in Hebrews 6:19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul.

Our hope is anchored in the finished work of Christ. Our hope is rooted in the power of His Spirit. Our hope is grounded in the promise of God. And our hope doesn't disappoint because Romans 5:5 says God has poured His love into our hearts. God loves you. And he has a better day prepared for you. Satan hammers and hits and hacks away trying to cause us to doubt God but we hold fast to the hope of our salvation. You don't have to wonder about it, or worry about it. Why? Drop down to verse 32: if God didn't spare His own Son, why would he hold back on anything else? There's a better day coming. Don't ever doubt that. God created us, designed us for perfection, to live in perfection. And his resurrection guarantees the promise: The day is coming when God will satisfy our deepest longing, and fulfill our highest dreams. He will wipe away all our tears and end every frustration. He will right every wrong, correct every injustice, and , in the words of JRR Tolkien, he will make everything sad come untrue. The day is coming when we will work and play and worship forever; without the bondage of sin or the burden of sickness. No more weakness or failure, no more pain or death. The day is coming, my friend when the fight will be over, the war will be won and the spoils will be enjoyed by the king's subjects. Put on your helmet and don't ever doubt it. Don't ever lose sight of it. And don't ever wake up in the morning without thinking: it could be today.

### **What Must I Do to Stand Firm?**

Do you remember the story of Jed Clampet? The Beverly Hillbillies. I thought about that this week and I sang, I won't do it now, but I can still sing the entire theme song to the Beverly Hillbillies. Listen to a story about a man named Jed. He discovered oil and spent the rest of his life in luxury. Here's the question: when did Jed become a millionaire? Did he become a millionaire when he discovered the oil, or when he inherited the land? Jed Clampet was a wealthy man long before he ever knew it. He had it within his possession but he didn't know to access it. Everything God is ever going to do for you has already been done. Everything has been summed up in Jesus. Ephesians tells us that in the heavenly places: You are already seated with Christ, you already have every spiritual blessing in Christ, you already have the victory in Christ. You have all you need, to stand.