

Sermon Notes for January 29, 2012

Putting On The Christian Armor Sermon Series
“Putting On The Belt Of Truth”
Ephesians 6:10-14a

Introduction

A. THE CONCEPT OF SATAN

1. In 2001, Christian statistician, George Barna, asked the “typical denominational Pastor” this question: **Do you believe that Satan is a living entity?**
 - a. these are the percentages of those Pastors who agreed with that question:
 1. Presbyterian – 22%
 2. Lutheran – 21%
 3. Episcopal – 20%
 4. Methodist – 18%
 5. Roman Catholics – 17%
 - b. that means that as many as 80% of all denominational Pastors DO NOT BELIEVE in a literal, living entity called Satan
2. 99% of all Psychiatrists do not believe in a literal Satan
3. Nearly 6 of 10 Christians strongly agree or somewhat agree with the statement: “Satan is not a living being, but is a symbol for evil.”

B. THE CONFLICT WITH SATAN

1. The Bible refers to the devil or Satan some 106 times
2. Paul refers to Satan some 10 times in his epistles
 - a. Paul’s **perspective**
 1. **II Corinthians 2:10-11** – “If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in **order that Satan might not outwit us**. For we are not unaware of **his schemes.**”
 2. **II Corinthians 12:7** – “To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a **messenger of Satan**, to torment me.”
 3. **Ephesians 6:11-12** – “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.**”
 - b. Paul’s **persuasion**
 1. to make his point even stronger, Paul spoke not only about the power of Satan but also the need of the Christian to protect himself against Satan.
 - a. **if Paul did not think there was a “literal” Satan, why would he encourage believers to protect themselves against him?**

- b. as if Paul would say “make sure that you protect yourself from a “symbol of evil.”
- 2. **PAUL WAS TOTALLY CONVINCED THAT THERE WAS AN ACTUAL, LIVING BEING CALLED SATAN.**
- 3. in fact, Paul taught that believers were in a real battle or “war” with Satan
 - a. Paul taught that, as Christian soldiers, we need to “put on” our spiritual armor
 - b. in **verse 12** – “For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood.” Paul uses the greek word pale: to wrestle
 - 1. wrestling was a serious matter in the greek world
 - 2. often, wrestlers fought to the death
 - 3. the word pale suggests that a wrestler won when he put his hand on his opponent’s neck; i.e. total submission
- c. Paul’s **particulars**
 - 1. Paul must have gotten his ideas about the armor of the Christian from looking at the armor of the Roman soldier
 - 2. notice the armor of the Roman soldier
 - a. the belt
 - b. the breastplate
 - c. the shoes
 - d. the shield
 - e. the helmet
 - f. the sword
 - 3. but, notice how Paul “amended” the armor of the Christian soldier; look what he “added”:
 - a. the belt “**of truth**”
 - b. the breastplate “**of righteousness**”
 - c. the shoes “**of peace**”
 - d. the shield “**of faith**”
 - e. the helmet “**of salvation**”
 - f. the sword “**of the Spirit**”
 - 4. during this sermon series, we will look closely at each individual piece of armor of the Christian soldier
 - a. today, we will look at the belt of truth
 - b. many consider the belt of truth the most important piece of armor for the Christian in dealing with Satan

I. The BELT OF THE ROMAN SOLDIER

A. The NATURE OF THE BELT

- 1. the belt of the Roman soldier was a most essential part of his armor
 - a. it “secured” his breastplate and it was the place where he hung his all-important sword
 - b. in the winter, when the Roman soldier wore a long tunic, as he went into battle, the soldier would stuff his tunic into his belt; otherwise, known as “girding up his loins”

2. although, the belt was largely unseen, it was a most critical part of the Roman soldier's armor

B. The NECESSITY OF THE BELT

1. some historians believe that this belt may have been the most important piece of his armor for the following reasons:
 - a. the belt served as a "foundation" for all of the other pieces of armor
 1. the belt secured the breastplate
 2. the belt held the sword
 - b. if the soldier did not have his belt securely in place
 1. his breastplate would not be stable
 2. he would not have a place to hang his sword
 3. and his tunic would have no place to go and would cause the soldier to trip and not be able to move freely
2. have you ever lost weight and did not buy a smaller belt or pants?
 - a. you could not move freely
 - b. kids with baggy pants down below their waist
 - c. **Pastor Jeremy Myers** – "When I was going to school in Chicago, I had a friend who was a security guard. One day, before class, he told me that the night before, he and a fellow guard had caught some hoodlum stealing from a car. They started chasing him down the street, but this hoodlum was one of those who seemed to think it was cool to wear baggy pants with no belt. My friend said it was so funny. **Here was this young man trying to carry stereo equipment with one hand and hold up his pants with the other hand.** They easily caught the guy. As they were walking with the kid, they made some wisecracks to him about if he had just worn a belt, he might have been able to run faster."

II. The BELT OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

A. The DEFINITION OF THE BELT OF TRUTH

Ephesians 6:14 – "Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist."

1. the **PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST**
 - a. the **first meaning** of the belt of truth for the Christian soldier is that the belt of truth represents Jesus Christ
 - b. not only does Jesus Christ "tell the truth," **HE IS THE TRUTH!**
 1. **John 1:14** – "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.**"
 2. **John 14:6** – "Jesus answered, "I am the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
2. the **WORD OF GOD**
 - a. the **second meaning** of the belt of truth for the Christian soldier is that the belt represents the Word of God
 1. **John 16:13** – "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide you into all truth.** He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come."
 2. **John 17:17** - "Sanctify them by the truth; **your word is truth.**"

3. the **INTEGRITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER**

- a. the **third meaning** of the belt of truth for the is the integrity of the Christian soldier
- b. if Jesus is full of grace and truth, so must the Christian soldier be full of grace and truth as well

B. The DISTINCTION OF THE BELT OF TRUTH

1. the **PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST**

- a. how does the belt of truth represent Jesus Christ?
 1. what gave the Roman soldier his confidence?
 - a. the Roman soldier was well-trained
 - b. the Roman soldier had the best-made weapons of any army in the world
 - c. the Roman army had the greatest numbers of troops in all the world
 - d. the Roman soldier had the commitment of the Roman Emperor behind him
 - e. when the Roman soldier went to battle:
 1. he was absolutely confident, that he would win
 2. he was absolutely confident in his skills as a soldier
 3. he was absolutely confident in the support of his Emperor
 2. what gives the Christian soldier confidence?
 - a. the Christian soldier must **HAVE TOTAL CONFIDENCE IN JESUS!**
 1. this is not just your “belief” in Jesus; your knowledge about Jesus
 2. **IT MUST BE IN A VITAL, DAILY, ON-GOING, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS!**

- a. lyrics from the Christian group: Avalon, **“He’s Everything To Me”**

“I grew up in Sunday School
 I memorized the Golden Rule,
 And how Jesus came
 To set the sinner free. . .
 I know the story inside-out,
 And I can tell you all about
 The path that led Him up
 To Calvary. . .
 But ask me why He loves me,
 And I don’t know what to say –
 But I’ll never be the same,
 Because He changed my life when
 He became . . .

Everything to me –

He's more than a story

**More than words on a page of
History.**

He's the Air that I breathe,

The Water I thirst for,

And the Ground beneath my feet--

He's Everything to me”

- b. **John 14:6** –“ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- c. “DO YOU HAVE “THAT KIND” OF RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?
- b. and most importantly, when Satan attacks you and offers you “all kinds of stuff,” what do you do?
 1. if Jesus is NOT everything to you, the “other thing” will appear beautiful
 2. if Jesus does not “meet your every need,” then you will need “other things” to fulfill you
 3. **Chip Ingram – The Invisible War**
“Satan’s modus operandi has not changed.
 He tells us that we will never be happy unless we have a lot of stuff or until we look just right or until we have whatever he can get us to chase until we get it and need something more to satisfy us. The dissatisfaction deep within us—the very cravings that all those advertisements exploit—are **the products of his lies**. He convinces us that we need more and more and more, and then he tempts us to get it in ungodly ways. **And before we know it, we’re buying the lies—hook, line and sinker.”**
- b. as you can see, Jesus gives us our “foundation” as believers
2. the **WORD OF GOD**
 - a. the next application of the belt of truth is that it represents the Word of God
 1. like the belt of the Roman soldier, the belt serves as the **foundation** of the Christian soldier
 2. the Christian soldier does not feel secure because he is smart, well-trained or because he never misses Sunday School
 3. **NO, THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER IS CONFIDENT BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE TRUTH!**

- b. notice how Satan attacks:
1. **how Satan attacked Eve** in the Garden of Eden
Genesis 3:1 – “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, **“Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’**”
 - a. Eve was not really sure what God had said to be
 - b. so, Satan attacked her lack of knowledge
 2. **how Satan attacked Jesus** in the wilderness
 - a. Satan tempted Jesus to follow him, to worship him, to feed on him
 - b. **AND EVERY TIME, JESUS RESPONDED WITH SCRIPTURE!**
 1. **“IT IS WRITTEN”**
 2. Jesus did not attempt to reason with Satan – He simply quoted Scripture
- c. what do **you** say when Satan attacks you?
1. **“Do you really think that you can be forgiven of all of your sins just by believing in Jesus?”**
John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, **that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**”
 2. **“If you are a Christian, how come you keep committing the same sins?” Do you think he will keep forgiving you?**
I John 1:9 – “**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**”
 3. **“Look at your life. How do you think you will go to heaven with all of those sins?”**
Romans 8:1-3a – “**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin And death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man,**”
- d. your confidence as a Christian soldier is **not** found in your ability, your intellect and your “apparent spirituality.”
1. Satan is thoroughly unimpressed with all of that
 2. but, the Word of God is another matter
 3. are you confident:
 - a. in the truth of the Word of God?
 - b. in your “use” of defending yourself with the Word of God?
 4. **Rick Renner** – **Dressed to Kill**
 “If you lay aside your Bible, the “belt of truth,” in time you’ll begin to lose your sense of righteousness. Lay aside the belt

of truth, and you will slowly begin to lose **your sense of peace**. Lay aside the belt of truth, and you will **feel the joy of your salvation begin to deplete**. If you toss the belt of truth out of your life, you will begin very quickly to **lose your ability to believe God and walk in faith.**”

3. the **INTEGRITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER**

a. the third application of the belt of truth for the Christian soldier is his/her integrity

1. what gave the Roman soldier confidence as he fought?

a. HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING!

b. HE DID NOT WONDER WHAT HE WAS DOING!

c. and. . .he knew that he was representing the Emperor of the Roman Empire

2. what gives the Christian soldier confidence in battle?

a. the committed Christian soldier knows how to fight

1. he knows the Word

2. he knows his Lord

3. he serves his Lord

b. BUT, also, the Christian soldier’s heart must “represent” the Savior’s heart

1. we cannot expect to fight on the battlefield for the One who is full of grace and truth and we have no grace and truth in our lives

2. we cannot represent our Commander and Leader, who has a pure heart, when we don’t have a pure heart

3. **William Gurnall – “Likeness is the ground of love. A carnal heart cannot like truth, because it does not resemble truth.** How is it possible, then, for an earthly heart to love pure heavenly truth? It is sad when men’s understandings clash with their affections, when judgment and will are **unequally yoked**. Truth in the conscience scolds lust in the heart! Like a quarreling couple, they may live together for awhile, but the discontent will soon expel truth.”

b. notice **Ephesians 6:14** – “**Stand firm then**, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,”

1. to stand in the greek means to:

a. stand upright

b. the image is of one who is confident

c. the picture of the Christian soldier that he is “so confident” that he is standing with his head held high and his shoulders thrown back

2. **William Gurnall – The Christian In Complete Armor** – “No matter how much you believe in the power of God, a lack of the presence of God in **your life will scream fear.**”

c. the inherent confidence of the Christian soldier, as he fights Satan, is

that he is “truly and totally” representing the One for whom he is fighting

1. **I AM REPRESENTING JESUS CHRIST FAITHFULLY AND “ACTUALLY”**
2. look at King David:
 - a. how did he manage to function as King Saul pursued him for ten years?
 - b. **Acts 13:22** – “After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse **a man after my own heart**; he will do everything I want him to do.’”
- d. let me say a few words to parents:
The great **Dr. Samuel Johnson** gave this advice for raising children:

“Accustom your children constantly to the telling of the truth. If a thing happened at one window, and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another. **Do not let this pass**, but instantly challenge them. **You do not know where deviation from truth will end.** It is more from **carelessness about truth** than from intentional lying that causes so much falsehood in the world.”

III. GETTING READY FOR THE BATTLE

A. ARE YOU READY FOR THE BATTLE?

1. Do you know how long it took the allies to prepare for D-Day in World War II?
 - a. it took approximately 3 years for the Allies to prepare for the biggest military invasion the world has ever seen
 - b. hundreds and thousands of man hours to prepare--BEFORE THE ALLIES EVEN INVADED!
2. The 6-day war in Israel
 - a. When the three countries of Jordan, Syria and Egypt attacked Israel on June 5, 1967
 1. Egypt had some 100,000 troops in the Sinai
 2. Syria had 75,000 troops
 3. Jordan had 25,000 troops
 4. after 6 days of battle, Jordan, Syria and Egypt were completely defeated
 - a. the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the old city of Jerusalem were taken by Israel
 - b. Israel increased her territory from 8000 square miles to 26,500 square miles
 - b. HOW DID ISRAEL DEFEAT ALL OF THEIR ENEMIES?
 1. General Zonik Shaham, when asked how the Jews defended themselves against such odds:

- a. “People think Israeli’s are super people with a super intellect and strength. They think that we win because of that. **We win by commitment.** In the Israeli army, we still use the phrase, “gird up your loins.”
- b. General Shaham related a story about the Israel army: The General told of a man who desired to live in Israel- After living in Israel for several years, this man, like the others who live there, had to join the Israeli army. The young man knew General Shaham and made an appointment with him. The General thought that the young man would ask for an easy desk job. **Instead, the young man said that he wanted to be in the finest, most strategic, diligent and difficult regime in all of the Israeli army.** He would subsequently join the paratroopers, the first to land in the most precarious duty. **General Shaham said, “that is why we win- we have people like him who are committed.”**
- c. my experience in Israel

B. DO YOU KNOW “HOW” TO GET READY IN THE BATTLE?

1. You have got to put on the belt of truth
 - a. you have to be **CONVINCED** of the reality and truth of **Jesus Christ in your life**
 1. not just that He is your Savior
 2. **BUT, THAT HE IS YOUR VERY LIFE!**
 - b. you have to **know and use the Word of God**
 1. if you are “cavalier” about the Word of God
 2. if you do not read it, know it and learn it – you will be no match for Satan
 - c. you need to have **a clean heart**
 1. otherwise, you will know that you are not a “true soldier” of Jesus Christ
 2. you will know that you and “your General” do not agree and are not fighting the “same battle”
2. The belt of truth, although it is largely invisible – **IS YOUR VERY FOUNDATION**
 - a. so, how secure are you in the battle?
 - b. “Gird up your loins.”

Conclusion:

1. The belt worn by a Roman soldier was tied around his waist
 - a. however, the belt was also attached to a piece of leather that wrapped around the soldier’s shoulder
 - b. it was on this leather piece on the soldier’s shoulder that medals would be placed for success in battle
 - c. that is where you want “your medals” to be placed as you face the Lord in Heaven

1. you didn't get medals because of your intellect or your ability
 2. you got medals because you based your life on truth
 - a. the **truth of Jesus**
 - b. the **truth of the Word of God**
 - c. the **truth of a pure heart**
2. I want us to look at a video done by the Christian group, Avalon. Their song is, "He's Everything To Me."
- a. Is Jesus **anything** to you?
 - b. Is Jesus **something** to you?
 - c. Is Jesus **everything** to you?