

Sword of the Spirit
Series: The Armor of God
Ephesians 6:13,17
February 27, 2022

Welcome again to worship. Whether you are inside, outside, or online, thank you for joining us. I want to invite you to turn in your bulletin to page 5 or grab your spiritual journal and your Bible and turn to Ephesians 6.

This is our final message in our series “The Armor of God.” I told you at the beginning that I’ve never preached on these passages, so it has been a joy to dig into the truths of these 5 verses, especially in light of the evil times we find ourselves. If you have missed any of them, you can always watch or read the sermons by going to our website – germantownchurch.com – and looking under the tab “Glorify.”

Thus far in our “Armor of God” series, we have looked at the Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Shoes of the Gospel of Peace, Shield of Faith, and Helmet of Salvation. Just one more piece to go.

The Sunday School teacher was telling the class about the armor of God. After talking about the breastplate of righteousness and a shield of faith, she said, “And Paul also says we should carry a weapon. Do you remember what it is?” There was no answer, so she added, “It’s something very sharp, something that cuts.” Then one little fellow answered vigorously, “I know. I know. It’s the axe of the Apostles!”¹ He was a little confused.

Let’s look at our passage from Ephesians 6:13, then 17b:

*Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm... and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*²

Today’s armor is the Sword of the Spirit.

It is the Word of God.

Now, typically when the Bible talks about the “word,” the Greek word that is used is what? *Logos*.

John 1:1:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*³

However, in Ephesians 6:17, Paul uses a different word. **The Greek “word” is rhema⁴, not logos⁵, and means the spoken word.**

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:7:

*We faithfully preach the truth. God’s power is working in us.*⁶

Rhema, the spoken word, is a reference to speaking the Gospel, which is powerful and effective weapon of the Spirit of God.

¹ Pastor’s Manual, Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times.

² Ephesians 6:13-17 (NLT2)

³ John 1:1 (NIV)

⁴ ῥῆμα

⁵ λόγος

⁶ 2 Corinthians 6:7a (NLT2)

Whatever the difference between the use of *rhema* and *logos*, all Bible commentators hold that Paul is talking about the Bible as the sword of the Spirit.

Look at the bottom of page 5 and the passage from Hebrews 4:12:

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword...⁷

So, the final piece of our armor of God is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

The sword of which Paul speaks is, as he explains it, the word of God; that is, the revelation which God has given of Himself, or what we call the Holy Scriptures. It is called the sword of the Spirit, because it comes from the Holy Spirit, and receives its fulfillment in the soul through the operation of the Holy Spirit.⁸

Think about the other pieces of armor:

- The Belt of Truth: it is defensive, in that, a soldier can't move around when his pants are falling down. This guys who wear their pants below their rears. Dumb.
- The Breastplate of Righteousness: defensive.
- The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace: defensive.
- The Shield of Faith: it is mostly defensive; a soldier could use it to strike an enemy, but it is most defensive.
- The Helmet of Salvation: defensive.

But the sword is different. It is dual purposed. It is both:

A defensive weapon.

It is a defensive weapon, in that it can block attacks.

LIGHT SABER

Paul says:

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.⁹

So, as a defensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God:

First, it teaches truth.

Again, I need to remind you the context of the armor of God. We are in a battle against the forces of evil, who in my opinion, are focusing their power as the end of days are coming. So, the devil is tricking so many people to trade the truth for a lie.

The Bible teaches us the will of God and points out Jesus Christ until He comes again. It helps defend our minds from the falsehoods of the devil.

Second, it corrects us.

to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.¹⁰

The word of God restores things to their proper uses and places, correcting false notions and mistaken views.¹¹

⁷ Hebrews 4:12a (NLT2)

⁸ Adam Clarke's Commentary, Ephesians 6:17

⁹ 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT2)

¹⁰ 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT2)

¹¹ Adam Clarke's Commentary, Ephesians 6:17

In the Book of Judges, several times, it says the people did what was right in their own eyes. Do you see the problem with that? What I may believe is right may not be what you think is right. Then no one knows what's right.

The Bible corrects us. Through reading it, the Holy Spirit – remember, it is the sword of the Spirit – convicts us of sin in our lives, helping us repent, confess, and be converted to the holy living that God wants.

But, unlike the other pieces of the armor of God, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, is also an offensive weapon. It is our weapon of attack against the sins of the world. Oliver Cromwell's Ironsides soldiers fought with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other.¹²

The sword of the Spirit is the only truly offensive weapon in the armor of God, and it is used in 2 ways:

First, to proclaim truth.

PREACHING AND TEACHING: PROCLAIMING TRUTH, RHEMA.

Have you ever been to a museum that displays really big swords? Some of them weigh more than I do. What many think, as they hold or look on these massive swords, is that they are interesting, but practically useless for warfare. No one would recommend them to be issued to troops; they are too heavy.

How similar this is to people's opinion of the Bible. Many people admire the Bible and may put the Bible on display in their homes somewhere (normally a huge Bible), but some of these same people never use the Bible. Why? They deem it like an ancient sword, useless for modern warfare, too heavy.

This should not surprise us. In the Garden, the serpent, the evil one, raised doubt and suspicion about God's word. But do not be deceived. You can trust God's Word. You need God's Word. Do not go into battle without a sword. Read it. Meditate on it. Pray it. Proclaim it.¹³

Second, it defeats the devil.

Ephesians 6:13:

*Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.*¹⁴

The sword of the Spirit reminds us the great importance of the Word in our combat with evil. Christ defeated Satan in the great temptation experience by using 3 texts of Scripture from the book of Deuteronomy.

The sword of the Spirit, the word of God, is a very necessary and useful part of the Christian soldier's equipment. It is very necessary, and of great use, in order to maintain the spiritual warfare and succeed in it.

John Wesley said this: "And the sword of the Spirit, the word of God - This Satan cannot withstand, when it is edged and wielded by faith. Till now our armor has been only defensive. But we are to attack Satan, as well as secure ourselves; the shield in one hand, and the sword in the other. Whoever fights with the powers of hell will need both. He that is covered with armor from head to foot, and neglects this, will be foiled after all."¹⁵

¹² Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT).

¹³ Christ-Centered Exposition - Exalting Jesus In Ephesians: Christ-Centered Exposition, Ephesians 6:17

¹⁴ Ephesians 6:13 (NLT2)

¹⁵ Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament, Ephesians 6:17

Paul reminds us that the battle is spiritual and must be fought in God's strength, depending on the Word and on God through prayer.

William Barclay wrote, "We can never win God's battles without God's book."¹⁶

Today, the world, even some in the Church, mock the Scripture, but we must continue to use it in combating evil. It is the "sword of the Spirit" and there is no better sword.

A former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park tells the story of a ranger leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout. The ranger was so intent on telling the hikers about the flowers and animals that he considered the messages on his two-way radio distracting, so he switched it off. Nearing the tower, the ranger was met by a nearly breathless lookout, who asked why he hadn't responded to the messages on his radio. A grizzly bear had been seen stalking the group, and the authorities were trying to warn them of the danger.

Any time we turn out the messages God has sent us, through His Word or other ways, we put at peril not only ourselves, but also those around us. How important it is that we never turn off God's saving communication!¹⁷

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.¹⁸

¹⁶ Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT).

¹⁷ Harold M. Wiest, from a sermon by Kevin L. Jones, "A Lasting Word For The Last Days," 2/15/2010, downloaded from sermoncentral.com

¹⁸ Ephesians 6:13-17 (NLT2)