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The Divine Protective Equipment of the Christian

Spiritual warfare is an important theme in victorious Christian living and it is taught by Paul in Ephesians 6. The book of Ephesians, written by Paul during his first imprisonment in Rome at around 62 A.D. deals with three main concepts:

Chapters 1-2 → the Calling of a Christian
(predestination)

Chapters 3-4 → the Conduct of a Christian
(walking worthy of our vocation)

Chapters 5-6 → the Combat/Conflict that
Christians face

All of us are in constant spiritual warfare, a spiritual form of conflict with the malevolent seductions of Satan and the world. To be well-equipped for this war, there are 4 pertinent points we need to consider:

1. **Be Strong in the Lord & Put on the complete Armour of God All the Time (v11)**

- The first century Romans were masters of the battlefield and defeated the Alexander and Greek empires, controlling about 1/3 of the known world at that time. The Romans empire was never conquered. It disintegrated on its own after the 5th century. All its soldiers were well-trained in combat and warfare.
- Paul would have had such a soldier stationed next to him to guard him during his house arrest, whom he could have looked to for inspiration to write about the armour of God. The average Roman soldier's full battle order weighed almost 10kg: it was not an easy or convenient garment to put on. Similarly, we must be sure we are fit enough to wear the amour of God or it may



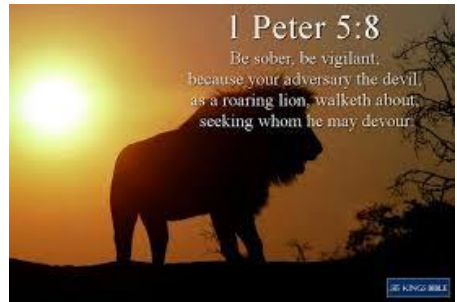
crush us. Although we are often unwilling to put on the whole armour (*panoply* in Greek) because it can be uncomfortable, we know that every piece counts, and every piece is necessary as it helps us to stand against the wiles of the evil one.

- It is important in any war to know who we are fighting for and against; we are fighting for God and against the devil. The first part of verse 11 is written in the possessive form and in the imperative mood, may be indicative of instructions given by a commander to his men. **It is not a suggestion or a proposal; it is God commanding us to obey Him.**

2. Know the Strategy of our Enemy (v12)

- Verse 12 speaks about the hierarchy of the fallen angelic world (Rom 8:37-39). We need to put on the **whole** Armour of God because there is a devil (*diabolos*, i.e. *slanderer*) who, together with his army of fallen angels are constantly attacking us (v16: “fiery darts”).
- Sun Tzu in his book “The Art of War” famously said that we must know both ourselves and the enemy. The Bible contains a wealth of information about the diabolical wiles of Satan:

- 1 Peter 5:8-9 → Satan is described as a roaring lion. He is constantly waiting for an opportunity to attack, which means there is no place for complacency in the Christian. We are all to be sober and vigilant.



- Job 1:7 → Satan is very diligent (*going to and fro in the earth...walking up and down in it*). He never ceases and has with him an army of fallen angels to send destruction and devastation to God's children.
- John 8:44 → Satan is the master deceiver/serpent/ father of lies. Christians must resist Satan and remain steadfast in the faith and the new can triumph over evil.

- There are 2 common misconceptions about our understanding of how to resist the devil:
 - Overconfidence in our ability to fight and overcome the devil
 - Extreme phobia of the devil → 2 Timothy 1:7, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear by of power and sound mind”
- Both misconceptions are, of course, incorrect. The Bible is where we should look to gain an understanding of how best we might fight the devil:
 - James 4:7 → submit to God first before all else, then resist the devil, and he will flee from you. This is similar to going to a military commander for orders before rushing headlong into battle. Without the help of God, we are on our own and we will fail.
 - Jude 9 → Like Michael the archangel, instead of relying on own strength to fight the devil, we have to first depend on God, just like how Michael said “The Lord rebuke thee” to Satan.
- The correct position is therefore, according to verse 13, to withstand the evil one first before we stand. We cannot stand unless we withstand in the “evil day” when the devil finds our Achilles’ heel and tries to attack it.



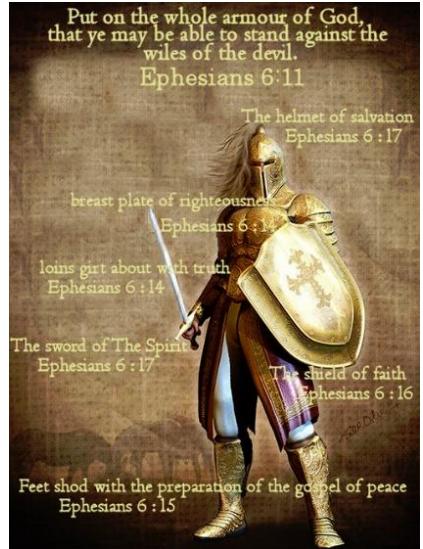
3. Understand the role of the six pieces of the Armour of God and equipping for battle (v14-17)

- a. ***‘Having your loins girt about with truth’***, i.e. a Belt/Girdle
 The belt is not an ornament, it is an armament. It was used by Roman soldiers to hold the entire set of their armour together, and thus naturally is very important. If we want to put on the belt, we must be on the side of truth which comes from Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17), as opposed to the devil’s lies or deceitfulness. As Christians, we must be found standing (symbolizing readiness) and wearing our belt of truthfulness all the time.

b. Breastplate of righteousness

Snipers will usually aim at either the head or the chest first. Roman soldiers who wear the breastplate (i.e., righteousness) will have a better chance of survival because it protects one of the most important organs - the heart. There are 2 forms of righteousness:

- Imputed righteousness: we must be washed by the blood of the lamb
- Practical righteousness: denotes actual integrity, justice, probity, and being above board in all our dealings. When we sin, God does not demand perfection but repentance and confession.



c. Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace

The Christian gospel is defined as peace-making with God. We must always be ready to use every opportunity to share the gospel of everlasting life as we go on the offensive to save souls. But before we can share the gospel, we must make sure that we know the gospel well enough AND that we are actually saved; because what you do not have, you cannot give. We must have Christ to share Christ. We must understand the gospel before we can teach it and have a burden for souls in evangelism.

d. Shield of Faith

The Roman soldier's shield is an oblong/triangular 4x 2.5ft piece of metal that is the only mobile equipment he carries. When the soldier squats down and places the shield in front of him, he should be at least 90% covered against the enemy's arrows. Our faith is supposed to act as a shield to

guard us against the fiery darts of the evil one. There are, again, two forms of faith:

- Objective faith: "I believe in God". The world teaches us to see first before believing, but as Christians, our faith enables us to believe first and see later.
- Subjective faith: "I trust the Lord" (Heb 11:16)

We must believe God's word wholeheartedly even though we have not seen many of things like heaven and Christ we have read about. While we do confess that many times our faith is overcome by fear, that fear must eventually be translated into trust in God.

e. Helmet of Salvation

The helmet protects the head, which represents the seat of knowledge and bastion of understanding. This guards us against false doctrines and teachings that permeate the world and the Church today. These false doctrines and teachings undermine our knowledge and understanding of the doctrine of salvation.

f. Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God

The sword is the only offensive weapon that will protect and equip us as we advance into enemy territory (i.e. to share the Word of life with unbelievers). The inspired bible or the Word of God is the sword of Christians, which will be our main weapon in our defence and evangelistic efforts. The question to consider here is how much of this inerrant and sufficient book that we carry really do we read and meditate upon (2 Tim 2:15)?

g. Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit

As Paul concludes, he added one more element. The armour of God functions well when complemented by fervent supplications for all and persevering prayer. Prayer symbolizes constant communication

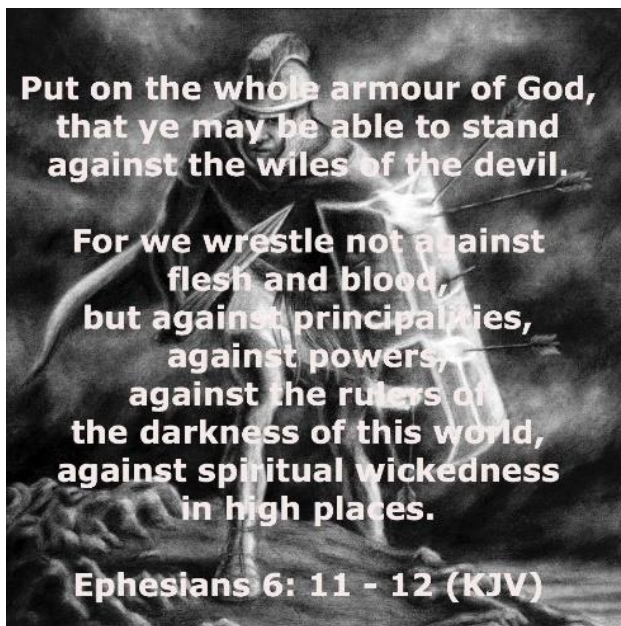
with God and is like that oil that keeps our armour working well, which in turn protects us from harm and danger.

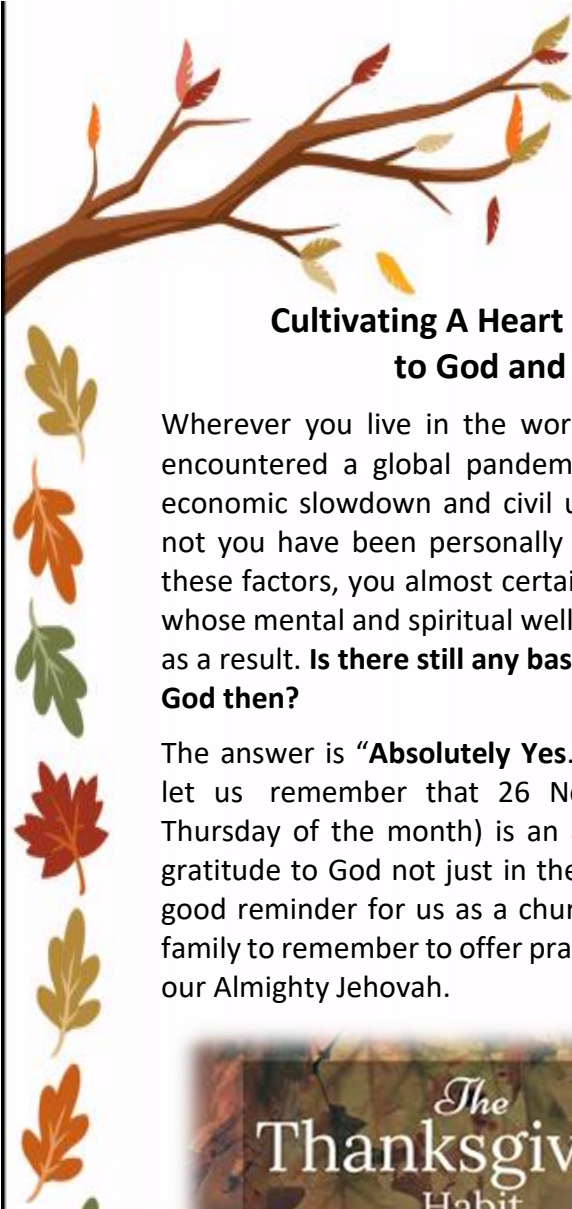


Conclusion

Besides fighting the coronavirus which is a serious global health threat, we are also still in the midst of a lifelong battle and we need to be alert and vigilant at all times. Are we truly equipped and ready to withstand the attacks of the devil when they come along? It is one thing to know about the armour and another to be actually wearing it and to know the God of this armour. Let us all always put on the full armour of God, that we *'may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand'* (Eph 6:12).

Jack Sin





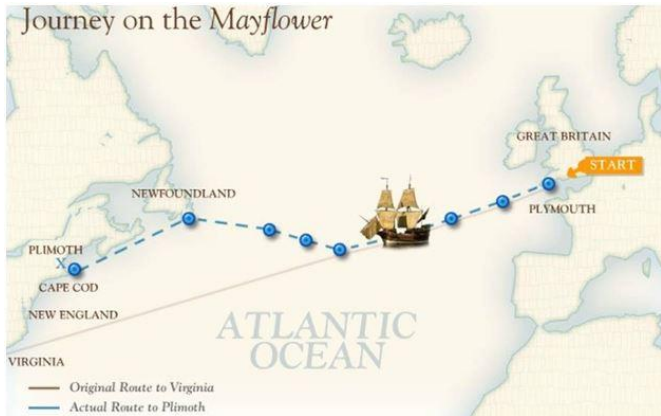
Cultivating A Heart of Gratitude to God and Man

Wherever you live in the world, you have likely encountered a global pandemic, social isolation, economic slowdown and civil unrest. Whether or not you have been personally affected by any of these factors, you almost certainly know someone whose mental and spiritual well-being has suffered as a result. **Is there still any basis to give thanks to God then?**

The answer is “**Absolutely Yes.**” For that reason, let us remember that 26 November (the last Thursday of the month) is an annual occasion of gratitude to God not just in the US but it is also a good reminder for us as a church and a covenant family to remember to offer praise and gratitude to our Almighty Jehovah.



By tradition, it was recorded that there was a famous thanksgiving celebration held in Plymouth in 1621. The first winter the Pilgrims had in the 'New World' was a brutal one (nearly half of those who came over on the ship *Mayflower* died).



Times got eventually better by the grace of God and the following harvest season was so bountiful that the Pilgrims decided to hold a feast for celebration and thanksgiving. This 'festival', which lasted three days, included the participation of nearly one hundred Native Americans. Governor William Bradford invited the natives to show them appreciation, for helping his colony survive through the harsh weather conditions by the grace of God.





No matter where you live, no matter how the pandemic is affecting you in your locality, no matter how each one of us are doing, **this is the opportune time to begin right in our hearts with thankfulness toward God and man, to be spiritually and mentally healthy in the Lord.**



Let us take stock of what we can thank God for; our salvation in the first place, our families that He has blessed us with, not forgetting our church and her ministry to us, our health, our homes, our jobs despite this crisis, our friends, our nation and the leaders and healthcare workers in handling this global health crisis, daily pleasures like a safe walk for us and daily commuting, the food on the table, the birds that we hear, the aroma of the flowers we smell and see along life's way, the fresh air and breath in our nostrils and much more.



Pause for a moment to thank God for His Word, the joy of salvation, the privilege of prayer and for those who have helped and blessed your life over the years.

Thankfulness begets thankfulness in return. The same is true for hatred, anger and evil and resentment and harsh words. It is your call today; it is your life. You get what you put in and let us get it right by the grace of God.



Do not take God and your loved ones, the church brethren and sabbath worship, Christian fellowship, the Word of God and the Sacraments, your parents and children for granted but cherish and relish them instead.

It is with grateful hearts that we acknowledge and thank God for prospering and preserving our members and the ministry and missions of Sovereign Hope BPC in 2020 despite the unprecedented pandemic. There is still much to be done for the Lord.



We pray for safety and protection, fervent and committed spirit among all of us to desire to grow in the knowledge of the Word and in prayer, to give unto the Lord cheerfully, to share the everlasting gospel with lost souls and to edify one another in the fear of God.

Let us persevere in our gospel outreaches next year to the unsaved in the vicinity and beyond. Let the love of God be seen in us as we seek to witness for Him in these last perilous days.

Let every member and friend strive to be grateful, faithful and responsible stewards and ambassadors for Christ, and be consecrated and sanctified in Christ. Let us be renewed in our personal consecration to Christ and to His church that we are worshipping with deeper devotion as we come to the close of 2020 soon. Let us rededicate ourselves to thank, honour and serve Him faithfully till He comes.

When you *Pause* to *Think*,

You have *Cause* to *Thank*.

Ponder and meditate on this soberly this day, this Thanksgiving Week and always.

Jack Sin



**PROPHETIC AND PRACTICAL INSIGHTS
FROM ISAIAH FOR TODAY**

Lord's Day Programme from Oct - Dec 2020

OCTOBER

- 4 The Case for Divine Reasoning (Isaiah 1:1-18)
- 11* The Holiness of God and the Prophet's Response (Isaiah 6:1-8)
- 18 When the Top Angel became the Devil (Isaiah 14:1-15)
- 25 Reformation Sunday: The Refuge of God in the Reformation (Isaiah 25:1-12)

NOVEMBER

- 1 The Basis for Peace of Mind (Isaiah 26:1-9)
- 8* The Gospel Highway and Streams of Life (Isaiah 35:1-10)
- 15 The Almighty Comforter for Souls (Isaiah 40:1-14)
- 22 Fighting Phobia with Courage in God (Isaiah 41:1-14)
- 29 Triumph over Distress as Witnesses (Isaiah 43:1-28)

DECEMBER

- 6 The Only One True God of the World (Isaiah 45:5-28)
- 13* The Call to Extend the Kingdom of God. (Isaiah 54:1-17)
- 20 The Foundation for Contentment (Isaiah 55:1-13)
- 24 Christmas Eve: Mary and the Lamb of God (Luke 1:27-47)
- 27 Reforms through the Hand of God (Isaiah 59:1-21)
- 31* WATCHNIGHT SERVICE: Am I a Wise or Foolish Virgin? (Matthew 25:1-13)



Memory Verse

Isaiah 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed;
for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness..

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Rev Jack Sin speaks today on “**Fighting Phobia with Courage in God**” (Isa 41: 1-14), the Oct to Dec series on “*Prophetic & Practical Insights from Isaiah for Today*”.
3. Rev Jack Sin speaks next Sunday on “**Triumph over Distress as Witnesses**” (Isa 43: 1-28).
4. Sunday School classes continues in church after the worship service:
 - Catechism Class – Pastor Jack
 - “Rules for Walking in Fellowship by John Owen” – Dn Choo Siang
 - Studies in Leviticus – Dr Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have commenced a new series of studies and discussions on History of the Church. Do join us!
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The Nov prayer list is available from Dn Choo Siang.
7. The Pandemic book can be purchased through Dn Yue Kay (Hp: +65 97450311) or via email at sovereignhopebpc@gmail.com.
8. There will be Christmas Eve Baptismal & Gospel Service on 24 Dec 2020 at 8pm and Watchnight Service on 31 Dec 2020 at 8pm. Do mark them on your calendar and invite your family and friends to join us for worship on these special days.
9. Those who have a testimony to share may submit to Pastor for the weekly.
10. Pastor is still available for counselling via WhatsApp, Email or Mobile.
11. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**