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The Conflict and Arsenal for the Christian

We read daily of the war in Ukraine in the news but there is there is a real unseen battle going on daily in our lives. The Spiritual Warfare of the believer was emphasised by Paul in

Ephesians 6 as it is a relevant and real concern then and still is today. The book of Ephesians, written by Paul during his 1st imprisonment in Rome at around AD62, deals with three main concepts:

Chapters 1-2 → Calling of a Christian (Predestination)

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

Chapters 5-6 → Combat/Conflict that Christians face

All believers are in constant spiritual warfare, a profound invisible spiritual form of conflict with the diabolical seductions of Satan and the world daily. To fight well we need to be well equipped for this war, there are 4 pertinent points we need to consider.

1. Be Strong and Put on the Complete Armour of God (v11)

- The Romans were masters of the battlefield and defeated the Greeks under Alexander which controlled a greater part of the known world and later the Roman empire reigned for a few hundred years at that time. The great Roman empire disintegrated on its own the 5th century. All its soldiers were well-trained in combat and warfare.
- Paul would have had such a Roman 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. Turn your scars into stars and your trials into triumphs. The average Roman soldier's full battle order weighed over 10kg: it was not an easy or convenient garment to put on. Similarly, we must be sure we are fit enough to wear the armour of God, or it may just crush some of us. Although we are oftentimes unwilling to put on the whole armour (the panoply) because it is uncomfortable and cumbersome, we know that every piece counts, and every piece helps us to stand up to the deceptive 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, not for self nor just for the sake of against the



devil. The first part of verse 11 is written in a possessive form and in an imperative mood, which may be likened to instructions given by a commander to his men, and we submit to him. It is not a suggestion or a proposal; it is God commanding us to obey Him and let us do so daily.

2. Be Aware of our Enemy (v12).

- Verse 12 talks 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*), together with his army of fallen angels, constantly attacking us (v16: “fiery darts”).
- Sun Tzu in his renowned book, The Art of War famously said that we must know both our enemy and ourselves as well. The Bible contains a wealth of information about 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 for the constant warfare is real.
 - 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 and remain steadfast in the faith.
- There are 2 common misconceptions about the devil:
 - Overconfidence in our ability to overcome the devil
 - Extreme phobia of the devil → 2 Timothy 1:7 God hath not given us the spirit of fear
- Both misconceptions are, of course, inappropriate. The Bible is where we should look to gain an understanding of how best we might fight the devil:
 - James 4:1 → submit to God first before all else. Then, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. This is like going to a military commander for orders before rushing headlong into battle.
 - Jude 9 → Like Michael the archangel, instead of relying on his own strength to fight the devil, we must first depend on God and His Word.
- The correct position is therefore, according to verse 13, to withstand first, and then to stand. We cannot stand unless we withstand in the “evil day”, when the devil finds our Achilles’ heel and tries to attack it.



3. Be Equipped with the Armour of God (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 is thus naturally 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 deceitfulness. As Christians, we must be found standing (symbolizing readiness) and wearing our belt 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 will have a better chance of survival because the breastplate (i.e., righteousness) 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 integrity, justice and being above board in all our dealings. God does not demand perfection, but rather a certain rectitude, good conscience and a heart for repentance and confession when we sin.

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. 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.

d. Shield of faith

The Roman soldier's shield is an oblong/triangular 4x 2.5ft piece of metal that is the mobile piece 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 in God and his word 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, hell and Christ we have read. 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.

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

The sword is the only offensive weapon that will protect and equip us to advance into enemy territory (i.e., to share the gospel with unbelievers in evangelism). The Bible is the sword of Christians, which will be our main weapon in all our preaching teaching and evangelistic efforts. The question here to consider is: how much of this book that we carry really belongs to us? Do you read, meditate and memorise the Word of God? Know the word well and you are ready to do battle

g. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (vs 18)

The armour of God functions well when complemented by fervent persevering prayer for ourselves and others too. Prayer symbolizes devotion and constant communication with God and is like that oil that protects our armour, which in turn protects us.

Conclusion

The 2 previous World wars has taught us that the proper military equipment and the right and strategic use of it is important coupled with courage for ultimate victory in each battle. We live in perilous times where the enemy will attack us even more. Are we truly equipped and ready to withstand the attacks of the enemy when it comes? It is one thing to know about the armour and another to be actually wearing it and to know the God of this armour. Are you truly born again, and have you truly accepted Christ and repented of your sins? Let us all put on the full armour of God, that we '*may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand*'.

Jack Sin

Reflections on the SHBPC Church Camp 16-18 June

The three days of ***“Biblical Perspectives for a Vibrant Christian Walk Conference”*** was a great blessing.

I was wondering if I would be able to attend because initially, I had made plans to go to India to visit my church and also my family.

Rom 8:28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”*. Only after attending the camp, I realised that it was God’s plan for me to stay back and be a part of the camp.



The theme verse from Colossians 1:10 *“to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”* has been very touching to me personally, which reminded me that I need to walk worthy of the Lord. Pleasing him in all our walks. The thematic sermons and the relevant Questionnaire were very helpful for the application part.

The 1st thematic sermon – Christian & His Longings: Ambition - helped me to focus once again for the purpose that God has brought me here to Singapore. I was able to reflect on what are the things that I am drawn to both positive and negative and their effects.

The 2nd thematic sermon – Christian & His Lips: Communication - helped me to focus on what I speak and how I speak, especially the 4 Sentinels which is a helpful scale whenever I am talking. There is always a possibility to exaggerate something in our speech and how our we always need to be mindful of how we build up each other with our words.

The 3rd thematic sermon – Christian and His Love: Relationship - was a great encouragement for me. I have taken well not of the seven aspects of a happy marriage and the elements of the Christian HOME.



All these three sermons were also linked and woven in such a wonderful way that these things can hardly be forgotten. At least the titles of the sermon can be very instantaneously recollected as **Ambition Relationship Communication** as I remembered and pondered on **ARC** while on the way to Pulau Ubin outing.



Each message was a constant focus on the theme which is to “walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him in everything”. And, each message was also packed with the practical examples from the Pastor’s life and situation that could be easily related. There are many things that I have also taken note of which I would like to replicate when I get back to India.



The Outing was a time of refreshing physically and a time to get to know each other. The times of lunch and dinners together was also a time where we could share.

Thanks a lot for making me also a part of your SHBPC family. The brotherly love shown to me was tremendous. I wished my wife also could have been at the camp. I thank the Lord for also helping me to be of a little help here and there. I pray that the Lord would bless the work of SHBPC and fan it into flames, so that many would be blessed though the revival fire in these last days though the united labours of God’s

children.

John Caleb

Dear Pastor Jack

Thank God for giving you spiritual foresight and courage to hold a live in church camp at Changi. John Caleb told me about it

Praise God for all who attended and were blessed. Psalm 103:1, 2

*Pastor Philip Heng
Galilee BPC*

GODLY COUNSEL FOR PILGRIMS & STRANGERS (STUDIES IN 1 PETER)

LORD'S DAY PROGRAMME FOR JUL-SEP 2022

JULY

- 3 Our Salvation & Eternal Hope (1 Pet 1:1-12)
- 10* Sojourning in the Fear of God (1 Pet 1:13-25)
- 17 Of Lively Stones & Royal Priesthood (1 Pet 2:1-10)
- 24 Of Pilgrims & Strangers (1 Pet 2:11-25)
- 31 Guide for The Believers Domestic Life (1 Pet 3:1-9)

AUGUST

- 7 Christian Apologetics in Practice (1 Pet 3:10-15)
- 14* Keeping a Good Conscience (1 Pet 3:16-22)
- 21 Godly Demeanour in Afflictions (1 Pet 4:1-8)
- 28 How to be Faithful Stewards of God (1 Pet 4:9-11)

SEPTEMBER

- 4 When We Suffer for Christ (1 Pet 4:12-19)
- 11* Models in Meek Service (1 Pet 5:1-7)
- 18 Sober and Vigilant Stand Against Evil (1 Pet 5:8-14)
- 25 Seeking Reconciliation with God (2 Cor 5:11-21)



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Memory Verse

1 Pet 1:15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Sunday Worship Service! For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Pastor speaks this morning on “**Sojourning in the Fear of God (1 Pet 1:13-25)**”, the start of a new quarterly series on **Godly Counsel for Pilgrims and Strangers (studies in 1Peter)**.
3. Pastor speaks next Sunday on “**Of Lively Stones and Royal Priesthood (1 Pet 2:1-10)**”.
4. Sunday School classes continues after worship service:
 - WCF Shorter Catechism Class – Pastor
 - Studies in Deuteronomy – Dn Kwong Leen
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. Included in the programme is a study on Church History in China on alternate Sundays. Join us for a time of profitable learning.
6. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
7. Pray for the Mission Team to Cambodia (Jul 18 – 28) comprising Pastor, Angie, Amber and Esther as they minister to 3 churches and a Christian University in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville.
8. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 5 Aug 2022, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
9. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
10. 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**
