

The Belt Of Truth

Ephesians 6:10-14

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Let's begin reading in Ephesians 6:10-13. Paul says, "Finally, my brethren," or, for the rest, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," that really summarizes the whole armor section, we stand against the wiles of the devil by relying upon God's strength and power. Notice verse 11, "Put on the whole armour of God," or the whole panoply of God, "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God," this is the second time he mentions it, he mentions it in verse 11 and again in verse 13, "that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

The famous American Evangelist, D.L. Moody, I find it interesting that he actually told his worship leader, called a song leader back in those days, Ira Sankey, not to lead the congregation in the song, "We Are Soldiers in God's Army," because he felt the church was really a sad picture of the army of God—we weren't really going out and standing against the wiles of the devil. Warren W. Wiersbe said, "If being a good soldier involves obedience, discipline, and sacrifice, then many professed Christians have either never been enlisted or have gone AWOL." A lot of Christians are not really aware of the fact that we are in a spiritual battle, and as I quoted A.W. Tozer last week, they think the Christian life is a playground when in reality it's a battleground.

Notice verse 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." That really summarizes the war that we are in. If you are a Christian, like it or not, you're in the Lord's army and there's a spiritual battle going on; and you won't be able to stand, you become a casualty, if you don't stand in the Lord's strength and in the armor that He has provided.

We saw three things last week, and I want to mention them to introduce our subject. We saw the enemy, verse 11, is the devil, and we saw three things about him. The first thing was that he is cunning. In verse 11 it mentions his "wiles." That word means schemes or methods. He knows what he's doing, he's a master at his craft, he's been around for a long time, and he knows how to deceive and attack the believer. He's got schemes. He's also powerful, verse 12, "...against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world," so he's a powerful spirit being. We saw that he was an angel who rebelled against God and fell from heaven. Other angels fell with him, demons, and they attack believers and try to defame God. Thirdly, we saw as well, verse 12, that he is wicked. There are three things: he's got schemes or wiles, verse 11; he is powerful, verse 12; and he is a wicked spiritual being so we must stand in the strength the Lord has provided, verse 10, and in verse 13, we must put on the armor that God provides. We know the enemy, we stand in God's strength, and we put on the armor that God provides for

us.

Notice in verse 13, Paul says, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.” I believe that “evil day” is a reference to when we are attacked by the devil. When the devil comes, or one of his demons, with one of his temptations or one of his attacks, or we’re going to see in a few weeks one of his flaming arrows, when he comes in that evil day, and we live in that day today, he’s the prince and power of the air, that we are able to stand because we know the enemy, we stand in God’s strength, and we put on the whole armor of God.

What are we to wear to war? Let’s read verses 14-18. “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,” that is, the devil. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” and I love it, verse 18, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints,” so we are to put on the first piece of armor, go back with me to verse 14, “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,” this is what we call the belt of truth.

What was the belt the Roman soldier wore? The Roman soldier wore what’s called a tunic underneath his armor—it’s his underwear, but you could see it. It was kind of like wearing a skirt. The Roman soldier’s skirts were a little shorter than the Jews wore, they wore miniskirts, I guess is what they wore, but basically the first thing the Roman soldier would put on...by the way, Paul is writing Ephesians from prison, and he is chained to a Roman soldier. It think it’s kind of cool that he was probably looking at one of the guards he was chained to—looking at the belt, the breastplate, his sword, his shield, his helmet, his shoes and realized that we’re in a spiritual war and used those as metaphors or pictures of what we’re to put on to stand against the devil.

The soldier would first put on his outer robe or tunic and then place the leather belt around his waist. The King James Bible says “loins,” but it was actually like a girdle or belt with an apron in front of it to protect him. It was made out of leather. That “belt of truth,” as Paul speaks of it actually held the robe in place. He could girt up his loins. You read in the Bible, “girt up your loins.” It’s kind of like an expression that we would use today, “roll up your sleeves” and get to work. Rather than having this kind of flowing robe in the way, they would pull it up, tuck it up under the belt, and then they would be able to go out and do battle. The first item was the belt that held everything together. On this belt of truth, the breastplate and sword would be fastened. The soldier would fasten the breastplate to the belt and also have the sword sheath in his belt as well. It was the first thing that he put on.

I think that is significant in that the most important foundational truth in standing against the “wiles of the devil” is that we have truth in our lives—we stand on truth and live in truth, so we stand on the Word of God, and we live in integrity. I believe that’s what Paul is actually saying

here.

What does it symbolize as Paul uses this concept of the belt of truth? Let me give you three ideas. First, some say that it's Jesus, and I think that's kind of interesting that you can take each one of the pieces of armor and see Christ in them. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," so Jesus stood on the Word of God and practiced the truth in integrity, but He is the truth, so we put on Christ. There's significant meaning there, and in order to stand against the "wiles of the devil" you must stand. We're going to see that when we get the helmet of salvation and the breastplate of righteousness, we must stand in the imputed righteousness of Christ, not your own. When Satan attacks you, your righteousness is not yours, it's the righteousness of Christ.

Others say, as well, that it's the truth as found in God's Word. The Scripture text doesn't say, "the truth," it says, "truth," and I'll explain what I think that signifies, but it is true, I don't think that this is the primary meaning, that we must stand upon the Word of God. In a few weeks, we're going to get the sword of the Spirit, verse 17, which is the Word of God. This is not a reference to the Scriptures, but again, how important it is when we're going to stand against the devil, to know God's Word, right? The psalmist says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Remember when Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness? Every temptation that he brought to Jesus, and by the way, it's not a sin to be tempted, it's only a sin when you yield to the temptation. Jesus the Son of God was tempted. In every temptation, Jesus answered the devil with the Word of God, "It is written..., it is written..., it is written..., it is written," so Jesus used the sword of the Spirit and resisted in His humanity the devil leading us in the way of victory in relying upon God's Word as well.

It is important that we know God's Word. I exhort you tonight to be studying the Bible. I commend you that you're here on Wednesday night and that you are under the teaching of God's Word. It's so very important. You should be students of the Bible yourself. You should read the whole Bible, you should marinate your heart and your mind in the Word of God. You should soak your life in God's Word. Read Psalm 1 where it says, "Blessed is the man," or the woman, the person, "that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water...his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." If you want to have a long, fruitful, blessed, prosperous Christian life, then meditate day and night in God's Word. God's Word is that foundation and that sword of the Spirit.

God's Word, the sword, must pierce and penetrate our hearts and transform our inner attitudes and actions. I'm going somewhere with this—listen carefully. Yes, we put on Christ's righteousness; yes, we stand in the Word, but the Word of God must transform the inner person. Years ago I heard a quote that I've hung onto that the goal of Bible study is not an enlightened intellect, it's a transformed character. It's not just having head knowledge, it's

having a transformed life. I think when Paul says, "...having your loins girt about with truth," it's significant that he didn't say "the truth," just simply "truth." I believe the belt of truth is a reference to our truthfulness or our integrity, that is, living a life of sincerity with integrity in our minds and hearts, not practicing hypocrisy or duplicity. I'm going to amplify what I mean by this. In other words, it's not so much talking about Christ's righteousness or talking about "the truth," the body of truth we believe the Word of God, it's talking about being a truthful person, being a man or a woman of integrity and not practicing hypocrisy or what we used to know as duplicity. It's living with sincerity, so "truthing it" in love, being a man or a woman of integrity, living in sincerity, and having our minds and hearts focused on one thing, that is, the Lord.

The contrast is Satan who is a liar, right? The Bible says he's the father of lies. What does that mean? It means that he is the source of all lying. When you lie, you are actually doing what's considered to be a trait of your father the devil. You may be a child of God and fall into lying, but the source of lying is demonic and from the devil. He is the source, the father, of lies, so you're playing into his camp. You don't want to place yourself under his influence, you want to live with integrity, sincerity and not practice duplicity.

Write down Psalm 51:6, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." I'm going to reference that psalm again in just a moment, but I love that statement that what God desires is truth in the inner parts, not just that I know the truth but that I live the truth in the inner part. Like a soldier without his belt, without integrity, everything falls apart. Everything in your life falls apart without integrity—your walk with God, your marriage, your family, your ministry. Everything flows out of who you are. You cannot practice duplicity and prosper as a child of God. You cannot grow spiritually and stand against Satan's attacks without truth in the inward parts. This belt of truth speaks to every one of us about being sincere, honest, and humble before God and before others.

Let me explain a little bit about integrity. The word "integrity" has the idea of oneness or wholeness. You're not divided up. You're not two-faced. A person of integrity...the etymology of the actual word "integrity" means oneness or one completeness. The opposite of integrity is duplicity, and duplicity is the idea that I'm practicing deceit or I'm two-faced. Remember the old phrase we would use, "That guy's two-faced," they say one thing to one person and another thing to another person. Some people are one way on Sunday in church, they live another way on Monday at work, and they live a completely different way on Friday night at the party. You might even run into them on Saturday and wonder, Who in the world are you? Integrity, and I love this concept, is that you are the same person everywhere, all the time. You're the same person at church, the same person at home, the same person in private.

Are you different at church than you are at home? Do you talk different? Do you walk different? Do you live different? Are you the same person on the job Monday morning? Do you come to church on Sunday and praise the Lord, but when you go to work on Monday, you leave your Christianity at church? That's duplicity. That's not integrity. If we're going to defeat the devil and not let the devil get a stronghold in our lives, we're going to have to practice being sincere and not practicing duplicity.

Another word that we use, and we know quite well, is hypocrisy. Jesus condemned those who were hypocrites. The word “hypocrite” literally means to speak from under or speak beneath. The reason why it means that is because in the Greek culture on the Greek stage in the Greek theater, they played roles or parts by putting on the mask of the part they would play. They would actually hold a mask on a stick and whip one mask up in front of their face and play a role, then they would pull the mask down and have another mask and put that mask on and play a different role by speaking under the mask. Hypokrites meant to speak from under, then it came to mean speak from under a mask, and that’s what a hypocrite is. They’re wearing a mask. They’re speaking from under a mask, so on Sunday morning, WHOOSH! here comes my Christian mask. When church is over, let’s put it in the glovebox and pull out. Let’s go home and be heathens’ masks. You never know what masks they are going to be wearing because they’re hypokrites or hypocrites.

Duplicity means living a double life or deceit. Look up the word even in an English dictionary. It means practicing deceit, a life of duplicity. Jesus said this in Matthew 6:24, and I think it’s one of the best explanations of what it means to put on the belt of truth. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon,” or money. Then, He went on to say, “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single,” what it means is that there’s no duplicity, it was singly set on God. It wasn’t one eye on God and one eye on the world. It was singly set on God so that, “thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, the whole body shall be full of darkness...how great is that darkness!” That’s really what Paul is talking about from this passage, that we cannot serve God and mammon.

We can’t serve two masters. We have to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our strength, and with all of our minds. It’s not playing Christianity. You play Christianity, and the devil will eat you alive. You get serious with God in the inner man, in the inner person. You get alone with God, you get on your face before God, you get on your knees with God and before an open Bible and say, “Search me, O God. Know me, O God. Try me, O God. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the path of everlasting.” You’re not worrying about what people think or say. You’re not out for a popularity contest, you just want to be right with God and be a person of integrity.

There are some interesting examples of this in the Scripture, and I want mention just a few. I think of the contrast between Abraham and Lot. If you look at Abraham, he was a man who “...looked for a city...whose builder and maker is God.” His life was marked by a tent and an altar. Everywhere Abraham went, he would build an altar and would worship God. He lived in a tent because he was a stranger and pilgrim. Those two pictures of Abraham’s life—the altar, worshiping God, the tent, “I’m a stranger and a pilgrim”—is a picture of a man of integrity. I’m not at home in this world, I’m not living for two masters, I’m following the Lord.

Abraham’s nephew, Lot, it says “...lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan,” Sodom and Gomorrah, “that it was well watered,” and pitched his tent in that direction. The next thing we see is not only Lot near Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot is in Sodom and Gomorrah, and he was

a conflicted individual. It's interesting to look at Lot in the Bible. He pictures, I believe, the individual who is trying to serve two masters—God and man. Lot actually had to be rescued by his uncle Abraham when he was taken captive by the five kings. He was taken captive because he was actually compromising his walk with the Lord. Don't be a Lot, be an Abraham. Lot ended up losing everything, and Abraham ended up inheriting everything. Remember when they were going to separate and Abraham said, "You take whatever you want, and I'll go the other direction." Lot saw Sodom and Gomorrah and said, "I'll take that. Look at that shopping mall. Look at those beautiful theaters. Look at the beautiful apartments they have there, the beautiful causeways. I'm going to go to Sodom," and he lost everything.

I think of Elisha and his servant Gehazi, what a contrast. In 2 Kings 5, when the Syrian army commander, Naaman, who had leprosy, came to Elisha and asked him to pray for him that he would be cured of his leprosy, Elisha told him to go down to the Jordan River and dip seven times and he would be cured. He first rejected that idea, but his servant said, "What have you got to lose? If he would have told you some hard, difficult task, you would've done it, but he told you something to humble your pride and you don't want to do that. Why not give it a try?" The commander goes down and dips seven times (you know the story, I'm making a long story short) and comes up and is cured. He goes back to Elisha and says, "Thank you so much! That's awesome! Let me pay you." He wanted to give him gold, silver, precious garments, and all these things. Elisha rightfully said, "Look, the Lord healed you. I didn't heal you, so I won't touch any of your treasures, your money, or your loot. No thank you."

The commander rode off, but Elisha's servant Gehazi was starting to think, Boy, that's pretty foolish of my master. He could be rich and get all that gold and silver. Unbeknownst to his master Elisha, he snuck out and intercepted the commander from Syria and said, "My master's changed his mind. He would like some of that gold. He would like some of that silver," and Naaman said, "Wow! I'm glad to give it to him," so he gave it to Elisha's servant Gehazi. He said, "I'll even double that. I'll give you more silver, more gold," and gave him these garments. Gehazi comes back secretly and hides it in his tent. Now, I don't know how secure a tent would be for gold and silver, but he dug a hole, sticks it in his tent, covers it up, and thought, Wow! I've got retirement all ready to go. I'm going to buy me a piece of land, build a vineyard. It's all going to be awesome. He was practicing duplicity, and the Spirit of the Lord revealed it to Elisha. When he saw Gehazi he said, "Where have you been?" He said, "Oh, nowhere." The prophet said, "Did not my heart go with you? Is it a time to buy property, build buildings, store gold and silver?" He said, "The leprosy that was on Naaman shall come upon you," and he was struck with leprosy for the rest of his days. What a price to pay for his hypocrisy and duplicity.

I think of Joshua and Achan. What a contrast between the two, Joshua practicing the belt of truth and Achan practicing the deceit and the hypocrisy. When they conquered the city of Jericho, God said, "No one takes any spoils." That's God's law, "No one takes any spoils," but Achan saw this beautiful Babylonian garment, some wages of silver, and looked around. He looked to the left, looked to the right, looked behind, looked around, but forgot to look up. He forgot the fear of the Lord. He grabs his stuff, and he does the same thing. He goes home, digs a hole, and stores it in his tent as though God can't see, God doesn't know. He was lined

up in the lineup, picked out, and he was put to death for his deceit, hypocrisy, his greed, and his lust.

I think of the contrast between David, the man after God's own heart, and King Saul. King Saul was proud. He was a great hypocrite by any measure of the standard. He would say one thing and do another thing, but God chose David and rejected Saul. Why did God choose David? Psalm 78 says, "So he fed them," that is, the people of Israel, "according to the integrity of his heart," it uses that same word but from the Hebrew, "...the integrity of his heart," not practicing duplicity. That doesn't mean that David was perfect, and don't get the idea that putting on the belt of truth means that you are a perfect person. You're still going to be tempted, you're still going to struggle with temptation and sin, and you might stumble and fall, but you're going to honestly, humbly, sincerely repent, turn back to the Lord. You're not going to try to cover your sin. The Bible says if you confess your sin that God will forgive you and you will prosper; but if you try to cover your sin, you try to put a mask on or bury it in your tent, that you will not prosper.

After David had sinned with Bathsheba, Psalm 32, he repented and God forgave him. We all know Psalm 51 where David cried out, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according...unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions," that beautiful pouring out of his heart before God in prayer and he was forgiven by the Lord. In Psalm 51:6 (write that down) David said, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." What God requires, of you and me, is truth, not hypocrisy or duplicity but integrity and sincerity. It means we're genuine. We are authentic. In Psalm 139:23-24, the psalmist said, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That's what it means to put on the belt of truth. David was a man after God's own heart.

I want to point out a couple of other places where truth is mentioned in the book of Ephesians. Turn back to Ephesians 4:15. I've always loved this verse where Paul says, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Putting on the belt of truth means we speak truth and not lies; we speak the truth in love. That phrase in the Greek could actually be translated "truthing it." I like that. It means you're "truthing it"—you're living in truth, you're sincere, you're not practicing hypocrisy or duplicity, and you're a person of integrity. You live in the truth, you speak the truth, and your heart is focused on truth. Turn to Ephesians 4:25. Paul says, "Wherefore putting away," or laying aside, "lying," that's the opposite of truth, "speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." Again, the idea of not lying, not practicing hypocrisy or duplicity, but speaking the truth, "truthing it" in our daily lives.

Look at Ephesians 5:8-10, "For ye were sometimes darkness," that's our unconverted days before we were saved, "but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light," we got that Sunday morning in 1 Thessalonians 5, that we're not of the night nor of the darkness, that we're "...children of light, and the children of the day," so what does it mean to walk as "children of light"? "(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and," here it is, "truth.)" The Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of truth and is the Holy Spirit, if He's working in your heart

and controlling your life—your thoughts, your motives—then you are filled with the fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth, and look at verse 10, “Proving was is acceptable unto the Lord,” that’s the pleasing life of integrity and “truthing it” before God in love.

This is what the belt of truth is: It’s not just the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by faith, it’s not standing just on God’s Word, His truth, but it’s letting His Word transform your heart and your life. Do you know you can’t fool God? You can fool your wife, you can fool your husband, you can fool the pastor, but you can’t fool God. The truth is, He sees, He knows. What you are when you’re all alone—where you allow your thoughts to go or your heart, your attitude, your eyes, your hands...I love that song the kids learn in Sunday school, Be careful little feet where you go, be careful little hands what you do, be careful little mouth what you say, be careful little eyes what you see, For the Father up above, Is looking down in love, So, be careful little feet, hands, mouth, eyes what you do. There’s a Father up above, looking down on you in love.

Integrity and truth is knowing that God sees my heart and what matters most is that I want to be acceptable in His sight. I want to be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord. It’s putting off all hypocrisy and pretense and putting on truth, and then everything else comes together—the breastplate, the helmet, the sword, the sandals of peace. You cannot stand against the lies of the devil if you’re not practicing sincerity before God and before others. It may be that you need to pray with David, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And...if there be any wicked way in me,” forgive me, “and lead me in the way everlasting.” Maybe someone you’ve sinned against you need to confess your sins that they might forgive you and you could be healed or maybe it’s to God first and then to someone else. How marvelous it is to be set free from duplicity and hypocrisy and to live a life of sincerity.

In Psalm 86:11, the psalmist cried, “Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name,” I love that, “unite my heart to fear thy name.” The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Amen? Let’s bow our heads and pray.