

The Helmet Of Salvation

Ephesians 6:17

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I'm going to be giving you a lot of verses. We're only going to look at one part of a verse, but I'm going to give you a lot of cross-references, some of my points are going to be on the screen. You won't hear anything tonight you haven't heard me say before, but I don't apologize for that these are very important truths and doctrines. I really encourage you to kind of buckle your seat belt and give me your undivided attention.

Let's back up to Ephesians 6:10 and get a running start on our text. Paul says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles," that's the schemes, the methods, "of the devil," there's our enemy. "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," so we are in a spiritual warfare. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having," first of all, "your loins girt about with truth," that's the belt of truth; secondly, "and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" thirdly, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all," or in addition to or in all things, "taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked," and here's our text tonight, verse 17, "And take the helmet of salvation."

Everyone realizes that when a soldier goes to battle one of the most important thing for him to protect is his head. You can have body armor on but if you lose your head or your head gets damaged or hit, you can be incapacitated or even killed. So also for the Christian soldier in our spiritual battle and war with Satan, we must protect our head—our minds, our thoughts, and our understanding of truth. Satan wants to attack our minds to deceive us, get us to doubt, and get us discouraged.

What kind of a helmet did the Roman soldier wear? It was actually made out of bronze and covered his entire head. It had a center section that came down between the eyes and over the nose and came down the sides of his face. You've seen many times in Major League Baseball when the batter is up there in the batter's box, the side of his face facing the pitcher on his helmet has a shield over his face and chin. The Roman soldier's helmet had a shield like that on both sides, so the only thing exposed was his eyes, his mouth, and his lower chin. He would actually wear that in battle. As I said, that bronze was actually covered or layered with leather so it would be cushioned. This was so important. Many times it said that they would tie it to their belt so that everywhere they went they had that helmet, and the minute the battle started, they would take that helmet and put it on and go into battle protecting the most vulnerable part of their body, their head. If the head or brain is injured, we are definitely in big trouble.

What does the helmet symbolize in our text? Notice Paul specifies in verse 17, "And take the helmet of salvation," so he specifies that it is the helmet of salvation. Some translations render

that, “which is salvation,” but what does that mean? The first point I want to make if you’re taking notes, it could mean, and this is probably not what Paul had in mind but could be and is important to understand, that he was actually saying, “Make sure of your salvation,” or “Be saved,” or “Take up salvation.” Earlier, Paul talked about taking up the breastplate of righteousness, and now he’s talking about taking up the shield of faith, verse 16, “...taking the shield of faith,” and in verse 17, “And take the helmet of salvation.” The focus is not the helmet, the focus in the text by application is salvation.

In theology, this is what’s known as Soteriology, the subject of salvation. It’s as vast and as broad as the Bible itself, so we’re not going to exhaust the subject by any means. The fact that Paul is writing to Christians would indicate that he’s not necessarily telling them to be saved, but it is possible, and because it’s possible and because it’s important for us to understand salvation, I want to talk about that for just a few moments. What does it mean to take up salvation? It means to take salvation for yourself. Do you know we hear the saying, “God has no grandchildren, only children,” so you have to make sure that you’re saved, even if you’re raised in a Christian home, even if you’ve gone to church your whole life, even if you believe that there’s a God. The Bible says demons believe that there’s a God and they tremble, but that doesn’t mean they’re saved. If you’re going to be effective in your Christian life, you have to first be a Christian, obviously, and come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

What are the steps in a sinner’s salvation? First, if you’re taking notes, is to realize that we are sinners in need of a Savior. You’re not going to trust Jesus as your Savior if you don’t see yourself as a sinner. How does this happen? Simply, it’s that the Holy Spirit comes to convict or to convince you of sin, of righteousness, and judgment. No one comes to saving faith in Jesus Christ without the Spirit of God starting pre-conversion a work of conviction and convincing them of their sin and their need of a Savior, drawing them to Jesus Christ. If you look at your own salvation, you all of a sudden begin to realize, or you came under conviction, “I am a sinner. I’m going to hell. I need a Savior,” or you saw the emptiness of your life and realized Jesus died for your sins and you came to Him for salvation. You don’t just kind of “try Jesus,” or see if Jesus works, or “Yeah, that sounds pretty cool. I’ll pray the sinner’s prayer; I’ll trust Jesus.” You have to come out of the work of the Spirit convicting you and drawing you.

The Bible says no man comes to the Father except the Spirit draw him. Salvation starts with the Holy Spirit, and I think that initial conviction and drawing to the Savior is something the Spirit does in people’s hearts which can be resisted, it can be hardened against, and we can resist that work of the Spirit and not surrender our lives. We must trust Jesus as our Savior, and then we have to repent.

The word “repent” is a Greek word *metanoia*. The interesting thing about this helmet over the head to protect the mind is that *metanoia*, repentance for salvation, involves changing the mind. The word “repent,” *metanoia* in the Greek, literally means to change your mind and carries the imagery of going one direction and then I change my mind about my sin, about the direction of my life, and about Jesus, and I do a 180; I turn around and follow Jesus Christ. So, you come under conviction, you repent of your sin, you turn around, and you follow Jesus Christ.

The third stage of your salvation is receive. If you're taking notes, write down: Realize I'm a sinner, repent—change your mind, and it also involves your emotion and your will, you must trust Him; and then thirdly, it's all tied together, you must receive or believe or put your faith in Jesus Christ. In John 1:12 it says, "But as many as received him," that is, Jesus, "to them," those who are repentant, He gives eternal life, so you must receive Jesus, trust Him as your Savior.

Some Christian groups get really uptight about this idea of receiving Jesus. To try to counterbalance that, they like to emphasize repentance and that you must receive Him as Lord and Savior. Whether I trust Him as Lord and Savior I don't think determines whether I'm saved, but if I trust Him as a Savior, that's the important part. Lordship becomes the discipleship thing after you are born again. Whether I believe in Him as Lord or not doesn't determine my salvation. I just need to believe that Jesus died for my sins, that He rose from the dead, and that He's my Savior.

When Paul, in the book of Acts 16:31, was talking to the Philippian jailer who asked him the question, "What must I do to be saved?" That's a great question, by the way. Whenever a cultist knocks on my door, and it's funny, they knock on my door and I haven't even invited them but they knock on my door and want to give me a false gospel or a false religion or some other way to get saved. I ask them that question, "What must I do to be saved?" and then I give them the answer from Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," right? It's interesting, he doesn't even say, "repent," there because the jailer was already repentant and already convicted. He just said, "Believe." He didn't say, "Behave," or "Get baptized," that followed as a result of his conversion, but he just said, "Believe," John 3:16, "...whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To be able to stand against the devil, you have to go from being a child of the devil to being a child of God by regeneration or conversion.

Here's my second point. Once you are saved, once you have been born again, once you are a child of God, and this is what I think Paul is talking about the helmet of salvation, what we need is to have assurance that we are saved. We need to have a confidence—a joyful experience of the reality of our salvation. There are people who are saved and they don't realize it, they have lack of assurance. There are people who aren't saved and think they are saved, so we need to make sure we're born again, "...make your calling and election sure," then we need to make sure that we have that assurance, that confidence in our heart and in our life.

Once you are saved, Satan knows that he's lost you so what he wants to do is keep you from knowing you are saved and enjoying your salvation because you'll never ever be effective as a Christian serving the Lord or witnessing for Him if you don't know that you are saved. Can you imagine trying to evangelize, "Hey, you need Jesus...I don't know if I've got Him, but you can have Him." "Hey, Jesus will forgive your sins...I don't know if mine are forgiven, but I think He'll forgive you." That's going to be a real effective witness, right? "You need to trust Jesus; He'll take you to Heaven when you die...I don't know if He'll take me, but I think He'll take you." You're never going to be able to serve the Lord, live for the Lord, or be a witness for the Lord

unless you have assurance. I believe that the Bible teaches that a true Christian can be absolutely sure they're a Christian and they can have absolute assurance that they're forgiven, that they have salvation, and that they're on their way to Heaven. The helmet keeps us from being deceived and doubtful in our mind and in our thoughts about our salvation.

The deception of the devil about salvation is many times as I would say brings a false assurance. This is a real delicate subject and really takes a balance of understanding the doctrine of salvation in Scripture, but there is such a thing as a false assurance. What I mean by that is there are people, because they go to church, because they've been baptized, because they intellectually believe that there's a God and then try to live a good life or they've been confirmed or they've gone to catechism or been baptized or whatever it might be, they believe that they're saved and going to Heaven. Some of the hardest people to reach with the gospel are religious people who think they're saved and going to Heaven and they're not.

Many times in the Bible, those passages that people think are saying you can lose your salvation are actually warning passages to say, "Make sure that you're saved." They're not telling us you can lose it, they're saying, "Make sure you have it," "...make your calling and election sure." You need to make sure that you are truly a child of God. Satan wants to come and either give you a false assurance...now, I don't want anyone thinking, that is not saved, that they're saved. This is why it's a challenge to preach to a congregation or a church because I don't ever assume that everyone who sits out here and listens to me preach is saved. I assume the opposite, and I want to make clear: Are you born again? Have your sins been forgiven? Have you trusted Jesus Christ? I don't want to get to Heaven and find out that I didn't make the gospel clear and people thought they were going to Heaven and they weren't.

Here's the opposite side of the coin: I don't want Christians who are saved to lack assurance that their sins are forgiven and that they are going to Heaven. It's a very fine balance there. There are those who do have salvation but lack assurance, and there are those who have a false assurance thinking they're saved but are not truly saved. You can't live a victorious Christian life if you lack assurance of salvation.

Why do so many Christians, and I believe a lot do, lack assurance? Well, for starters, I think they don't understand what the Bible teaches about salvation. This is why I'm trying to get through this topic tonight but I'm trying to make it as simple and as clear as I can. A lot of people don't understand the doctrine of salvation. Sometimes they lack assurance because they just don't know what the Bible teaches about salvation. Many times they think that salvation can be lost. I don't know why I'm headed down this path because it's controversial and good Christians can disagree about this, but I have my deep conviction that if you have been born again, if you have been regenerated, if you are a true child of God that you can never be lost. When God saves you by His grace, He will keep you by His grace; it doesn't mean you're going to live a perfect life, but He will take you to Heaven by His grace.

I know that so-called "good Christians" differ on this subject. Some say you can lose your salvation; some say you can't lose your salvation. In my study of the Bible, I'm convinced that if

you have been born again, you cannot lose your salvation. Now, that's not a license to go out and live a sinful life saying, "I get to go to Heaven, so I'm going to go live however I want." If you've truly been born again, you're going to want to live a life of sanctification and true godliness and true holiness. Your life will show evidence of true regeneration or salvation.

Write down John 10:28-29. Again, these are multiple sermons. All these points could be spent many weeks on, but here's a great verse that indicates that when you are truly born again you cannot be lost. Jesus says about His sheep, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish," in the Greek it is, "no, never ever perish," it's emphatic, "neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." If you are a Christian but think that you're going to lose your salvation, you're not going to be able to have assurance that you're saved because you will stumble, you will fall, you will make mistakes, and Satan will capitalize on that and say, "If you're really a Christian, you wouldn't think that. If you're really a Christian, you wouldn't have done that. If you're really a Christian, you wouldn't have said that. You're not really saved." You get this idea that you need to get born again, again..and again, and again. We sometimes have people that come forward every altar call. Every week they want to get saved again. How sad that is. It's so important for you to have assurance, "And I give them eternal life...they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

I don't want to get too sidetracked, but some people will say, "Well, no one can take you out of the Father's hand, but you can take yourself out of the Father's hand." You can jump out of the Father's hand? No man means no man, and I think that includes you. If you've truly been born again, why would you want to give your salvation back? Those who believe that forget that when you are saved something actually happens to you. It's not that you just, "I believe in Jesus," you are actually born of the Spirit. You are what's called regenerated, that's the life of God in your soul. Nowhere does the Scripture indicate that you can undo what God did in salvation, that you can unregenerate yourself. The moment you're saved, you're taken out of Adam positionally with all his sin, death, and condemnation, and you are translated into Christ. Nowhere does Scripture indicate that you can unregenerate yourself—take yourself out of Christ and place yourself back into Adam. You cannot undo what only God can do and there's nothing in Scripture that would indicate that, so I believe that you are safe in the Lord's hand, in the Father's grip.

Write down Romans 8:1, we know it well, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Let me tell you something very, very simple, but simply profound truth: Every Christian is in Christ Jesus. That verse is not about some super saints, "We're the 'in Christ Jesus' deeper life club," no, it's all Christians. The moment you were born again, you were taken out of Adam the first and taken and placed into Christ, who is the last Adam. In Adam the first is sin, death, and judgment is on you; when you're taken out of Adam and placed into Christ, His righteousness is imputed to you and you are righteous before a holy God.

The second reason some people lack assurance is they think they are saved by grace yet kept by works. They haven't read the book of Galatians. They think they're saved by grace but are kept by works—they must continue to perform. If you think you're keeping yourself saved, that's a tenuous foundation. If my salvation depended on me, I'm in big trouble. If your salvation depends on you, you're in big trouble. I believe we're saved by grace, we're kept by grace, and we will, like the song "Amazing Grace" says, Grace will lead me home. Amen? He saved me, He's keeping me, and He will take me home safely by His grace. We're not saved by grace but kept by works; we're saved by grace, kept by grace, and that's so important.

Many believers, who think they can lose their salvation, when they stumble and sin, have no assurance. They don't understand that they're kept by the power of God and understand 1 John 1:9 is written to Christians which says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I call that the Christian's bar of soap. When a Christian sins, it breaks fellowship, but you do not lose sonship. It will break fellowship, but it does not mean a loss of sonship. You want to restore fellowship with God so there's nothing between your soul and the Savior so that His blessed face you can see. We want to abide in Him, walk in the light as He is in the light, and when we know we've sinned, we want to confess our sin and be forgiven to have that fellowship with Him.

This is illustrated in John 13, and I preached on that passage before. Remember when Jesus in John 13 in the upper room was washing the disciples' feet? He came to Peter's feet—big, gnarly dirty feet. I think feet are some of the ugliest part of the human anatomy. Peter says, "You're not going to wash my feet! No way, Lord!" Remember what Jesus said to Peter? He said, "If I don't wash your feet, you have no part with Me," change the word "part" to fellowship—no koinonia—"no fellowship with Me, no participation with Me." When Peter heard that, he thought, Really? "Give me a bath! Let's go for it, Lord! Just give me a whole bath. If it means fellowship with You, let's do it. Let's do it right, Lord. Give me a bath." Then Jesus said these words, "If you've already had a bath, all you need is your feet to be washed." They didn't have running water in their houses, they had public bath houses, and they wore open sandals. If you went out to take a bath, by the time you went from the bath house to the house, your feet would get dusty and dirty, so inside every home, they had a basin of water, towel, and the lowest of the slaves, the servants, would wash everyone's feet as they came into the room. Peter is getting a lesson about fellowship. Jesus said, "Peter, if you don't have your feet washed, you have no participation with Me."

When you are born again, you get a bath, but as you walk through this world, you walk through life so to speak, your feet get dirty. Almost daily, right? as believers, we need to say, "Lord, forgive me for that thought. Lord, forgive me for that attitude. Lord, forgive me for saying that word I shouldn't have said. That was wrong." We're getting our feet washed every day by the Lord so that we can stay in communion or fellowship with Him. We're not getting bathed again, we don't need a bath, we've already been born again—the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. What we need is our feet to be washed so that we can have koinonia with the Father.

Let me give you three things that assurance is based on if we're going to wear the helmet of salvation. First of all, it's based on the Word of God the Father. How do you know that you are saved? Simple as believing what God says in His Word. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Do you believe that? It's that simple. Jesus said it, I believe it, that settles it. Don't let the devil tell you anything differently.

The second assurance is based on the work of God the Son. In 1 John 5:11 it says, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." God has given to us, present tense, eternal life, and it's in His Son. If you have the Son, you have life; and if you don't have the Son, you have not life. Jesus died on the cross and cried the words, "Tetelestai," or "It is finished," or "Done!" What you're doing is that you are resting in that finished work. Christianity doesn't say, "Do," it says, "Believe," and "Finished," or "Done," and you rest in that so when the devil comes to you and says, "You're not really saved. You're not really a Christian," just tell him, "Jesus died for my sins." Not only did Jesus die on the cross for my sins and cry, "It is finished!" but Jesus prayed in John 17 saying, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me," that's salvation, "be with me where I am," in Heaven, "that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." You don't think that the Father is going to answer that prayer? Jesus prayed for you. He paid a price and prayed for you when He was in that upper room, and I believe that God will answer that prayer that we'll be with Him in Heaven seeing His glory that He had before the world was ever created. How important that is!

We also know in Ephesians 2:8-9 that we're saved "by grace...through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

The third is the witness of God the Holy Spirit. Write down the Word of God the Father, the work of God the Son—the finished work on the cross—and thirdly, the inner witness of God the Holy Spirit. It says in 1 John 5:10, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself," that he is the child of God. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." We have the witness within ourselves. This is the subjective experience of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. It's that knowledge of, "I know, that I know, that I know. I know what God says in His Word. I know what Jesus did on the cross for me in His work, and I have the witness of the Holy Spirit in my heart." What a day that was when you put on the helmet of salvation, when you were born again! The sky looked bluer, the birds sang prettier. I never heard birds singing until I got born again. The grass was greener, people looked nicer, hopefully, I did, too. You just had a new joy and everything was just radiant.

I'll never forget that day that I sat on the beach south of Ventura and said, "Lord, come into my heart; forgive my sins." I must have sat there for a couple hours just crying, repenting, and pouring out my heart to God. As I left that beach that day, I just felt so forgiven and cleansed. I felt like a weight lifted off my shoulder and knew that I was a new creation in Christ. My life has

never been the same since. I put on the helmet of salvation.

Thirdly, the helmet is also the hope of salvation. We need to be saved, we need to know that we're saved, and thirdly, we need to have the future hope of our salvation. We need to realize that God will finish what He has begun. This is taken from 1 Thessalonians 5:8. If you want to flip there in your Bible real quick, you can do that. (By the way, this Sunday we're going to start 2 Thessalonians in our series on Sunday morning.) Notice what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:8, "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet," there it is, "the hope of salvation." In Ephesians 6, it's "...take the helmet of salvation," and in 2 Thessalonians he said, "...be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

What does Paul mean by that? It would seem almost contradictory when he said in the Ephesian epistle that we put on salvation and that we have assurance, now we're hoping that we're saved? I don't get it. We're crossing our fingers, we're holding a rabbit's foot saying, "I hope, I hope, I hope, I hope that I'm saved?" No. When the Bible speaks of a believer's hope, it's speaking of a steadfast assurance. You can actually define "hope" in that way. It's a steadfast assurance. It's not, "I hope it will happen," it's "I know beyond any doubt. I know that my Redeemer lives! I know I will go to Heaven when I die. I know my sins have been forgiven." Satan is going to come at you and attack you and get you to doubt your salvation, you wear that helmet of hope. It's so very important.

"I thought we were saved." Yes we are! You've heard me say it a million times, and I'm going to say it a million and one. Salvation has three tenses. It has a past tense, a present tense, and it has a future tense. If you don't understand the tenses of salvation, you will not understand your Christian life. You've been saved, you are being saved, and you will be saved. Let me explain it as simply as I can. First, we have been saved, that's justification. We're saved from sin's penalty. This is our past sins are forgiven and we're positionally in Christ. Every Christian has been justified. Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner to be righteous, and He does that based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, so the hope of salvation that we have been forgiven.

Secondly, we are being saved. This is sanctification. These are all biblical terms describing what it means to be a Christian or be saved. We have been justified, and then we are being—present tense— sanctified, that's saved from the power of sin. So, justified, saved from the penalty of sin; and sanctified, being saved over my lifetime gradually from its power, its control, from its hold. When you get born again, you don't perfectly grow up in Christ and never sin again, but as you walk with the Lord, you won't be sinless, but you will sin less and less and less and less as you grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. Sanctification starts at your salvation and ends in the third stage which is called glorification. We will—future tense— be glorified. So, we are justified, we are being sanctified, and we will be glorified. This is salvation from the presence of sin. This is the hope of salvation. It means that every one of us as Christians should be looking for a city whose Maker and Builder is God. We should be living for the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

If you are a Christian, this world is not your home, you're on your way to Heaven; so let your contact with the world be as light as possible. Amen? The more heavenly-minded you truly are, the more earthly good you will be. The more earthly-minded you are, the less you will be good for the Kingdom of God. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." When you put on the helmet as the hope of salvation, that's basically saying in simple terms, "I'm looking for Heaven! I can't wait to go to Heaven! I'm longing for Heaven! I'm groaning for glory! I want to be with Jesus!" But until I go to Heaven, I'm here right now. I want to grow in sanctification and likeness to Christ.

This third stage, glorification, is the deliverance of sin's presence. When we get to Heaven, guess what there'll not be in Heaven? Sin. Amen? No more sin! No more sickness! No more suffering! No more sorrow! No more death, "...for the former things are passed away." Amen? This is how we are to live with the helmet of salvation, with absolute assurance and the hope of Heaven. But Satan wants you to have a deceived mind, thinking that you're not saved; a doubtful mind, not sure of your salvation; and a discouraged mind, that you won't make it to Heaven. Don't let the devil have that influence on your life.

I love Romans 8 where Paul says, "For I am persuaded, that," nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus...Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature." Paul opens Romans 8 with no condemnation and ends it with no separation. What a glorious thing to have a helmet to protect us, that helmet of salvation, making sure that you've repented, you've believed in Jesus, you've been born again, resting in His Word, resting in the finished work of Christ, having the inner witness of the Spirit, and longing and living for Heaven. Amen?