

2 BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – “right with Him”

- Application - Satan attaching our hearts / emotions
- Self worth
- Trust
- The breastplate covers the heart and protects it and ensures approval!

When you were at school – did you ever have these words chirred at you? “Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me”.As we grow up we realise that actually this is not true! WORDS HURT AND REPETITIVE WORDS HURTS EVEN MORE!! Each time they are repeated they strike a deeper knock with us and then we wonder why we don't function so well in various situations! WHY? ,...BECAUSE THEY HAVE PENETRATED DEEP DOWN WITHIN US AND SEEM TO HAVE GOT STUCK!And they hurt don't they?

But why do they hurt?.....Because bruises which are external often heal, but the words which are said penetrate deep within and get stuck.

Our world is an 'Unsafe world'. Everyday we have 'battles' where we see the evidence of an 'Unsafe world'. We turn our TV on and the evilness around of Satan's world - steps into our private lounges as we look and listen to all the things in lie, which cause us to be vulnerable and scared.

When people are catapulted into this 'Unsafe World' without God they stand alone and sometimes when we step out of the armour of God we can then be affected too which drags us down.

What happens?

Our thoughts can become changed – if they are INVALID then it will mean we make INVALID CHOICES in life

Therefore our GOALS will no be achieved and we will then start to think we are failures – or NO GOOD and then the spiral descent of demotivation starts.

We are not exempt as Christians to be in the UNSAFE WORLD – but we do have equipment of the armour to sustain us – This does not mean that we will not have bad things happen to us! It means that Christ will take us though this and standing IN CHRIST he will equip us to bear the unbearable. He has promised we will never go through anything more than we can endure.

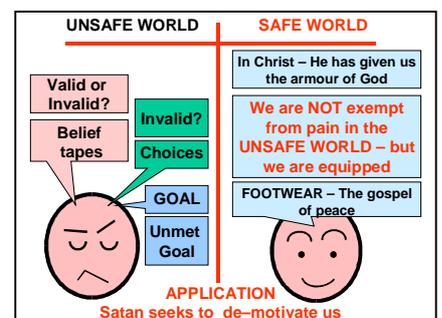
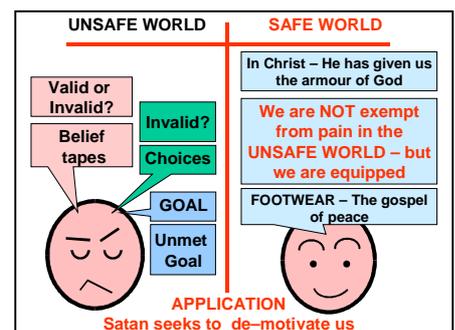
Standing in the armour Christ has provided makes sense

3 FOOTWEAR OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

- The Gospel of Peace. When I read this and wonder where our Christians voice has gone! Has the Christian voice become so quiet and peaceful that it's in near silence? This footwear - what type is it? Some versions call the footwear 'sandals', yet this seems a flimsy piece of clothing for a soldier!

These sandals have hobnail soles! These soles were worn in hot countries where feet in boots would be unbearable – but the hobnail souls would give better footing for battle. Satan tries to demotivate us, but

- Paul's says in this passage to 'STAND FIRM!' – Because what we take out is the gospel of PEACE!



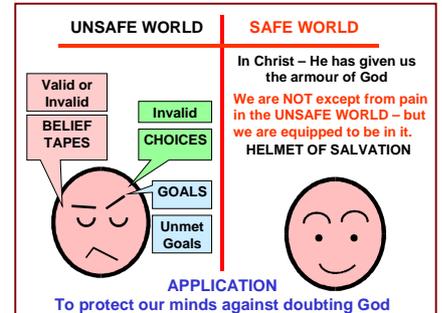
- It is with good footwear that we can march out into the places we live and move to speak in PEACE about the Gospel we believe in.

Not only does Satan make us demotivate about our faith – but he also

4 HELMET OF SALVATION

- Satan tries to make us doubt – we can do this about ourselves...but we can also do this about God too!
- And so we see the need to be equipped with in our MIND to be protected in the UNSAFE WORLD where Satan seeks to condemn and cause doubt of the existence of God.

In a battle we have TACKLE as well as clothing. So too in a Heavenly battle.



5/6 SHIELD OF FAITH AND SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

SHIELD – Protects our faith as the arrows come fast and furious to try and take away the stability of Faith.

SWORD

- The sword is the only weapon of ‘Offence’ seen in the garment. Seems like a scary battle with only a sword to protect us...The Roman soldiers wore a short sword which was used for close-fighting.
- It’s short and can be used to ‘pierce’ the body – like the major organs.

A material sword pierces the vital organs...BUT the sword of God pierces into the spiritual heart of each person it comes in touch with.

- It can sometimes be used as a challenge against a lifestyle..., which is where it feels sharp to the core!

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN MY LIFE?

A soldier’s outfit seems a thousand years ago.... INDEED it is! Yet we believe that God’s word is as relevant today as it was in Paul’s day.

Surely the application is that Satan is alive and still controlling the world.....and bringing it down to us in the 21st century – he’s affecting you and me!

In the 21st century a Christian’s life is still battling with ‘Rulers and Authorities’...now I don’t mean people who are lawgivers in our countries...I mean the powerful evil forces of the fallen angels of Satan. We are told that he is a created being – BUT HE IS NOT ETERNAL AS GOD IS! So you might ask how does he manage to get around so much and accomplish all his misdemeanours!!

The answer is that he has organised helpers.

Paul calls Satan’s helpers “principalities – powers – rulers – spiritual wickedness in high places” (v12)

Charles B Williams translates it as: “For our contest is not with human foes alone, but with the rulers, authorities and cosmic powers of the is dark world; that is, with spirit-forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest” (The New Testament in the language of the People).

This suggests a definite army of demonic creatures that assist Satan in these attacks against believers. Much of which can be our own neglect if we don't keep ourselves right with God.

Our eldest daughter is a teacher. She tells her children to make sure they put a comma when they want to write a pause and a full stop when they finish a sentence.

She has also taught them a little funny rhythm to go with this – and they know the rhyme well – they sing it – they shout it – they whisper it..... Yet every time they come to do their homework – they OMIT THE COMMA AND FULL STOP!

Is that what we do as Christians sometimes? We know reading GOD'S WORD and speaking to Him sustain our Christians life. But for some Christians they have to ask themselves when they last had a quiet time and prayed on a regular basis, which was consistent?

Part of the armour of God is to maintain our own spirituality in order that when the fiery darts attack us we can recall God's truth to combat the enemy.

Jesus gives us an example of combating Satan when he visits him on the mountain. When Satan tried to put wrong thoughts in his mind and seeks to discredit him – Jesus retaliated by quoting the scripture.

This is the way He taught us but we can only do this when we KNOW the scriptures.

The Apostle John hinted that one third of the angels fell with Satan when he rebelled against God. You can read about this in Revelations 12:4 and the book of Daniel also wrote that Satan's angels struggled against God's angels for control of the affairs of the nations.

READ DANIEL 10: 1-20

A spiritual battle was going on in this world, and in the sphere of 'the heavenlies' and Daniel got caught up in it by default!

This is Daniel's final vision, which gave further insight into the spiritual battle between God's people, and those who were out to destroy them.

Daniel was praying that God would sort the situation out – and he backed this up by prayer and fasting. He made sure he did everything that God wanted him to do.

Daniel felt frightened and scared – yet when God spoke to him he told him to 'STAND UP' – he did so, but he was so wobbly that he could only just manage.

God then told Daniel that he had sent a messenger to HIM – indeed he was a powerful spiritual being but the 'Prince of the Persian kingdom' detained the messenger for 3 weeks.

Sometimes when we are still doing all the right things – still warfare occurs and we start to be concerned as to why God doesn't intervene. I see this as the 'Daniel Principle'. I am clearly NOT saying that the same thing, which was happening to Daniel, is going to happen to us! Certainly not! ...BUT I am suggesting the 'Daniel Principle' can happen.

What we can gain from the 'Daniel Principle' is that sometimes it's not about what we have done right or wrong – because God has already heard our prayer. It's about seeing the bigger picture of the spiritual realm in the heavenly – a world which is unseen to us – yet a world where God has His enemy who still seeks to destroy and devour us.

Finally I saw a photograph which made me smile when I thought about 'Spiritual warfare'...yet the more I looked at it – the more it held my spiritual images.

There is a phrase which is God's advice in both passages – and that is 'STAND FIRM'

Daniel had to do this and Paul advises the Church in Ephesians to do the same.

Poor old Daniel was trembling so much that he nearly sank to the floor – but when God had spoken into his life – it says that he renewed his strength and stood firmly – that's what happens in battle. When we rest in God He renews our strength and allows us to calmly walk through the most difficult of places and circumstances.



PRAYER

- *Keeping this image of the photography in our minds eye, I ask you to image the situation you are in.*
 - *Maybe the cat is a picture of how you are feeling.*
 - *Are you spiritual prepared for the battle?*
 - *Are you reading God's word regularly so you can understand what he is saying to you?*
 - *Do you need to ask for prayer and spiritual direction from a mature Christians who you trust?*
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- Or perhaps you are doing all these things and are feeling like Daniel. So your situation is the Daniel principle.....Wait upon the Lord. Do not lose heart. But wait in confidence that God will answer and never will he leave you or forsake you. **STAND FIRM IN THE LORD.**

Amen.