

#2: The New Man as the Corporate Warrior of God with Christ as the Constituents of the Whole Armor of God

- I. The Ephesians 5 reveals that the church is the bride to satisfy the desire of Christ for His expression with His image, and Ephesians 6 reveals that the church as the new man is a corporate warrior fighting the battle for God's interests on earth for His dominion (thus fulfilling God's eternal purpose in Genesis 1:26):**
- A) In Ephesians 5 and 6 we see the church as the bride and as the warrior; in Revelation 19 we also have these two aspects of the church. Rev. 19:8 And it was given to her (the bride) that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
- B) In Revelation 19:7 and 8 we see that the bride is clothed in "fine linen, bright and clean"; then in verse 14 we see that the armies that follow the Lord into battle are "dressed in fine linen, white and clean"; these verses indicate that the bride's wedding garment will also be the uniform that she wears as God's army to fight against His enemy.
- C) As the bride, the church needs love and light; as the warrior, the church needs might and the whole armor of God.
- II. Ephesians 6:10-20 reveals that Christ is the constituents of God's armor for the church, the one new man, as the corporate warrior of God: Eph. 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**
- A) "Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil" (6:10-11): ① The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that we cannot fight the spiritual warfare in ourselves; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength. ② The whole armor of God is for the entire Body of Christ as the corporate warrior, not for any individual member of the Body; we must fight the spiritual warfare in the Body, not as individuals. ③ In Ephesians 2 we sit with Christ in the heavenlies; in chapters 4 and 5 we walk in His Body on the earth; then in chapter 6 we stand in His power in the heavenlies. ④ To sit with Christ is to participate in all His accomplishments, to walk in His Body is to fulfill God's eternal purpose, and to stand in His power is to fight against God's enemy.
- B) "Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth" (6:14a): ① Truth in Ephesians 6:14 refers to God in Christ as the reality in our living, that is, God realized and experienced by us in our living; this is actually Christ Himself lived out by us. ② The truth with which we are girded is actually the Christ whom we experience; because Paul's living was conformed to the pattern of Christ, he had the strength to face all opposition and adverse circumstances.
- C) "Having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (6:14b): ① Christ as the breastplate of righteousness covers our conscience, signified by the breast; in fighting against Satan, our accuser, we need a blood-purified conscience, a conscience void of offense. ② "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11); our response to Satan's accusations should be, "I overcome Satan, the accuser, not by my perfection and not even by a conscience void of offense but by the blood of the Lamb; I am defended against his accusations by the breastplate of righteousness."
- D) "Having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace" (6:15): ① Christ has made peace for us on the cross, both with God and with man, and this peace has become our gospel; the gospel of peace has been established as a firm foundation, as a readiness with which our feet may be shod. ② We fight the spiritual warfare by standing in peace; if we lose the peace between us and God or between us and other believers, we lose the standing to fight.
- E) "Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (6:16): ① The flaming darts are Satan's temptations, proposals, doubts, questions, lies, and attacks; we need to take up the shield of faith to quench these flaming darts. ② We need to exercise our spirit of faith with our subdued and resurrected will to believe that the Lord's manifestation is to destroy the works of the devil. ③ We need to exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord's death has destroyed Satan. ④ We need to exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the Lord's resurrection has put Satan to shame. ⑤ We need to exercise our spirit of faith to believe that the ascension of the Lord is far above Satan's power. ⑥ We must have faith in God, who is real, living, present, and available. ⑦ We must have faith in God's heart; God's heart toward us is always good; He has no intention to punish us, to injure us, or to cause us to suffer loss. ⑧ We must have faith in God's faithfulness; God cannot lie but is always faithful to His word. ⑨ We must have faith in God's ability. ⑩ We must have faith in God's word; God is bound to fulfill all that He has spoken. ⑪ We must have faith in God's will. ⑫ We must have faith in God's sovereignty; under His sovereignty even our mistakes work for good.
- F) "Receive the helmet of salvation" (6:17a): ① The helmet of salvation is for covering our mind, our mentality, against the negative thoughts shot in by the evil one; such a helmet, such a covering, is God's salvation. ② Satan injects fear, threats, worries, anxieties, and other weakening thoughts into our mind; God's salvation is the covering that we take up against all of these, and this salvation is the saving Christ whom we experience in our daily life.
- G) "Receive 'the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God" (Eph.6:17b): ① Among the six items of God's armor, the sword of the Spirit is the only one for attacking the outward enemy and the inward adversary; with the sword we cut the outward enemy and the subjective, inward adversary to pieces. ② Christ as the Spirit and the word furnishes us with a sword as an offensive weapon to defeat and slay the negative elements in our being; as we prayread the Word, eventually the self, the worst foe of all, will be put to death. ③ When the logos (the constant word in the Bible) becomes the rhema (the present, instant, living, and personal speaking of the Spirit) to us, this rhema is the sword that cuts the adversary to pieces: a. The more we take in the word with its killing power, the more our pride and all the negative elements within us are put to death; by pray-reading, the inward adversary is slain. b. In Ephesians 5 the word is for nourishment that leads to the beautifying of the bride, but in Ephesians 6 the word is for killing that enables the church to engage in spiritual warfare.
- H) "By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints" (6:17-18): ① Prayer may be considered the seventh item of the armor of God because it is the means by which we apply the other items. ② Prayer is the unique way to apply Christ as the armor of God; it is prayer that makes the armor available to us in a practical way. ③ We need to persevere in prayer because prayer involves a battle, a fight; two parties, God and Satan, are hostile to each other; the third party consists of God's chosen and redeemed people. ④ In order to fight on God's side against Satan, we need to persevere in prayer; this perseverance is needed because the course of the whole world is away from God. ⑤ Before we try to persevere in prayer, we should first make a vow to the Lord concerning our prayer life; we need to say to Him, "Lord, I am desperate about this; I offer myself to You so that I may have a prayer life; Lord, keep me in the spirit of prayer; if I forget this or neglect this, I know that You will not forget it; remind me again and again about prayer." ⑥ Persevering in prayer has many benefits: a. Prayer is the only way that we can set our mind on the things above. b. Prayer is the way to enter into the Holy of Holies and come forward to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to meet our timely need (Heb. 4:16); when we pray, approaching the throne of grace, grace will become a river flowing in us and supplying us—Hymns, #770. c. The more we pray, the more we experience being one with the Lord, enjoy His presence, and have fellowship with Him; what a marvelous reward!

Experience ①: In the spiritual warfare, be empowered in the Lord and be defended against Satan's accusations by the breastplate of righteousness based on the blood of the Lamb

The charge to be empowered implies the need to exercise our will. If we would be empowered for spiritual warfare, our will must be strong and exercised. We should not be like jellyfish, those who are weak-willed and vacillating. Actually, it is those with a strong will who are most able to repent. The fact that we need to be empowered in the Lord indicates that we cannot fight the spiritual warfare in ourselves; we can fight only in the Lord and in the might of His strength. In 6:10 Paul refers to power, might, and strength. First, we are empowered by the power that raised Christ from among the dead and made Him to be the Head over all things. Then we know God's might and strength. Whenever we intend to fight against the powers of darkness, Satan, through his accusations, causes our conscience to become very sensitive. These feelings actually are not the sensitivity of the conscience, but the result of Satan's accusations. Immediately our response should be, "I overcome Satan, the accuser, not by my perfection and not even by a conscience void of offense, but by the blood of the Lamb. I am defended against his accusations by the breastplate of righteousness." We are covered not by our own righteousness, but by Christ as our righteousness....In experience we cannot separate the blood from Christ. Apart from His blood, Christ could not cover us. Under the cleansing of His blood, He becomes our righteousness.

For junior/senior high school students

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength. 14 ...and having put on the breastplate of righteousness

Christian life is a life of spiritual warfare, so the school life of junior/senior high school students is also a life of spiritual warfare. For example, in your school life, there are bullies and temptations to pleasures of sins. These are offenses against you from Satan so that you, a child of God, may become weak in faith. You need to exercise your faith and will to be empowered in the Lord. So you should not love to stay in your weakness. The Lord lives in you and can empower you at any time. Your will should not be weak. Your future in the Lord is shining and glorious. Satan's strategy is that you will not see the fact that you in the Lord are stronger than Satan, so that you will spend your school life in yourself apart from the Lord. You need to pray this way. "Devil Satan, natural me is weaker than you. But I in the Lord is much stronger and higher than you. I do not fall into your deceitful strategy. I will be empowered in the Lord with His powers of resurrection and ascension. I will stand still for the warfare with my brothers and sisters and by being empowered in the spirit. It is for spending school life with testimony to build up of the one new man!"

Rev12:10 ...for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb.... Moreover, believe and accept the eternal effect of the redeeming blood of Jesus. For example, Satan may tell you, "You may remove separation between boys and girls so that both can be closer and have more fun", "What's wrong with hedonism? Isn't it all right if you have fun?", "Don't you think that the Bible is too unrealistic so reading the Bible is not useful? Isn't it much better for you to read the newspaper?" You must never have any conversation with Satan. Once you have a conversation with Satan, you will fall into his trap. Instead of having a conversation with Satan, you should, in good faith, reject the speeches of Satan. Our response against the appeal of Satan should be this way, "Devil Satan, I overcome Satan, the accuser, not by my perfection and not even by a conscience void of offense, but by the blood of the Lamb. The blood of the Lamb fulfilled God's requirements of righteousness, holiness and glory, and now it is the breastplate of righteousness covering my conscience. I am defended against your accusations by the breastplate of righteousness."

Experience ②: Put on the helmet of salvation, take up the shield of faith, and be protected from Satan's attacks

We all need to have a full faith in God, in God's heart, in God's faithfulness, in God's ability, in God's word, in God's will, and in God's sovereignty. If we have such a faith, Satan's flaming darts will not be able to damage us. The flaming darts are Satan's temptations, proposals, doubts, questions, lies, and attacks....Every temptation is a deceit, a false promise....As we are waking up in the morning, often Satan will make proposals to us. For this reason, we need to get into the Word the first thing in the morning. If we are not in the Word, we shall have no covering against the devil's proposals. **In the first part of Ephesians 6:17** Paul goes on to say, "And receive the helmet of salvation." This is for covering our mind, our mentality, against the negative thoughts directed at us by the evil one. Such a helmet, such a covering, is God's salvation. Satan injects into our mind threats, worries, anxieties, and other weakening thoughts. God's salvation is the covering we take up against all these. Such a salvation is the saving Christ we experience in our daily life. Satan's darts come to us through our mind. Therefore, just as our conscience needs the breastplate of righteousness and our will needs the shield of faith, so our mind needs the helmet of salvation. We need truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and then salvation. Righteousness issues in peace, and peace gives us the ground to have faith. Then faith brings in salvation. Do not separate the helmet of salvation from the shield of faith. The shield protects the front of our being, but the helmet protects our head. The shield and the helmet work together.

For Young Working Saints

Since Christian life is a life of spiritual warfare, your working life is also a life of spiritual warfare. You cannot avoid fighting, and you should never say that you do not want to battle because it is hard. The battle will not go away even if you say you do not want to fight. If you do not fight, you will only be a prey to Satan. In order to not becoming a prey to Satan, you need to avoid the following two extreme ways in your working life. One is that "Since I'm saved, rather than working hard, I'd better find an easy job to enjoy the church life", and the other one is "If I don't work desperately, I cannot get married, and I cannot have a successful career, anyway, there is the need for me to work desperately." You must not go either way. You need to work hard with the Lord for the testimony of the Lord, not for your career success or money making. However, love the Lord at the same time, show your care for the 6 types of newcomers for the building of the church, and learn to limit your overtime working for the sake of looking after them. It is not because of Daniel's desire or his greed for money that he was able to take the next higher position to the king. He worked diligently for the Lord, but only to seek the "rebuilding of the destroyed temple". He prayed in the direction of Jerusalem three times a day. Read Chapter 6 of the Book of Daniel.

Dan. 6:4 Then the chief ministers and satraps sought to find a ground for accusation against Daniel from the perspective of the kingdom, but they could find no ground for accusation or fault, in as much as he was faithful, and no negligence or fault was found related to him. 6 Then these chief ministers and satraps came to prevail upon the king and said thus to him, King Darius, live forever! 7 All the chief ministers of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors, have taken counsel together that the king should establish a statute and make firm an edict that anyone who makes a petition within the next thirty days to any god or man besides you, O king, shall be cast into the lions' den. 10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously. 13 Then they answered and said before the king, Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, has not respected you, O king, or the edict that you have signed, but three times daily makes his petition. 21 Then Daniel said to the king, O king, live forever! 22 My God has sent His angel and has shut the lions' mouth, and they have not hurt me, inasmuch as before Him innocence was found in me; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm. 23 Then the king was very pleased concerning him, and he commanded that they take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and he was found completely unhurt, because he had trusted in his God. 24 Then the king commanded, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel and threw them into the lion's den, them, their children, and their wives; and they had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.