

Ephesians 6

May 9, 2011

The first nine verses of Ephesians 6 are a continuation of 5:22-33. Beginning with 5:22 this passage has to do, first of all, with family relationships, first, in 5:22-24, wives; then in 5:25-33, husbands. Now in 6:1-3, children; then fathers, in 6:4, fathers.

None of us can be reminded too often that the predominant characteristic for Christians and their families, is submission, and that this submission is to be “in the fear of God” (6:21), or as some translations have it, “of Christ.” As Calvin said, “Either way will suit the passage well enough” (*Sermons on Ephesians*, p. 560). Submission to God first, and then to each other in the body of Christ, is one of the first evidences of the filling of the Spirit. And again we notice that the group with the lesser responsibility is mentioned first – first children, then fathers; then servants, then masters.

6:1 John Eadie in his commentary on Ephesians reminds us that there were not enough copies of this letter for every person to have his own. That would not have been possible even for every family. There was only one copy of the letter, and it probably would have been read when the believers in Ephesus gathered for their Sunday meeting. And so children would have been present as one of the elders read the letter from Paul. And as we noticed about wives and husbands in the preceding chapter, that each group was addressed directly, so Paul addressed the children. It was not an adult meeting where the children were not present, and so Paul would have just talked about them. Neither did Paul tell the fathers what was expected of the children. But Paul spoke directly to the children! They needed to hear directly for themselves the message that the Apostle Paul was bringing to them from the Lord: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Now when a married couple began to have a family (and that is the only condition under which it was God’s will for children to be born), what was going to give special influence to a father’s attempts to guide his children in the right way? It was that that child (and children afterwards) could see that the father was living with the mother just like the Lord wanted him to live. Not always, but many times the failure of a father with his child, or children, is due to disobedience in the father’s life, and especially in his relationship with the mother. It is always the way that we live that affects the results of what we say. And children are usually quick to see if their parents are being obedient to the Lord, or at least seeking to be.

Concerning the statement that “this is right,” Eadie said that “it has its foundation in the very essence of that relation which subsists between parents and children. Nature claims it, while Scripture enjoins it, and the Son of God exemplified it” (p. 438). We are told that when our Lord was twelve years old, He went with His parents to Jerusalem for the Passover. When the group from Nazareth left to return home, the Lord stayed behind and was talking with Jewish teachers when they found Him. When Joseph and Mary wanted Him to return with them, we read in Luke 2:51 tells us that our Lord went back with them to Nazareth, “and was subject to them.” And that means, not just that He went back with them, but that that was the way our Lord lived as a teenager. That proves that what He did was “right” then, and such obedience to parents is “right” now.

Since August of 1986 I have been reading the book of Proverbs. This is an excellent book for us to read to our children. It is full of teaching that is “right,” “right” for children and teenagers, and “right” for adults.

6:2 When we get married, we are no longer under their authority, but we are never out from under the fifth commandment. “Honor thy father and thy mother . . .” (Ex. 20:12). To honor our parents means that we are to let their lives and their words carry weight with us, even a lot of weight. This means that we are to listen to what they say, to believe them, and to do as they say. Let the advice of our parents far outweigh any advice that we might get from anyone else, unless they agree with our parents. I remember of hearing a man

who said that he was surprised how much smarter his parents got as he got older. Our parents don't say "no" to us to keep us from being happy. They say "no" to keep us from being unhappy. God has given each one of us two parents who are often the best counselors that we will ever have.

6:3 To emphasize how important this command is, the Lord made it the first commandment with a promise attached. It is given here. (Read it.) Parents have had to face problems and to make decisions that their children have not yet had to make. How wonderful it is if, because we are listening to our parents, we don't make some of the mistakes that they have made!

6:4 This verse is addressed to fathers.

Fathers may have a tendency to be impatient and severe. The only time they discipline their children may be when they have done something wrong. Fathers need to be especially of provoking their children because that usually produces the wrong results. And children, if they are not already rebellious, become rebellious.

What does "provoke" mean? "Provoke to wrath" is the translation of one Greek verb. It means that this is the response that the father gets when he confronts his child to prevent him from doing something that the father knows will not produce the good results that the child think it will.. Now it is hard for a parent to avoid this if he only confronts his child when he is about to do the wrong thing. But it can be avoided if by example, and by teaching, the parent has anticipated problems before they actually come.

But what is "the nurture and admonition of the Lord"? The NASB translates it "discipline and instruction. The NIV, "training and instruction." But since the word translated "nurture" is formed from the Greek word a young child, it would seem to me that the Apostle Paul was talking about training children from their earliest years. The word "admonition" has as its root the Greek word for the mind, so "admonition," it seems to me, would mean that in our teaching we need to make as sure as we can that our children are understanding what we are teaching them so that they can put the teaching to use in their lives. This would include exhortation. It would include warnings. It seems that these two words bring together what we usually recognize in the writings of the Apostle Paul – first the doctrine, or teaching of the truth, and then the application of the truth in every day life.

Charles Hodge, however, brings out a very important point in the teaching that fathers (assisted by mothers) must make clear constantly to the child, or children. We need to make clear to them that this is "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And the father needs to make sure, not only that this is what he is giving to his child, but that the child understand also that he, or she, is being taught the Word of God. This is a part of the education of children that is being entirely neglected by many families, and, if the children are being taught at all, it is only humanistic psychology in many cases. Our generation of Americans is suffering from the lack of Bible teaching, and Bible teaching that starts in early childhood, Bible teaching which our children know is the teaching of the Lord! Let us make it clear to our children and grandchildren that they can't start teaching their children to know the Bible, and to live it, because it is the Word of God. A generation of godly fathers and mothers who would raise their children on the Word of God, could practically eliminate juvenile delinquency. And what a difference such teaching would make in the lives of our fathers and mothers. Even today too many parents depend upon Christian schools and churches to teach their children. But there are no better teachers than fathers and mothers who prepare themselves to make sure that their children know the Lord and His Word.

Charles Hodge wrote,

It is only by making God—God in Christ—the teacher . . . on whose authority everything is to be believed and in obedience to Whose will everything is to be done, that the goal of education can possibly be

attained. It is infinite folly for men to assume that they are wiser than God or to attempt to accomplish a goal through any means other than those which He has appointed (Hodge, Charles, *Ephesians*, p. 204). Think of all of this in connection with what the Apostle Paul taught Timothy about the Word of God. I am thinking of his words in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

We all need constant guidance and encouragement in the reading and study of the Word of God. Fathers need to guide, help, encourage, and sometimes correct their children, but the benefits are eternal. Churches that overlook a ministry to children, are making one of the greatest mistakes that a church can make.

Next we come to servants and masters in verses 5 through 9.

6:5 In Bible times, both OT and NT, there were masters who had human slaves. The word translated “servants” here lit. means a bondsman, one who is owned by his master in the same way the master owns horses and mules, even property. He is different from a household servant who was paid. He had no rights. Sometimes his situation was good. At other times it was very bad. Everything depended upon the character of the master.

Probably the most famous slave in the NT was Onesimus, who belonged to a Christian master. The Greek word for “master” is the word for a lord. Onesimus had run away (which slaves often did). He had gone to Rome and somehow had crossed paths with Paul who was a prisoner in Rome at the same time. Paul led him to the Lord, and then encouraged him to go back to Colosse and to submit himself to Philemon. A slave could have been killed by his master for doing what Onesimus had done, but Paul wrote a letter to Philemon which we have in our Bible encouraging Philemon to take him back, and to forgive him. Slaves sometimes could obtain their freedom. Paul addressed Christian slaves in 1 Corinthians 7:21-22 which really expressed his attitude toward slaves who were believers. He said,

21 Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

22 For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

Paul did not belong to any movement to free slaves (if there was one), but this, basically, was his position as expressed in 1 Corinthians, to get slaves who knew the Lord to focus upon themselves as slaves of Christ. In Paul's letter to the church at Rome, he called himself *a slave of Jesus Christ*, and he used this emphasis in his teaching of the Christian life. He expected that knowing the Lord would make a great difference in the way a slave who was a Christian served his master, his lord.

And so he encouraged Christian slaves to be obedient to their masters, and to do it “with fear and trembling.” This does not mean that they were to live in constant fear of what their masters might do to them (which was always a problem), but that they should fear and tremble before their masters as they served the Lord “with fear and trembling” – but Paul meant with fear lest they would in any way fall short of what the masters wanted them to do. Paul really believed that if you were a Christian and a slave, that you ought to strive to be the best slave that any master could have. And to show them how this could be done, he added the phrase, “as unto Christ.” They were to serve their masters, regardless of whether they were good or bad, or sometimes good and sometimes bad – they were to serve “as unto Christ.” Reading through these instructions which Paul gave various groups in the church, it is very important to notice how he kept bringing the Lord into what he was telling them to do.

Paul spoke of his own ministry using these two words, “fear” and “trembling” in 1 Corinthians 2:3 where he said, “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” He had come to them with every desire to be faithful to the Lord, but not to trust himself in any way. He had an intense desire to glorify the Lord and feared that he might fail to do that in any way. See also 2 Corinthians 7:15 and Philippians 2:12 where Paul exhorted the Philippians to “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.”

6:6 Many slaves would work faithfully when their master or someone representing him was watching them, but instead they were to remember that they were also slaves of Christ, and so they were to serve their human masters as they wanted to serve Christ, “doing the will of God from the heart.” It is very important to notice how the Apostle was continuously bringing the Lord into their difficult situations.

And so he added in verse 7:

6:7 “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” Again quoting Eadie, “It is no goodwill which the slave often bears to his master, his common feeling being the torment of his master’s presence and the terror of his lash” (p. 461). But the Christian slave knew that in reality he was serving a loving and faithful Lord.

And Charles Hodge drew a further lesson from the teaching of the Apostle Paul in this verse:

This, as the Scriptures teach, is not peculiar to the obedience of the slave to his master, but applies to all other cases in which obedience is required from one person to another. It applies to children in relation to their parents, wives to husbands, people to magistrates. . . Foreign as all this is to the proud and rebellious human heart, which spurns all superiority and authority, it is daily illustrated by the cheerful and patient submission of the people of God, even to the capricious and unreasonable exercise of the authority of those God has placed them under (p. 207).

6:8 The Lord is keeping the records. And this applies to every part of our lives. The Lord will judge the wicked, regardless of who they are, how high in society or how low. Sometimes rewards are experienced at the present time. But they are certain to be given when the Lord returns. And this is another great reason for looking for the Lord’s coming. When He comes for His Church, all injustices will be a thing of the past. Then, even more than now, shall we as believers be thankful that the Lord has led us, and given us the grace to obey Him.

What the Apostle Paul was teaching in this passage is what King David wrote about in Psalm 16:8-9:

8 I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

As we learn throughout the Word of God, it is in our trials that God is producing godly character in us, and in showing His sufficient grace and power in our lives and for His glory now and in eternity to come. Eadie said, “The Christian doctrine of rewards is too often lost sight of or kept in abeyance, as if it were not perfectly consistent with the freest bestowment of heavenly glory” (p. 452).

6:9 Here we have just one verse directed to masters, lords. Power has a tendency to corrupt. We see that especially in the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel. But we saw it in King Saul.

The word “and” at the beginning of verse 9 shows that there is an immediate connection between God’s words to slaves, and His word to master’s. The Apostle Paul did not hesitate to speak to slaves, nor to masters. Some commentators believe that Paul had in mind kings and their subjects. “Forbearing” means *to let up*. Many

masters rule by giving one warning after another. The Apostle told them to let up on issuing threatenings. The verse suggests that they leave threatenings off altogether. A statement that the Lord gave in His Sermon on the Mount, applies to the masters here. I am thinking of Matthew 7:12 where the Lord said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." There will only be one Lord when we get to heaven, and He is no respecter of persons. When the Lord said, "This is the law and the prophets," He was saying that as far as our relationships with others, regardless of who we are, or who they are, we always need to treat others the way we want them to treat us. To the masters the Apostle was saying on behalf of the Lord, "You had better treat slaves the way you want to be treated when you stand before the Lord as His slave. We all need to keep eternity in our sights.

There is a lot of truth for all of us to digest from Ephesians 5:21 through 6:9. There is truth in these verses for all of us. One reason our country is in the condition that it is in today, is because we have skimmed over these verses, or it may be that some, even some Christians, are inclined to say that these verses belong to past generations, but not to us. I hope none of us is making that mistake. The Bible is unique in the doctrine that it teaches. It is unique also in the living that it instructs for the Lord's people. But it is unique also in its teaching on family life, and or relationships in the world. It would be good to conclude this section by repeating the first Psalm. Blessing always comes when we do things God's ways; problems magnify when we ignore His ways and walk in the ways of sinful men.

All of this, too, is in special preparation for what the Apostle Paul is going to teach us about the spiritual warfare we are all involved in, a war for which the first five and a half chapters of this epistle give us our preparation.

May 16, 2011

As we come to verse 10 of Ephesians 6, we come to the last major point in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesian church. And, assuming that Paul intended for it to be a circular letter, that is, a letter to be circulated among other nearby churches, it was a point that was intended to draw major attention to all churches. And when I say that, I mean all churches down to the present day.

The epistles of Paul represent what have been three major problems among the people of God from the beginning of time, both with Jews and Gentiles. But they are especially three major problems in the professing church today. What are they?

- 1) Ignorance of the great doctrines of the Bible. {
- 2) A failure to live according to the will of God and for the glory of God. {Comment briefly on each one.}
- 3) Too little attention given to the opposition which we face from the Devil. {

We can consider this last section (before Paul's conclusion) as an point all by itself, or we can consider it as the last part of the practical section of the book which began with 4:1. Paul gives us more practical exhortation, more commandments, in verses 10 through 20, so the word "finally" at the beginning of verse 10 can mean that Paul was about to give them his final words of exhortation. Notice:

- 1) "Be strong" in verse 10.
- 2) "Put on" in verse 11.
- 3) "Take" in verse 13.
- 4) "Stand" in verse 14.
- 5) "Taking" in verse 16. This is the same verb as in verse 13.
- 6) "Take" in verse 17. This is a different verb from those found in verses 13 and 16, but the meaning is the same.
- 7) "Praying" in verse 18.

Let me sound a word of warning as we begin these verses about the Devil. **The Devil does not like to be exposed.** But this is what Paul was doing in this passage. I am sure that the Apostle Paul suffered for it. You probably remember that in 2 Corinthians 12:7 Paul spoke of his thorn in his flesh which he called “the messenger of Satan to buffet me.” That was written seven or eight years before Paul wrote the Ephesian epistle. So Paul continued to expose Satan. God is far greater than all of the forces of the Devil put together. But Paul did not minimize what the Devil might do to anyone who sought to expose him. So I am sure that the Apostle Paul wrote these final words in the Ephesian epistle praying over every word. Let us approach this subject casting our care upon the Lord.

6:10 The Apostle’s last instruction has to do with the spiritual conflict that we are all involved in from the moment that we are saved. And so he says, “Finally.” It suggests that what the Apostle wrote, he wrote in an orderly fashion. The first five and a half chapters were in preparation for what he is about to tell us.

Those who are in any branch of the service are faced with two basic needs. They have to be physically fit, and they must know how to use the equipment that has been issued to them. And so, the first item of business is the rugged physical training to which men and women going into the service are subjected. It is called *boot camp*. The object is to get the recruit into the best physical condition.

When we are saved, we need to be prepared for war, spiritual warfare. And so the Apostle’s first order is, “Be strong.” You can have the finest equipment in the world issued to you, but if you are not strong enough to use it, the equipment alone is not sufficient. And so the Apostle Paul’s first order is, “Be strong.” But the kind of strength that a Christian needs is spiritual strength. And so Paul said, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.”

To be strong means that there must be growth, and to grow demands that we are eating the right things, and getting the right exercise. Our strength is in the Lord, and in the power of His might. And so we need to “feed” on the Lord. To do that means that we need to start reading the Word, seeking the Lord’s help in understanding the Word, plus being obedient to the Word. It involves learning to pay. We are strengthened by having fellowship with other Christians. And all of this which gives us spiritual strength must be continued if our strength is to be kept up, and even increased. The form of the verb that Paul used here means that we are to continually be seeking to get stronger and stronger, but it also indicates that while we read, and obey, and pray, and seek the fellowship of other Christians, *it is the Lord Who strengthens us*. “In the Lord” means *in union with the Lord*. As long as we live, our strength comes through a growing knowledge of the Lord which is the result of our fellowship with the Lord. And it is always from the Lord that we get the strength to live for the Lord, and to be involved in the warfare all Christians are involved in.

Let us always remember that this comes first, and always needs to be kept in first place in our lives. The Christian who begins to neglect the reading of the Word and prayer, will be weakened and become more likely to be a battle statistic. Our relationship with the Lord can never be severed, but it can be weakened, and often is, leading to spiritual defeats.

“Strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might,” are two ways of saying the same thing. The repetition, as always in Scripture, is for emphasis. And it is not just the habit of doing these things, but it is in keeping the Lord involved in every detail of our lives. We read the Word trusting the Lord to teach us of Himself. We pray to have fellowship with the Lord. And we obey the Word in order that we might be pleasing to the Lord.

6:11 When we are saved, we are enlisting in the army of the Lord, and by grace, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, our armor is issued to us. This is the very presence of God, of the Lord Jesus, and of the

Holy Spirit in our lives, and the spiritual gifts that we have in Them. In this epistle to the Ephesians Paul call the armor “all spiritual blessings” (Eph.1:3). We don’t have to go outside of the Bible nor beyond the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to find adequate defense measures for this warfare.

What is the purpose of our warfare? It is to enable us “to stand against the wiles of the Devil.” The Greek word which is translated “wiles,” is the word from which we get our English word, methods. All of the Devil’s ways are characterized by deceit. He is the Master Deceiver. He deceived Eve by getting her to believe that God had lied to her to keep something good away from her. He even sought to deceive the Lord. Let me tell you that the only place you and I can get reliable information about the Devil is in God’s Word. The Devil would like for all of us to believe that he is a joke, and so people are often inclined to believe that that is what he is, not a real person, but just a joke – that there really is no Devil. The only place that you and I will learn the truth about the Devil, is in the Bible. Only by putting on “the whole armor of God” will we be able to stand against our archenemy. We must not omit any part.

6:12 Our warfare with the Devil is called wrestling because he like to attack us individually. He is not omnipresent like God is, but he has countless numbers of fallen angels who make up his army. Several things make the forces of evil too much for us. First, they are stronger than we are. Second, they are more numerous than we are. And third, they are invisible so we are not able to see them. They are not “flesh and blood” like we are.

Paul used four terms to describe the demonic forces of the Devil:

- 1) “Principalities” - which seems to speak of a well organized force of evil, just like in our military we have generals, colonels, majors, etc. The Devil’s forces are well organized.
- 2) “Powers” - the word is authorities. The Bible speaks of the Devil as “the god of this world,” and we learned in 1 John 5:19 that “the whole world lieth in wickedness,” or, *in the wicked one*. The world with all of its unrest and widespread sin and evil, seem content to struggle weakly year after year, and often not at all, obviously, although not consciously, not knowing the source of all evil.
- 3) “Rulers of the darkness of this world” - their dominion is over the whole world.
- 4) “Spiritual wickedness in high places” - This statement has been translated in various ways, all which seem inclined to teach that the Devil has designs ultimately on heaven as on the earth. Eadie says that it is an expression which shows that the Devil and his forces have an appetite for evil which exceeds their capacity for producing it.

It is practically impossible to portray the power of the Devil, and his objectives, all designed to plunge all of creation farther and farther away from God, and deeper and deeper into more sin and worse sin.

6:13 Now, after seeing the great power of the Devil, and the forces allied with him to join him in achieving his objectives, this should make us as the people of God know that there is no part of the armor of God that we can afford to ignore or leave behind if we are to obtain the victory. Our God has made full provision for us in Himself, in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, to be victorious over the Devil and his forces in their own territory, this evil world.

This is the second time that Paul has used the term, “the whole armor of God.” No part can be left off if we are to be standing when each conflict is over. This should help us to understand what sufficient means we have in the armor of God for total and continual victory over our enemy. “The evil day” is the day of the Devil’s attack upon us. Geoffrey Wilson described it this way:

The Christian soldier must be thoroughly prepared in order that he may be able to withstand any sudden

assault that is launched against him. “The evil day” is the day when the conflict is most severe. It is any day of which it can be said, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness” (p. 131)

Now we come to a detailed listing of the parts of the armor.

6:14 Two pieces of the armor are here.

First, the girdle. It was probably one of the last pieces of armor that the ancient soldier would put on. It was a wide belt, often very ornamental, sometimes with gold and silver. It held the other pieces of the armor in place. It probably speaks of the Christian’s firm belief in the Gospel in particular, and in all of the Word of God in general. Only a firm belief in the truth of the Word of God can protect the Christian when he comes face to face to meet the foe.

Second, the breastplate of righteousness. As important as practical righteousness is, it is not sufficient for a time of spiritual conflict. Our consciences tell us that it is not perfect, and the Devil, who is the accuser of the brethren, has done his homework very well, and he knows how to raise past sins to our minds to weaken us in our conflict. No, it is not our practical righteousness, but the perfect righteousness of Christ which has been charged to our account, and which can withstand every charge that the Devil might bring against us. His righteousness in us and upon us is perfect, and is the same always. No assault of the Devil can injure us in the security we have, clothed in the righteousness of God through Christ.

6:15 This has to do with the shoes we wear and which are very important if we are to stand. Again we have the Gospel, the Gospel of peace, the peace of God, and peace with God. How important it is to have these shoes on for the battle! A trial comes up in our lives, and the Devil and his demons are quick to point out to us that this has come because of something which we have done in the past that has been displeasing to God. Every part of the armor has to be put on, and kept on. We are to be on the alert. So in a time like this when the Devil is seeking to weaken our ability to fight by reminding us of past sins, we answer him with what we read in Psalm 103:10-12:

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

6:16 “Above all” should be translated, *in addition to all*. The shield is not worn, but carried, which suggests active faith, such as we read about in Hebrews 11. Here its defensive value is pointed out. The shields in those ancient days were like doors, which was the original meaning of the word. They were about four feet high and two and a half feet wide. Such is faith. The fiery darts of the wicked as explained by Geoffrey Wilson are ways in which he uses horrible thoughts which often crowd into our minds, or angry words, or blasphemous words. Sometimes the Devil tempts us to pride, or discontent, sexual passion, anger, and the like. Fiery darts not only would penetrate the flesh, but also could set the body on fire. How many sins the Lord keeps us from, none of us knows. But what we do know is that the strengthening of our faith safeguards us from the worst which the Devil can shoot at us.

Faith is not something that we generate ourselves, but it is always a gift from God Himself produced in our hearts the fruit of the Word of God in us.

6:17 This is the final part of the defensive part of the armor. We are to take “the helmet of salvation.” To “take” is, is to appropriate it, to put it on for the safety that it provides for us. There is a passage in 1 Thessalonians that seems to throw light upon what the Apostle Paul had in mind as he spoke of “the helmet

of salvation. Let me read that passage in 1 Thessalonians to you. Its reference is 1 Thessalonians 5:5-11:

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

I think that it is very possible that when the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus about “the helmet of salvation,” he was speaking of the hope, the future prospect, that we have who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. What is our hope? It is the return of the Lord for His Church. Paul had just referred to this in 1 Thessalonians at the end of chapter 4. When that day comes, the Devil will never again be able to tempt us. We will be with the Lord, but what a blessing is added to that when we understand that the goal of our salvation is that we will be like the Lord Jesus – with Him, and like Him, forever!

Let me ask you: Are you wearing that hope? Have you taken the helmet of salvation? Isn't it wonderful to know that the day is coming when sin will be a thing of the past, when we will never again be tempted to do anything, or saying anything wrong, or even to think anything that is displeasing to the Lord? And we won't have to worry about going to the wrong place where we will be with the wrong kind of people. There won't be any wrong places for us, or any wrong people. The Lord will be all to all of us, all in all!

But there is one other thing that we are to take, and to hold it in our heart first, and then in our hands for use. It is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” How often do you use the Word of God in your opposition to the Devil and temptation.? This is what the Lord did. Read about it in Matthew 4:1-11. Remember also what the writer of the book of Hebrews said about the Word of God:

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

Let us always remember that the Bible is “the sword of the Spirit.” We take it and use it, but it is always up to the Spirit of God as to how the Word of God is used. The Word of God itself is more powerful than anything that you and I can say about it.

But we still have not gotten to the end of our list. Look with me now at Ephesians 6:18.

6:18 This is always the companion of the Word of God. It is prayer! How often? “Always.” What is all prayer? It is all kinds of prayer – worship, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and petition (which is supplication). It is also ejaculatory prayers, and days of prayer; private prayer, and corporate prayer. “All prayer” is prayer for everyone and individuals. It is prayer for all times – when we are happy, and when we are under trials. It is prayer when we feel like praying, and prayer when we don't feel like praying. We are to be praying “always.” Learn to pray from your Bible. Pray the prayers of the Bible when they are appropriate. The Psalms are a great guide for us to pray. So are the prayers of the Apostle Paul. They teach us not only how to pray for our fellow believers, but that it is often good to tell them verbally, or in writing, what it is that we are praying for when we pray for them.

What did the Apostle Paul mean by “watching”? It means that they were to persevere, not be remiss in prayer,

but always be on guard both for ourselves and for others. When we hear about soldiers who risk their lives to save a buddy in trouble, and often they do give their lives to save others, they are being “watchful.”

6:19-20 The Apostle Paul wanted prayer for himself, not that he would be released from confinement by the Roman government, but that he might speak boldly and effectively. This was to individuals as well as to groups. In Acts 14:1 it is said of Paul and Barnabas that in a synagogue in Iconium they “so spake, that a great multitude both of Jews and also of the Greeks believed”! If that is possible, Dr. Ironside said that it is also possible to “so speak” that no one will believe. The effectiveness of what we say is always linked with what we are in the sight of the Lord.

6:21-22 It is important for to keep in touch with others that they may know how we are doing, and that we might know how they are doing. None of us is serving the Lord alone. We are “workers together.” We are not in this work alone. When God blesses one, it is blessing also for another. We are not in competition, but we are ‘workers together’ (2 Cor. 6:1).

6:23-24 Here is another way for us to pray with all prayer. We can pray audibly. We can pray with pen and ink (or with our computers). “Peace” is always a proper subject for prayer because we live in a world which knows nothing about true peace, and we as believers are constantly faced with circumstances which can be an attack on our peace. Our greeting that we often use routinely, “How are you?”, ought to have behind it the thought, how are you doing spiritually as well as how are you doing physically. When people are grieving over the death of a loved one, or have received news that they are seriously ill, or have not been walking in fellowship with the Lord, it is important for us to know how they are doing in every way.

(Close our study by reading Ephesians 6:23 and 24.)