

## The True Christian — A Warrior.

Text: Eph 6:10-17

1) Who Are His Enemies

Suggested Hymns:

2) What Are His Weapons

206, 208, 205, 195, 352

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Ephesians 6:10–17, <sup>10</sup> *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* <sup>11</sup> *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* <sup>12</sup> *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

<sup>13</sup> *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.* <sup>14</sup> *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* <sup>15</sup> *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;* <sup>16</sup> *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.* <sup>17</sup> *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

With this text the Salvation Army people endeavour to defend their organisation.

In our text the Christian is pictured as a soldier, as a spiritual warrior, and the salvation army people have worked out this idea into the finest details and have formed themselves into a military organisation, with generals, captains, lieutenants down to the privates.

They wear uniforms according to their rank, go into barracks, march with drum and music, and everything with them has a military aspect.

It cannot be denied that these people are sincere and mean well, and that they show great courage to perform their work in the poorer districts that they may save immortal souls.

But what are we Lutherans to think of this movement? Are we to endorse it? Can we admit that these Salvation Army people are doing much good, as is often claimed, because they reach and come into contact with many of those whom the church would never reach?

Can we admire them as they boldly stand up in the streets, and sing their songs according to popular tunes, and speak to the crowd which gathers around them of Jesus, of conversion, of heaven and hell, unmindful of the scorn and ridicule and insulting remarks often heaped upon them?

No; we Lutherans measure all things with the Holy Scriptures, and if we find that a thing does not perfectly agree with the Bible, we reject it, even though others would praise and recommend it.

Now the Salvation Army is an organisation which rejects God's ordinances, the holy Sacraments. It has no Baptism and no Lord's Supper. And it is extremely happy throughout in its ways and methods, working upon the feelings, not bringing people to the faith by religious instruction, but producing in them an idea that they have been converted if merely they drop their pet sins, though they be steeped in other sins.

They often turn the Sadducees into Pharisees, that is, the godless and wicked they turn into self-righteous, who pride themselves and say: "***God, I thank You that I am not like other men.***"<sup>1</sup>

And does not our text say that the Christians must be a military organisation? Does not St. Paul say in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "***The weapons of our warfare are not carnal***"?<sup>2</sup>

Our text merely compares the Christian with an earthly warrior, and the lesson taught here is, that we must fight in the spiritual realm as the soldier fights in the earthly realm. Let us consider, *The True Christian — A Warrior*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## 1. The True Christian — A Warrior Who Are His Enemies

Our text begins, <sup>10</sup> *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* <sup>11</sup> *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* <sup>12</sup> *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Here we are informed, first of all, that in themselves Christians do not find the power and strength to combat against their enemies. “*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!*” Christians must look to the Lord for strength, to the Captain of salvation, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And who are the enemies against whom we must contend? “*We do not wrestle against flesh and blood,*” says the Apostle. Our opponents in Christian warfare are not mortal men whom we must overcome in bodily combat. We must not seek to harm and injure in their bodies those whom we must consider our enemies.

No matter how great the wrong done to us, we must return good for evil, according to the Word of God as we read in Romans 12:20, <sup>20</sup> “*If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.*”

Christ says in Matthew 5:44–45, <sup>44</sup> *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,* <sup>45</sup> *that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.*

Mortal men are not the enemies with whom we wrestle. Our enemies are in the spiritual realm. “*Against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*” we must wrestle.

The devil and all the demons of hell, with spiritual wickedness in high places, are the greatest and the most dangerous enemies we Christians have. True, we Christians must also fight against the world. We must oppose the world

when the children of this world tempt us to transgress God's command and to do wrong, or when they entice us to go to places where Christians should not be seen, or when they seek to entrap us by promises or threats.

And it is true that we Christians must also fight against our own sinful flesh, which clings to us as long as we are in this life. In conversion we are not made rid of our natural sinful inclination. The tendency to evil remains with us, and in our flesh dwells no good thing.

Continually we must battle down wicked emotions, evil desires, scornful thoughts, which of themselves crop forth upon the soil of our sinful hearts. Both the world and our flesh are enemies of our eternal welfare, and we must keep a watchful eye on them lest they deceive us or seduce us into misbelief, despair, or other great shame and vice.

But who is at the bottom of all mischief? Who is the main enemy? Who is the captain of all those forces that are against us? It is the prince of darkness, the devil, aided by his immediate attendants, the evil spirits.

In our days even those who claim to be Christians deny the existence of a personal devil, and the children of this world laugh us to scorn if we say that we believe there is a devil and demons. To their minds it is gross superstition to believe in the existence of evil spirits, and to be abreast of the times in this age of enlightenment and progress you must discard such medieval ideas.

But does not the Bible contain a perfect history of the bad angels, and tell us all about the devil's origin, his designs, his works, and his final doom? Let us not be deceived, then; for God is not mocked. The Bible is God's infallible Word. If it is true in one thing, it must be true in the other also.

If what the Bible says of God and of Jesus is true, then also that must be true which it says of the devil and of the evil spirits. Let us not be deceived as to the old wicked foe, of whom Christ distinctly says that he goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He is an enemy whom we must not ignore.

The Apostle calls those spiritual forces "*principalities and powers.*" So great is their power that no man can overcome them except in the name and by the strength of Jesus. The Apostle calls them "*rulers of the darkness of this world.*" They lead, they hold the rule, they have dominion upon this earth.

Ever since the fall of man in paradise all the children of men are the born subjects of Satan, and he rules them, and makes them do according to his will until they are born again and made the children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when we have been rescued from Satan's power, he does his utmost to regain what he has lost. So we must wrestle against him and against his allies, against darkness and wickedness, against everything that hinders our salvation. We must fight for the crown of life which is in store for us, or we shall never get it.

## **2. The True Christian — A Warrior.**

### **What Are His Weapons.**

In the second place, let us see what are our weapons. The Apostle says <sup>11</sup> *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

Put on the armour of God! This implies that you must throw away your own weapons. Away with your own righteousness, away with your trust in your own ability, away with your confidence in your own good resolutions and in your own will power!

These are all weapons of your own making, and with these you cannot stand against the wiles of the devil. He is too crafty and too subtle an enemy, who will surely get 'the best of you' and take control of you if you have no other weapons to wield against him.

Our text continues, <sup>13</sup> *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.*" In the armour of God we have six weapons, five to use in defence and one for attack.

<sup>14</sup> *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth.*" This is the first piece in the armour, the girth or belt. It prevents the whole armour from falling down. Truth is the Christian's belt as he stands ready to enter into a combat with the devil. In other words, *Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist.*<sup>3</sup>

Without truth you will lose all your spiritual weapons, and your combat with the devil will end in a failure. The devil is the father of lies, and if you are given to lying, the devil will get the best of you.

***“Having put on the breastplate of righteousness.”*** This is the second weapon of defence. The breastplate covers the heart, the seat of life, and the lungs. To secure your very life against Satan’s darts, you must supply yourself with righteousness, both with the righteousness of your Saviour Jesus, by whose blood and righteousness we are saved, and with a righteous, holy living according to the rule of the divine Law.

***“And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”*** This is the third weapon of defence. The Roman military sandal was furnished with nails that gripped the ground firmly, even when it was sloping and slippery.

And how can the devil and his demons cause you to slip and to fall if you meet him prepared with the Gospel of peace? If the Gospel, which gives peace into your heart and makes peaceful, is your stay, you will stand firm in every attack and say with the Apostle in Romans 8:31, <sup>31</sup> ***If God is for us, who can be against us?***

***“16 Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”*** This is the fourth weapon of defence. Here we see what importance St. Paul attaches to faith. In our days the universal cry is: *What is faith good for? Deeds are wanted!* Let everybody believe as he pleases, and show his religion in deeds of love.

But St. Paul attaches the greatest importance to faith and says: ***“Above all, taking the shield of faith.”***

The warrior of olden times could hide himself behind his big shield so that nothing was seen of him. He held the shield before him, and the arrows could not reach his armour, but stuck in the shield. A firm believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has a protection in the shield of faith against which the devil batters in vain. If our faith is the victory that overcomes the world, it will surely overcome the devil.

***“And take the helmet of salvation.”*** This is the fifth weapon of defence. The helmet protects the head. The helmet of salvation protects your thoughts from being disturbed and your divine knowledge from being destroyed.

The glorious truth that you are saved appropriated, rested on, rejoiced in, will protect even so vital a part as the head, and keep you from doubt and despair into which the devil is always trying to lure God’s children.

But the Christian warrior must also have a weapon with which he may attack the enemy, and God has supplied him with an infallible weapon. The Apostle says: ***“And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”***

This is the weapon which our Lord wielded against the devil in the wilderness when the devil tempted Him. He simply quoted the clear words of Scripture and said: ***“It is written.”***

Let us freely use this glorious weapon which never fails. Let us attack the old wicked foe with the written Word of God whenever and wherever he shows himself, and he shall be put to flight and flee every time.

Let us conclude with the words of Luther,<sup>4</sup>

Though devils all the world should fill,  
All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill,  
They shall not overpower us.  
This world’s prince may still  
Scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none;  
He’s judged, for e’er undone;  
One little word can fell him. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 18:11

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:4

<sup>3</sup> NET

<sup>4</sup> Hymn 195