

Ephesians: From Death to Life
The Armor of God (Part 2)
Ephesians 6:16-20

The world, along with many in contemporary, cultural Christendom, see the concept of religion as a means to make the world a better place, or a means to cultivate a humanly defined spirituality. We tend to think more highly of ourselves than we ought with regard to our own goodness, which creates this false idea that we are good people who need religion to make us better people. We tend to treat our salvation as a call to moralism or a call to therapy when in fact, Christ saves us and calls us to war.

1. Christ defends us with a reasonable faith.
2. Christ protects us with an assurance of salvation.
3. Christ equips us with a powerful word.
4. Christ enables us with comprehensive prayer.

Our battle is real, and it is active and ongoing. Paul sees the church as a kingdom outpost established in and in some cases behind enemy lines. The truth is that Satan wants to prevent people from being gathered into the church of Christ because to do so reminds him of his inevitable defeat. Paul tells us to stand firm in the gospel and pray for world mission. We are enlisted by our King to engage in spiritual warfare, which means we put on the armor that Christ wore, and we express our faith in the gospel through prayer for evangelism.

Reflection

Why might some people be turned off by the idea of warfare being a metaphor for our spiritual experience? What mistakes do we make when we assume that culture is our enemy? How should we frame the gospel so that we maintain the ability to speak truth to the culture? When we think of warfare, we often think in terms of going on the offensive and attacking the enemy. Where is Paul's emphasis on spiritual warfare, offense or defense? How is "standing" significant in literal warfare, and what is Paul's frequent use of "stand" signify in spiritual warfare? How does it encourage you that Paul asks others to pray for him as he proclaimed the gospel?