"Spiritually Outfitted"

Ephesians 6:11

Introduction:

1. As you may or may not know, Sharon and I have always enjoyed camping—tent camping. Some of you are thinking, "This confirms what we've always thought. You two are crazy!" But there is something to be said for sleeping outside with just the thin wall of the tent separating you from the elements and all kinds of creepy, crawly creatures. But I digress….

2. If you want to join us tent camping, you need to be properly outfitted. Tents, pillows and sleeping bags come quickly to mind. A camp stove and camp cooking gear are also helpful in getting the total outdoors package. And for your sleeping pleasure, a good air mattress proves to be a wise investment. Yes, you need all those things, along with a lot of other camping gear one inevitably acquires.

3. I probably won't convince most of you to go tent camping, but I hope that I can persuade you about your need to be spiritually outfitted. We are in a spiritual war, and we must be prepared for conflict. Before our government sends out soldiers, it makes sure that they are properly equipped for battle. Our Lord has provided all that we need for spiritual battle, and he tells us to put on what he has provided for us.

Exposition:

I. What is the "armor of God"?

A. It is the armor or spiritual protection that God provides for his people.

1. In the fullest sense this is Christ himself (Rm 13:14). Since we are in union with the risen Christ, we are to live as full participants in that union, finding our full sufficiency in the Lord.

2. It also includes the grace that flows from Christ through his redeeming work. The spiritual blessings of redeeming grace are very powerful.

B. We must settle in our hearts that God has given us what we need for a successful Christian life. We need only lay hold of all through faith in the Lord Jesus.

1. We who follow Christ have already been given all that we need for life and godliness (2 Pt 1:3-4).

2. Now we only need to use this abundant provision (2 Pt 1:5). This is the life of faith.

Apply: The key idea of the Christian life is a living, active **fellowship with the Lord by faith**. We exalt God's fame when we rely on and enjoy all that he is and offers to us.

II. Why should we put on the full armor of God?

A. We should put it on because the Lord commands us to (cf. Lk 12:35). This alone ought to be sufficient reason. Who are we to disobey the **Lord**? But this is an age of incredible spiritual immaturity. I speak of us all. Someone has said that American Christianity is 3,000 miles wide and a half an inch deep. Therefore, let's think of some other reasons.

B. Satan has a great advantage in battle when we fail to put on and then use the weapons of our warfare (cf. Lk 4:13; 16:21-23).

Illustration: Imagine going tent camping and then failing to zip up the doors to keep out the mosquitoes and other nasty bugs. That would be failing to use your advantage.

1. Whatever opportunity the evil one now misses by our diligence, he hopes to find again by our negligence. He hopes that we will be tired out by continual duty.

Illustration: Satan is a skilled hunter (1 Pt 5:8). He watches the tracks of our **feet** for an indication of the direction of our **hearts**. Ps 119:10

2. Beware of middle-aged laziness or senior sleepiness.

Illustration: We need to be like Eleazar in battle (2 Sm 23:9-10) or like Joshua (Josh 10:12-14).

C. It is hard to reactivate a habit of grace when it has fallen into disuse (Song 5:3).

1. Sometimes this happens because of the shame of guilt. Is there anyone here that is too ashamed now to serve because you have really messed up your Christian life? I know one way that you can be whiter than snow. The blood of Christ never loses its power! Remember that after David was forgiven he went out to fight again.

2. Sometimes this happens from sheer difficulty. When a room has been messed up, it is harder to clean than when it is kept in constant order. One sin tolerated will eventually lead to greater problems.

Illustration: Learning to play a musical instrument and then neglecting to practice and then trying to play again

3. Sometimes this happens from being under false teaching. Arminian or free will teaching marinates a soul in self-sufficiency. Legalism bakes the heart hard in self-reliance also. Transforming experience errors (like the Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit) send a soul on an empty search for something besides Jesus Christ. Seek fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, not an experience!

Apply: In one sense it doesn't matter how someone falls into a trap. What matters is how to get out of it! The only way is through a fresh faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. What can I do to persuade you of his surpassing worth and all-sufficiency?

D. We should put our armor on for the sake of our fellow soldiers.

1. A soldier who does not know how to use his weapons is a danger to his own comrades (cf. Heb 5:11-14).

Illustration: Good doctrine with an evil lifestyle is like a loaded gun in the hands of a two-year-old. Incorrect doctrine with good intentions is like carrying out attacks without regard to where the enemy is—many are injured by "friendly fire".

2. The unwise conduct of one professing believer makes the situation worse for many others. Even when the person does not fall into a scandal, he or she cannot help other saints, as should be the case.

Conclusion:

1. We can only put on spiritual armor by faith. This action is a daily necessity for every follower of Christ. You and I must be prepared for battle!

2. However, you cannot put on spiritual armor unless you first know the Lord. Are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you united to him by faith? Do you desire to fellowship with the Lord? True Christianity is a relationship with the risen Lord, and not an empty practice of duty. Make sure that you know the Lord before you try to follow him.