

Hurst Green

19th Aug 2018

Eph 6 10-20

Intro – To Stand

We are now going to spend a few weeks looking at the armour of God. I have mentioned it several times recently and I feel it would be good for us to look at it in some detail since we are told to put on the full armour of God.

But before we go into the detail we need to understand why this is important and the answer is in these 11 verses that we are going to be focussed on for a few weeks.

Firstly take verse 10

Ephesians 6:10 (ANIV)

¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*

In all the difficulties and problems these verses will cause in your life if you take them seriously this verse is there at the start of the passage to give you great comfort each time you consider these verses.

Perhaps even by the end of the series you will have committed these verses to memory!

When we go to Windmill Manor there is a lovely old lady who when we have the reading is reciting it along with us but from memory – she had committed these and many other verses to memory so that no-one can take them away from her. Perhaps we should do more of this.

When we have run children's work it is quite common to have memory verses and to get the children to demonstrate that they have learnt them by reciting them in front of their peers.

So each week I could call one of you forward and ask you to recite the memory verse from last week.

So as this week's memory verse we will take verse 11.

But we are still at verse 10 in order to understand the comfort that this gives us

Ephesians 6:10 (ANIV)

¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*

Be strong in the Lord.

In the Lord

Not in yourself on in anything you can do or say – the strength is from the Lord and just happens to be operating through us.

So when any of this seems difficult we need to remember this verse and that the strength is in the Lord and not in us!

And it is not just any old strength – it is his mighty power. The same power that created the universe – that mighty power is in us so that we might do this.

And what is it we are to do for putting on the armour is not enough – you put it on for a purpose.

The answer is in several verses throughout the bible and is mentioned four times in these eleven verses; **To stand**

Now this is not a popular statement in our society where the pressure is always to confirm; to fit in but we are told in Romans 12:2

Romans 12:2 (ANIV)

² *Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

That is a tough verse for us Christians – we want to be called by Christ's name; we want to be part of his army but we are surrounded by the pull of the world. It is always there and we cannot escape it.

But we are called to stand out – to be different – to stand and that is what we have the armour of God for.

The call on Christians is the reverse of the call of the world.

The world would say – why stand out when you can fit in

Christ would say – why fit in when you can stand out! why fit in when you can stand out!

Christ in his time here on earth did not model fitting in – he stood out. As King he walked among the lowly and the needy. To fit in he would be in Herod's Palace for that is where Kings should be.

Instead we find him dining with the tax collectors and sinners

He stood out by washed the feet of his disciples when fitting in would have had them washing his feet.

He stood out feeding the crowds when fitting in would have sent them away hungry.

Listen to Acts 1:8

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will "HUDDLE in the four walls of your church, you will hide your Christianity from others, no one will ever know you are following me, you will be afraid to let to the power of the Spirit work through you, you will never be a witness to those around you and you will blend in to society."

That is how most churches want that section written!!

However the workshop we ran the other week shows us to be different – we want to be far more in keeping with the actual scripture:

Acts 1:8 (ANIV)

⁸ *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

And we are back with that power again. That power that sustains the universes and sustains each one of us individually.

That same power that raised from the dead, healed the sick, performed other miracles and not just through Jesus – his disciples did this as well, not just his disciples all of his follows when he sent out the 72.

Jesus when he calls each of his disciples calls them to be different.

He calls them not to fit in but to stand out.

He calls us not to fit in but to stand out with the power of the Holy Spirit that he gives us.

Because we have to know who our enemy is

V13 starts with a therefore

Ephesians 6:13 (ANIV)

¹³ Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Lots of stands but we need to note that therefore for that is the reason we put on this armour and so look at verse 12

Ephesians 6:12 (ANIV)

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

How often do we get this one wrong!

We get tangled up in the deeds of the world – in the petty squabbling and the way we are treated. Now these things are important but they are the symptoms and we often treat them as the main issue.

Behind all the bad ways we are treated and the issues we have in the world is the spiritual warfare.

The enemy and his agents are trying to give us a hard time and all too often succeeding because we are focussed on the skirmish when we are trying to win the war.

To allow us to win the war God gives us the tools to fight the spiritual battles and it is easy for us to try and use them to fight the physical battles.

We are fighting a spiritual war and so he gives us the armour of God – not a literal armour but a spiritual armour and over the next few weeks we will look each piece but remember that we are told to put on the whole armour for it all works together to give you the protection you need to stand out and be different.

How different are you prepared to be?