

## Weekly Newsletter: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

### Reflection: The Armour of God

By Darien J

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” Ephesians 6:10–11 ESV*

I’ve never been good at knowing my surroundings. I live in a huge city right on the edge of the Sahara. Twisting and turning in random patterns, it seems to never end. In a place with no addresses, who would be foolish enough to try and go places that are unfamiliar? Me. On my way back from the little local shop (that I actually knew my way to!) I decided that I wanted to take a different way home. One turn led to another turn until finally, I realized that I was quite lost...without water and without a phone. Smart!

Hot and tired, I miraculously made it back home. I realized I had neglected to equip myself with the proper tools for navigating an unpredictable climate. This is also the case as I walk out in my busy life. It can be easy to go about my work forgetting that I am in a spiritual war zone that is as dangerous and unpredictable as it is here. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, writes of a spiritual evil that we are combating against (Ephesians 6:12). Fortunately, he also writes of the tools we can use to fight. Verse 11 says, ***“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”*** This armour comes from God Himself. Walking out in life without it is like a soldier running into battle naked. Though foolish, I often find myself doing just that, which is forgetting that I have need for my Father.

How do we use this armour? We are told to be strong in the Lord. Like the Ark of the Covenant: Without the power of Jesus - we will fight a losing battle. This armour is to be put on daily as we combat the forces of evil. My mum always says that the enemy never takes a vacation: he is constantly seeking someone to devour. So, as we fight, we must know what we need. Paul gives us a list of the armour we can put on:

**The Belt of Truth:** A Roman soldier’s belt kept the armour together and the sword secured. The entirety of God’s word and Christ is truth. Without being centred on truth, the armour will be loose and no use. Only with this belt can we use the sword of the Spirit, which *is* God’s word. If we can’t trust Christ’s words, then we would be like a ship without an anchor.

**Breastplate of Righteousness:** Our heart needs protection, for it’s deceitfully wicked. If we don't understand what God requires, we’ll listen to the voice saying, “follow your heart, it leads to instant gratification!” It’s

a painful stab when one realizes too late that it's a lie. Righteousness fastened tightly with truth is believing Jesus paid it all. The breastplate we wear isn't ours, but His.

**Peace Shoes:** A soldier's shoes allowed him to plant his feet firmly in the ground, and to be ready for travel. Since the enemy plants many obstacles in our path, these shoes help us be prepared to go diligently to battle. As we proclaim the Good News of peace to the world, we must be confident in who we are in the One who guides our steps.

**Shield of Faith:** A soldier's shield wasn't just a defence, but a symbol of who it was they fought for. It put out fiery darts, and with the shields of others, formed a wall of protection. Faith is confidence in Christ. Satan will shoot arrows that slowly burn us with doubts and lies. When we raise up our shield, we declare that we are the Father's, whose promises are true. When we stand with others, we form a barrier of Christ that renders any attack powerless.

**Helmet of Salvation:** Signifying distinction and identity, Roman helmets protected the head. As Christians, our helmet also signifies this. Assurance of salvation is a hope in our identity in Christ. By daily latching on the helmet, we surrender to Christ, who renews our minds, rejects our doubts, and gives us an eternal perspective.

**Sword of the Spirit:** The sword of the Spirit is the word, double edged and powerful, scripture helps us fight the enemy's attacks. Just like a soldier trains when using a sword, we must train in the word and in the Spirit. Even a believer's heart is filled with many thorns that only this sword can cut down. As we go into battle everyday, we must keep alert with all perseverance, for our flesh is weak, but the Spirit is strong. Our hearts will be broken, we will have struggles, and it may seem hopeless at times, but Psalms 18:31-34 reminds us that in this battle we shouldn't give up, but place our hope in Him. It says this,

*"For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?— the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze."*

I pray as we take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Christ into battle, we will put on the armour he gives us. Praise God that he has equipped us to not only fight, but to walk in freedom.

## Kathleen Forsyth

Kathleen was an inspirational lady who went home to glory late yesterday (Monday) afternoon. We loved her and will miss her dearly as a church family but we rejoice that she is now free from illness, suffering and pain and with her Saviour. Please pray for those grieving the loss of a dear friend and sister in Christ. More details about the funeral arrangements to follow.

## Book Group

Book group restarts this month. No specific book this time so come along and share your book recommendations with the rest of the group. Meeting at 9 Craigentenny Avenue at 3.30pm on 30<sup>th</sup> September. If you would like further information speak to Anncris ([anncris@gmail.com](mailto:anncris@gmail.com)).

## Ladies' Bible Studies

We're looking forward to getting together **tonight on Zoom at 7pm**. We're going through Session 2 of Rebecca McLaughlin's 'Navigating Gospel Truth' and are meeting for five weeks (until Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October) on Zoom. Hopefully this will allow those who live at a distance or are working to attend. There is no pre-reading, homework or book to buy – just come as you are!

Contact Liz ([Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org)) if you would like the Zoom codes and haven't received them.

## Ladies' Breakfast – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October

Our next Ladies' Breakfast will take place from **9.30am to 11am on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October**. Eleanor Dickson will be our speaker as well as hearing an interview with Anna Barnard.

Please join us for a time of fellowship, teaching and prayer (as well as having our breakfast together!) A sign-up sheet for food has been emailed around and there will also be a hard copy sign-up sheet in church on Sunday. Any questions, please contact Liz ([Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org))



## Men's Discipleship 2023

By Joe Barnard

Does your spiritual life need a reboot? Are you eager to make closer friendships with other guys in the church? If so, join one of our men's discipleship groups. Our focus this Autumn will be deepening our understanding of basic truth by studying the Gospel Coalition Statement of Faith. There are two options-

- **In-Person Option** - Thursdays, 10:30am at Holyrood
- **Zoom Option** - Tuesdays at 6:30am. Contact Joe or [info@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:info@holyroodevangelical.org) for more info.

## Care Not Killing – Assisted Suicide

On Wednesday (27 September), Liam McArthur MSP will address (and answer questions at) a public forum at Barclay Viewforth Church, Edinburgh, alongside Dr Gillian Wright (director of Our Duty of Care) and Gordon MacDonald (for Care Not Killing). The event will take place from 7.30pm, tickets are free and can be booked [here](#).

Gordon MacDonald writes 'we are glad of an opportunity to outline some of the bill's many **deficiencies**, as well as the broader, deeper, fundamental problems with legislating for assisted suicide. We'd love for you to join us there.'

Liam McArthur's assisted suicide Bill will appear quite soon for its journey through the Scottish Parliament. Please consider contacting your MSPs, urging them to reject the Bill. For more information and to sign the Care Not Killing petition against the push for assisted suicide in Scotland, go [here](#).

## Mission Prayer Meeting Notes

It was great to be praying for our missionaries and those serving overseas on Saturday morning. The prayer notes that we used are available on the church website (<https://holyroodevangelical.org/prayer-bulletin/>) with the usual password. Contact Liz ([Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org)) if you have any questions or problems accessing them.

## Defib Training – Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October

Training on how to use the defibrillator that has been fitted to the outside of the church building will take place on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October at 8pm (after the in person prayer meeting) in the church. Please come along!

## Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday:
  - Baby & Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am
  - Youth Discipleship Team at 7pm
- Tuesday:
  - Men's Discipleship at 6.30am on Zoom
  - Pickleball and Table Tennis at 7pm
  - Ladies' Bible Study at 7pm on Zoom
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom
- Thursday:
  - Men's Discipleship at 10.30am in person in the church
  - Session meeting at 7pm in person in the church
- Sunday:
  - Communion Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
  - Equip at 6pm (and live streamed). Joe Barnard leading.



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