**Ephesians 6:14-17**

***Why We Fail***

Introduction

1. Are you overrun by the enemy? Why do Christians fail?

2. Ephesians 6:14-17 Paul continues with a military analogy. Paul is describing a Roman military man, a soldier. The wherewithal to stand is not within the soldier’s natural ability, but his supernatural ability. In Romans 13:12, 14 we have a similar analogy. *Put on the armor of light (v. 12) Put ye on the Lord Jesus (v. 14). Finally, my brothers be strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10).* I believe my armor is Jesus in me. He wants to live His life through me. This is described in Ephesians 6:14-17 as armament.

Are you overrun by the enemy? Why do Christians fail?

**I. OUR RELIANCE 6:14, 15**

*Having* is used 3 times. Each is known as the Greek Aorist Tense. It is a past action with

 continuing results. The action is permanent. We are to never be without them. They are for

 our long range preparation and protection. They are never taken off on the battlefield.

1. ***Reality*** *Having your loins gird about with truth…*
2. There was a belt around the waist that was gathered in a short tunic. It was a square piece of material with holes for the arms and head. A soldier going into battle wouldn’t want his tunic flapping in the breeze, because it would hinder this fighting ability. It helped keep the breastplate in place. The soldier hung his scabbard from this belt.
3. *With Truth…*absolute truth is essential. All *truth* flows from that source of truth. Since the Bible is God’s word, and God is absolutely true. *Truth* must line up with God’s Word. Jesus is *truth (I am the way, the truth, and the life). Reality as opposed to hypocrisy*…that which is real! Are you real? We move from religion to reality, which starts with the Word and Jesus Christ. Most just flap in the breeze. We never get from religion to relationship. Christianity is a love affair with a Person…Jesus!
4. ***Rightness*** *Having on the breastplate of righteousness…*
5. The breastplate covered the body from the neck to the thighs. Polybius tells that it was known as a heart protector. Usually they were made of molded bronze. Of all the pieces, this was most essential as it protected the vital organs in the front and back.
6. *Righteousness*…this is not imputed righteousness (put to my account), although this is essential. This is a right relationship with God and is a rightness between you and God. Rightness comes in how we live. I John 1:4 says that if you are not obedient, you will not have joy. Personal holiness protects my heart. Is Jesus seen? He is there, so move sin and self out of the way so others can see Jesus Christ!
7. ***Reconciliation (v. 15)*** *Having your feet shod with the Gospel of peace…*
8. To a foot soldier the feet were vital. The Roman soldier had a special boot for fighting as well as marching.
9. In the time of Roman wars there was a common military practice of planting sticks in the ground which had been sharpened to a razor sharp point. Then they were concealed so they were almost invisible. The Roman soldier wore a heavy soled shoe that couldn’t be pierced.
10. Josephus (a Roman historian at this time) described them as *shoes thickly studded with sharp nails to provide a good grip.* The NIV: *having your feet fitted with the gospel of peace as a firm footing.* Ephesians 6 has nothing to do with preaching…6:14 has everything to do with ‘standing firm’. The gospel is good news. The Good News is we can have peace with God. We are on His side, but He also is on my side! **We can stand absolutely confident when we realize that God is on our side!** *If God be for us who (or what) can stand against us?* We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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**II. OUR READINESS 6:16, 17**

Just as *having* is the key to vss. 14, 15, so *take up* and *take* these were kept in readiness, so *the*

 *Shield, Helmet, and Sword*  were to be kept in readiness when the actual fighting began.

1. ***Relevance…****above all…*on top of everything *take*
2. *The Shield* in the Greek is *thyreon* and is derived from *thyra* which means, *door.* This was not a small round shield, but a large (2.5’x4’) shield. The soldier held it in front of him. It consisted of two layers of wood glued together and covered with linen and hide bound with iron. Soldiers would often fight side by side forming a solid wall of shields.
3. *The fiery darts…*Herodotus describes how cane darts tipped with pitch were ignited. The two layer shield actually quenched the flames to keep them from spreading. After the siege of Dyracium, Sceva had no less than 220 darts sticking in his shield. Our only defense is *the shield of faith*. *Faith* is a positive act and affirmation to divine revelation. I adjust my life…believing God. *Faith* is worthless in and of itself. *Faith* is only as good as its object. Who do you believe when you sin? SATAN…The Devil! What you're saying is "I really don’t trust Jesus Christ that He knows what is best."
4. ***Remembrance…****take the helmet of salvation*
5. *Helmet* covered the head and was made of molded bronze or leather. It was for protection: arrows, the broad sword had 3-4’ blade with a massive handle, and was designed for the soldier on horseback to deal a heavy, skull crushing blow.
6. *Salvation* has 3 aspects: I was *saved* from the Penalty of sin. I am being *saved* from the Power of sin. One day I will be *saved* from the Presence of sin. **Jesus is for me all the time!** Doubt and discouragement begins in your mind. ***Where did you get that thought?*** Keep *salvation* ready. It protects me from fainting, from giving up, from growing weary. There is a great day coming…but not yet!

The battle is in your mind and for your mind. **Salvation isn’t to just take me to heaven!**

1. ***Resource…****the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God*
2. *The Sword…****take it!*** The word here is not the broad sword, but the *gladius.* It was 6 to 18” in length and was used for fighting in close hand to hand combat.
3. *Of the Spirit…*It is spiritual in nature, and is intended to reach the heart. This sword is given by the *Spirit.*
4. *Which is the Word of God…*keep it in readiness. It is a matter of learning how to use it. Hebrews 4:12 *For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit…and is a discerner of the thoughts and intent of the heart.* **You will never be able to stand without the Word!**

**Jesus is in us. He wants to live His life through us.**

**MAKE HIM LORD!**