

Paul prayed that the eyes of the believers in Ephesus would be opened so they would understand three things:

- 1) That you would understand the greatness of God's calling of you;
- 2) That you would understand your inheritance as a son of God;
- 3) That you would understand the greatness of God's power at work in you as a believer.

Now, when Paul gets to the final chapter of the book of Ephesians and he is wrapping it all up, he refers again to the power of God. Throughout the book he is talking about all three things that he wishes that they would get: that they would understand the hope to which God called them; that they would understand their inheritance—God's glorious inheritance in His saints; and when Paul finally wraps up the book, he says that he wants them to understand to clothe themselves with the power of God. He had previously described the power of God, and in a previous set of messages we talked about the nature of God's power and authority—how we are His delegates, how He operates in and through us, how we operate *in Him*, and so on and so forth [Note: See Current Affairs #'s 12, 13, and 14].

But today, at this time, I wanted to focus on this portion of the message where he is summarizing at the end of Ephesians. At the end of the letter, he says, "*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power*"—as I said, having described His mighty power in much detail before—and then he says, "*Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes*" (Ephesians 6:10-11NIV). As I have said before, our understanding of biblical things is in serious need of being upgraded. We still have a Sunday school understanding of the armor of God—you know, where you have cardboard cutouts and little kids dressing up like a Roman soldier, and we talk about the different parts of the armor. Generally, I mean I have heard preachers say as long back as I can remember, that the only part of the armor that is offensive (that is, for going on the offensive) is the sword. That is because they are taking the whole teaching on the armor of God out of its context. Everything about the armor of God is how you overthrow the devil's schemes. The war with Satan, you see, and our war, is not against flesh and blood, so it ought not to be thought of in the fashion in which we would engage flesh and blood. If you do, I promise you, you have already lost.

What are the devil's schemes? How does he conduct war against us? And, how is the power of God effective against the enemy? All of the references to the Roman soldier's military garb is really to talk to us about being at war, not so much that the enemy that we would encounter would come at us in a way that these pieces of the armor would defend a Roman soldier in battle. It is not that at all. This is a very asymmetrical warfare. It is not against flesh and blood. And his approaches were not like any that a Roman soldier might have encountered on the field of battle. The enemy comes at us with schemes.

Before I get into that, let me give you a quick example of why the armor of God should not be considered in the same fashion in which a Roman soldier's armor worked against, say the Goths or the Visigoths, or various other tribes of the barbarians. Having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (cf. Ephesians 6:15)—what is that, as an example? How does that work against a scheme of the devil? Well, first you must understand what the scheme of the devil is that that overcomes. Every aspect of the armor of God is about overcoming. It is not about defending your position. It is about overcoming the attack of the enemy in that place. Your feet are the first place that your body touches the earth, and your heel is that point at which, if you are walking, your heel touches the ground first. The serpent, as it were, lies in the grass waiting to bite you at the heel, which is your first contact in his realm. "Having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"—that is how Paul puts it in Ephesians 6:15—so, you are prepared to walk in the gospel of peace. Shod—your feet are, in a sense, clothed with a shoe that is designed to, not just protect you from a snake bite, from the bite of the enemy, but actually to crush his head. Immediately you see this is an offensive weapon. This is a way to dismantle the schemes of the devil. We are not yet talking about the schemes of the devil. That is really what I want to talk about today, but I am showing you how dreadfully in need of updating our understanding is of being clothed in the mighty power of God. We need to upgrade from the Sunday school version of this. This is not a little kid's drill. This is not something that you take a kid to Sunday school so he can be amused by being dressed up in a cardboard cutout. This is for real. This is war for adults. Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

What is the gospel of peace? The word "peace" is a military term. It is not the 1960s "Peace, man." It is derived from the term "pacification," which is to degrade your enemy's ability to wage

effective war against you. When you pacify a country in war, you have effectively degraded the ability of that country's military to rise up and be a potential threat to you. In which case, if their armed forces cannot threaten you, then you may rule the country. You may impose your rule upon the country. In the Hebrew term for "peace"—*shalom* (Strong's Hebrew 7965)—there are 4 words (of course, Hebrew is hieroglyphics—picture words):

- 1) *Shin* - The character *shin* is in the form of two front teeth, which describes the act of eating, or devouring, or destroying—to destroy.
- 2) *Lamed* - is authority.
- 3) *Vav* - is to establish; that is like a tent peg that you can secure the tent with.
- 4) *Mem* - is pictured like the waves of the sea or the surface of the water, like a storm-like occurrence, and that means disorder.

Together, *shin* + *lamed* + *vav* + *mem* = to destroy the authority that establishes disorder. That is the term "pacification." Jesus is the Prince of Peace—not because He walks around with a halo and two fingers up; and that everybody can quote or refer to whenever they want to have a "peace initiative," where it is about how nobody does anything that is offensive to anyone. It is about destroying the authority that establishes disorder. It means to destroy the works of the devil; it is about the destruction of the works of the devil. The Son of God was revealed for this reason: to destroy the works of the devil (cf. 1 John 3:8). That is pacification. That is how you reduce to ineffectiveness the ability of the enemy to resist you. The Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil.

Now, your feet shod with the preparation of this gospel, the gospel of peace, means that you are equipped to destroy, in your domain, every scheme of the devil. It means you understand your positioning in the power of Christ, and the ability of the power of Christ working in you and working through you, to eradicate from your sphere of influence that which represents the incursions of a scheme of Satan, by which to take you captive. That is an example and a very nominal reference—very nominal prosecution of this matter. I do not mean by any means to suggest this is an in-depth look at what it means to have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I am using this to show you two things:

- 1) We radically need to upgrade our understanding of what the armor of God means. It is suiting up for warfare to be conducted on the plane of adults, not children.

- 2) You do have and you have been equipped to understand and to dismantle every scheme of your enemy that enters within your domain of rule, beginning with the internal domain of rule, which is your soul.

I want to spend the rest of this broadcast, and perhaps the next one, talking to you about how the enemy actually gains access to your domain. What is his scheme for doing so? Now, the human being is constructed by God to be able to connect to the voice of God, to connect to the heavens, and that which in us connects to God is our spirit. That is why when we are born again, we are born again of His Spirit. The essential nature of the human being is that we were created by God by an endowment of Spirit out of His person. God imparted into human clay an endowment of His Spirit, which has the ability to relate to God, as God is. So by our spirits, we can connect to the mind of God. That connection, ultimately, is reestablished for us. It was severed by Adam, but it was reestablished for us *in Christ*, who sent us the Holy Spirit to testify between our spirits and the mind of God, that we are now aware that we have been reconnected to God, having been born of Him, born of the Spirit. “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*” (John 3:6). Therefore, we are the sons of God, which means we have an ability to hear God. That reconnection to God gives us access to the mind of God, and it represents the potential for us: a) to understand the schemes of the enemy, and b) to rule over them to crush his head.

Now, that is not the only component to us, and that is why the enemy has devised a scheme to entrap us. He can entrap us in that portion of us that touches the earth, the domain of earth—in other words, that portion of us that was designed to function in the earth. So God gave us a spirit to connect us to God, and He gave us a soul to rule from the point of view of God in our domains. This is primarily an issue of the endowment of authority. God has plenary authority, and we talked about this in one of the broadcasts earlier [Note: See Current Affairs # 14]. We are the plenipotentiary—we are the potential of access to the power of God. We humans who have been the delegates of God, having been made so by the Holy Spirit, we have the potential of bringing into our domains, into the spheres of our rule—whether that is internal rule, family rule, the rule beyond that in the work place, the rule in society, *et cetera*, in our circle of friends and acquaintances, and the like... Again, I remind you that “rule” here is not a reference to arbitrary

subjugation of others. Rule is that we are the standard and measure of God's character. Like when we were kids a long time ago (well before the electronic era), we had twelve inch sticks in our book bags, and we called those twelve inch sticks "rulers." We still do. We still call a twelve inch measurement a "ruler." So, we have domains of rule—domains over which and within which we represent the accuracy, the test measures of God as the standard. That is what I mean by rule. In our spirits we are connected to God and we have access to the knowledge, the understanding, the wisdom, the counsel of God's character to function within the domains that we rule over. Our souls are the component of being through which this rule is effectuated. So, our souls were made to rule, to carry out the rule of God coming to us through our spirits within the domains of earth.

Our five senses are the specifics of how we rule. Within these five senses we exercise the rule of God that comes to our souls through our spirits, via the Holy Spirit. The scheme of the enemy is to work within any vulnerability that may be found within these five senses. Here is how he works; this is the scheme. Of course, everyone is born as a child, and a child does not rule over anything. But a child, while still a child, is subject to the experiences that come to the child's soul, via the five senses—the sense of smell, the sense of touch, the sense of taste, the sense of sight, the sense of hearing. Through these senses, when we are children, we take in all manner of experiences, and the first blush of these things is interpreted to us by our souls. The interpretation of the human mind of these impulses that come to us through our senses produce emotions in us.

It is still true that when I smell certain smells—I am thinking of smelling curry, for example. As a small boy growing up, that was something my mother cooked, and smelling curry takes me back to the time and the emotions of a small boy. I have an anticipation that is not purely determined by my present circumstances, but the memory of something generated by an emotion. So my emotions trigger memories—happy memories in some cases, but it could just as well be that a smell can trigger a very unhappy, very terrifying event. The smell of something burning, if you have escaped from a house or a confined space that was on fire, could trigger panic even though you are not immediately in danger. A sound, words that were spoken, could trigger the emotions, which in turn trigger the recall of memories. Sometimes, you are not able to specifically recall the memory itself, but you can definitely recall the emotion, and the emotion is one that is highly

unsettling to you. So, your enemy takes complete advantage of anything within your memory banks that is triggered by the recall of an emotion.

The enemy does not have access to your mind. Be aware of that. Your enemy does *not* have access to your mind. He cannot control your thoughts. What he can do is access your thoughts through the likelihood of your response, by an emotion recalling a thought. In other words, he is extremely practiced in knowing the connections between stimuli in your environment—things that remind you, things that have the capacity to trigger an emotion—which accesses your memory banks with certain thoughts, which in turn predisposes your actions. That is the pathway of the enemy's schemes. Something in your present environment coming through your five senses—like a smell, sound, words, a touch, a feeling—that recalls to you something, for the devil's purposes, very unpleasant, generating an emotion of fear, which takes you back to memories and thoughts that predispose your actions, whether to flight, or to defense, or to counterattack, or whatever. The moment these waves begin to form within your mind, you are in the midst of the enemy's schemes. That is how he works.

Your soul makes decisions on the basis of your emotions; it justifies your decisions on the basis of your reason. When the enemy accesses your emotions, he potentially has accessed your decision-making, and he can control the choreography of how you begin to form a defense or form a response based upon the recall of an emotion triggered through or accessed through your senses. That is what the enemy has. So if you are in your soul, if you are governed by your soul, you are always going to be entrapped in the enemy's schemes. Paul's teachings to us in the book of Ephesians shows us how to overcome the impulses of the soul to be taken captive in this way by the schemes of the enemy, through repositioning us away from the control of the soul to being under the control of the Holy Spirit through our spirits, because our spirits are perfectly compatible with the Holy Spirit. When you are going down the hole of panic and when you are beginning to feel entrapped, this is the manner in which the specific portions of the armor of God begins to work to aid you in this conflict with the devil. That is why we are instructed to take every thought captive. But if you do not understand that the manner in which you take the thought captive is to bring it under the knowledge of Christ, then all you are trying to do is force your soul to take back

control of your soul. And you are going to lose, I would say, every time. That is why very strong, powerful believers can still be held captive to the schemes of the enemy.

I want to discuss the armor of God in detail later on, to continue to equip you for the work of your ministry. God bless you. I will talk to you again soon. Bye-bye.