

THE  
WHOLE  
ARMOUR  
OF GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-20

DECEMBER 7  
MUNDIJONG FRC

# W E L C O M E

## S I N G I N G : H Y M N 35:1-4

1. If God is on our side, against us shall be none  
He did not spare his own, his well beloved Son  
but gave him up for us, that he might save us truly.  
Will he with him not give us all things free and  
fully?

Who then will yet accuse those whom he has  
elected?

'Tis God who justifies in Christ the Resurrected.

2. None will condemn us now! Christ Jesus, he who  
died -

yes, rather, who was raised - sits at his Father's side  
and intercedes for us; he will forsake us never.

Who from the love of Christ shall separate us ever?  
Shall persecution, shall distress, or tribulation,  
or nakedness, or sword, or peril or starvation?

3. 'Tis written, "For your sake they kill us all day long;  
we are considered sheep by haters fierce and strong;  
we're being put to death and driven to the slaughter."  
All day we are disgraced, we are poured out like water,  
but yet in all these things we are more than victorious  
through him who loved his own, our Saviour great and  
glorious

4. I am convinced that neither powers, death, nor life,  
nor angels, things to come, things present, princes, strife,  
nor height, nor depth, nor any other thing created  
will from the love of God now keep us separated -  
his love in Jesus Christ, the Saviour whom he gave us,  
that through his precious blood he might redeem and save  
us.

## P R A Y E R

## R E A D I N G : E P H E S I A N S 6:10-20

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers,  
against rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly  
places.

13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day,  
and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of  
righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of  
the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with  
all perseverance and supplication for all the saints -

19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make  
known the mystery of the gospel,

20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.



## THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

War. Armour. Battle - all concepts that we understand, yet so seemingly detached from our day-to-day realities. We may every so often read a news article on a war being fought on another continent, know of someone enlisted in the army or navy, or have a great-grandfather or relative remembered as having fought in the past; but do we realise that we, too, are engaged in battle each and every day of our lives, and are we prepared to fight? The spiritual battle between Christ's church and Satan has existed throughout all history, and will remain until the last day. We all are soldiers in this war. Us, young ladies, students, wives, mothers, grandmothers? Yes, each and every one of us in this room! We may not identify as 'warriors' in the traditional sense of the word, yet we bear the name of Christ, and are commanded to be His spiritual soldiers. We know that Christ, by His death on the cross, has defeated sin and Satan. But that does not mean we can rest easy until His return. Satan is always busy, like a prowling lion, seeking to devour those who do not resist (1Pet 5:8,9). Abraham Kuyper characterised this spiritual war as "a struggle so intense, so convulsive, sweeping away everything within its range, that the most fierce battle fought on earth would seem like mere child's play by comparison."



How do we keep from becoming casualties on such an intense spiritual battlefield? We look to the Bible, and find the answer as Paul writes in Ephesians 6. As a prisoner of the Roman Empire, Paul would have been familiar with Roman soldiers – and it is a soldier's armour that the apostle uses as a metaphor for how God has equipped us to be able to stand against our powerful spiritual enemy. Let's now look more closely at each aspect of the spiritual armour we have been gifted.

### STAND THEREFORE, HAVING GIRDED YOUR WAIST WITH TRUTH...

A Roman soldier's belt was a crucial piece of armour. It gathered the tunic so that they could move more freely, fastened onto the breastplate, and held the sheath of the sword. Paul calls the belt in God's armour, the 'belt of truth'. We need to be belted and buckled with truth – what truth? As Jesus told Pilate in John 18:37 "...for this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Jesus is the embodiment of truth. He is the word become flesh, "the way, the truth, and the life". (John 14:6). People and cultures hold to their own 'truths' these days and false teachings flourish, but we know these to be fallible, man centred claims. The devil loves to plant seeds of doubt in our minds, just as he did with Eve. Where there is doubt, conviction fails. When we don't hold on to the truth of God's word, we falter. Only in the truth of Jesus can we stand firm against the wiles of the devil, and refute false teachings that try to tear us apart. When we wear the belt of truth, we are given the means to resist the devil, "that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ" (Ephesians 4:14-15)

## ... HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ...

“Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous” (1 John 3:7). Our breastplate is Christ’s righteousness, for we in ourselves have none. Faithfully living out the truth is to live righteously. To be a Christian and walk in a way that does not adhere to what God teaches in the bible, is to march into battle with a chink in your armour. Note that the righteousness spoken of here, is not self-righteousness. The Pharisees erred in this thinking, and Jesus warns against this proud self-assurance, for just as the proud prayer of the self-righteous Pharisee did not credit to him salvation, nor will it credit us. In 1 John 2:1 we read that “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”. We are called to “present ourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness to God.” (Romans 6:13) It is only when, clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, will we be able to live the truth of the gospel, and withstand Satan’s lures. Through the righteousness of Christ, his perfect life and death, we are made right with God, and can live righteously in thankfulness for this immeasurable gift.



## ... AND HAVING SHOD YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE ;

The Roman army’s soldiers were all fitted with sandals called caligae. They were an innovation designed to protect soldier’s feet during long marches, with thick soles, and straps that wrapped around to prevent blistering. They also had spikes on the bottom which gave traction as they travelled over all types of difficult terrain. Satan is the antithesis of the Gospel, or ‘good news’, and we know he is busy distorting, ridiculing, even outlawing this gospel of peace. Why? Because Christians can stand firm in the perfect peace and assurance it brings, leaving no room for his lies. By standing firm in the gospel, we can know true peace even in the most turbulent of times. We think of Job, afflicted and persecuted, yet he persevered. How? He says in Job 19:25 “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth.” Knowing and trusting this, we too can not only persevere, but experience a peace surpassing all understanding, even in the most trying times in our lives. This peace brings not only peace with God, but also with our circumstances good or bad, with other believers, and gives us a firm foundation upon which we can stand against the schemes of the devil.

The word 'readiness' has been used interchangeably with 'preparation' in this verse. We must always be ready and prepared, digging our feet in firmly on the foundation of the gospel, to be able to withstand the storms that Satan stirs up. There is no news that Satan would rather squelch than the good news of the gospel, and we will face many barriers in our calling to stand firm and spread the good news to others. Only when wearing the full armour, even the shoes that God provides, is this possible!



... ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH  
WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO QUENCH  
ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE ...

The shield mentioned in this verse refers to a large, oblong shield approximately 2.5 x 4 feet that protected the whole body. It was made of strong wood, canvas, metal and leather, and was fire-retardant to repel the fiery arrows commonly used in warfare. It was the difference between life and death for a soldier. The devil's attacks are often like fiery arrows – they are launched from a distance with the element of surprise, specifically aimed at points of weakness, they are swift and silent. These arrows spread their fire quickly, igniting others to sin and temptation, overcoming those closest. They may be aimed at the mind, to stir up doubt. They may pierce our will, wear us down, or target our conscience – that little voice in the back of your mind asking “Is this really so bad?” or “just this once won't hurt”. Just as we each need the shield of faith to be protected individually, we must be careful not to scorch each other if our shield catches fire, causing others to fall into sin. The devil and his cohorts may shoot the arrows, but you and I are responsible to use the faith that God has given us as a shield. The shield of faith is a powerful defensive weapon, for when we trust in God's power and protection, we can remain steadfast. Our faith must remain in God and God alone, and we must actively be wielding this shield to defend against the many flaming arrows that come our way. Just as Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, so will he tempt us in any and every way possible, especially when we are at our weakest. “Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time” (Luke 4:13). Let us wield our shields of faith always, and stand fast in scripture so that, like Jesus, we too can resist temptation, and not be used as instruments of Satan to ignite others to fall into sin.

## SINGING PSALM 18:10, 11

10 Who but the Lord is God, so great in splendour?  
Who is a rock but God, my strong defender?  
He with his strength has armed and girded me;  
my way he has prepared most perfectly.  
With him as guide, I will not fall or stumble;  
he makes my feet like deer's feet, swift and nimble;  
he lets me stand secure on mountain heights.  
There I am safe, supported by his might

11 O Lord, you for the day of battle train me,  
and with your help you strengthen and sustain me.  
My arms can even bend the strongest bow;  
all who attack me I will overthrow.  
You granted me the shield of your salvation,  
and your right hand upheld my place and station  
Your gentle care has made me strong and great.  
I did not slip: my path is broad and straight.

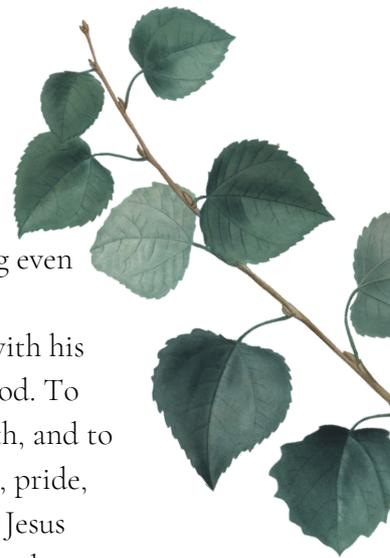


## ... AND TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION ...

Our armour is coming together - We have a belt, breastplate, sturdy shoes, a large shield to protect against fiery arrows, and now a helmet to cover the vulnerable head, most susceptible to fatal blows. In 2 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul uses the same analogy, saying "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation." The word Hope in this biblical context is not used as we often use it to mean 'wish', but speaks of a faith in our future deliverance by God that is so real and sure that it is tangible, concrete. This hope is an anchor for our soul, because the object of our hope is Christ himself! Our helmet of salvation gives us confidence, for we know we do not fight for victory, but from a position of victory. We are victorious in Christ, for we know "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). Hope placed on the visible, material aspects of life will inevitably disappoint as these things are finite. Our lives must be characterised by hope in Christ – if they are not, we will scatter and run before the enemy just as the disciples fled when Jesus was arrested. They were focussing only on what was seen, not on what is unseen, what Jesus was only able to fulfill in deed by his death on the cross. In a world full of hopelessness, do you wear the helmet of salvation? Then rejoice! For we have a hope that will never disappoint, but that gives great joy in the Lord and protection from the evil one.

## ... AND THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD ...

The power of the sword of the Spirit is described in Hebrews 4:12 this way; "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Just as every Roman soldier would be equipped with his sword, both to defend and offend, so every believer is equipped with the Word of God. To wield the sword of the spirit is to use Scripture to defend against the attacks on truth, and to oppose false beliefs. In the wilderness, Satan tempted Jesus with allurements of food, pride, and power and even tried to use scripture against him, quoting Psalm 91. Each time, Jesus response was "It is written...". When we find ourselves tempted, we must always go back to God's word and respond in the same way. How vital it is, then, that we are intimately familiar with the bible, that we may be able to use it as a cornerstone of truth in every aspect of our lives. We need to read, study, familiarise, memorise, conform to, and meditate on scripture, in order to be able to use it effectively. The devil tries to prevent this with distractions, busyness, discrediting – all calls for us to drop our swords. We must never do this, for just as a soldier would never give up his sword in the midst of battle, we too cannot put aside that which God has given for defending truth and avoiding deception.



## ... PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT ...

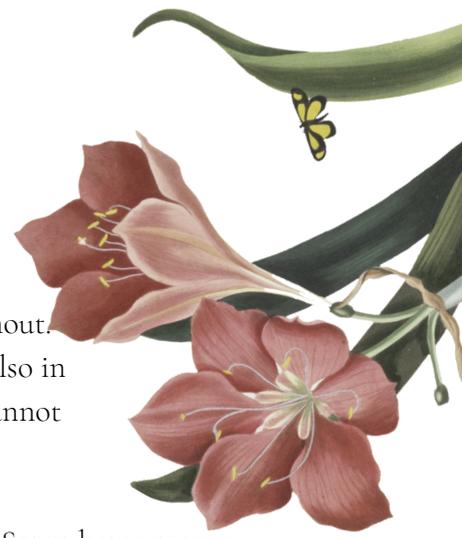
Our last offensive weapon, or tactic, is prayer. The Bible has much to say on prayer, and we can read of many powerful prayers and their outcomes throughout. Our prayers must be continual and unceasing, not just in troubled times but also in times of peace and prosperity. We know that our enemy never rests, and we cannot sustain the battle in our own strength.

James 5:16 says "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much". Satan hates prayer, for he understands its' power, and will do everything to keep us from prayer to God. In spiritual warfare, we must use prayer as a powerful resource. When we pray, we glorify God, and acknowledge that through him, all things are possible. What do we pray for? Not just for ourselves, but also our fellow warriors on the battlefield, just as Paul (from prison) asked his readers to pray for his continued strength in his proclamation of the gospel. We need to pray that our churches shine as beacons of truth, for those who are under the siege of oppression, those on the front lines of God's army, our ministers, government leaders, and those wounded by the schemes of the devil. By our prayers, much can be accomplished!

It is in prayer, that our armour is completed. If we are to stand firm, we must pray! All the spiritual armour in the world is useless without prayer, because prayer connects us to the mighty strength of the Lord. Through prayer, our deep dependence on God is expressed. We are continually instructed to pray throughout scripture. Luke 18:1 tells us "that people always ought to pray and not lose heart". Romans 12:12 says "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, continue steadfastly in prayer." Paul in our text speaks of praying, an active verb, emphasising the need to pray continually, securing and fastening each piece of armour through prayer, and glorifying our Father through it.

When we look around the room tonight, what do we see? Not a battalion of soldiers arrayed in fine suits of steel, ready to face an earthly foe. Yet you and I, we are soldiers one and all. Our armour is invisible to the eye but is the most powerful, unbreakable, priceless armour there is – the armour of God. Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." It is in this armour that we trust we can stand firm, until the return of our Lord Jesus. We may at times grow weary, bear wounds, and experience distress, yet with eyes to Christ, we know we have the strength to stand firm, for He is already victorious.

How fitting and encouraging then are the words of the 19th century hymn by George Duffield, Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus.





STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS,  
YE SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS;  
LIFT HIGH HIS ROYAL BANNER,  
IT MUST NOT SUFFER LOSS.  
FROM VICTORY UNTO VICTORY  
HIS ARMY SHALL HE LEAD,  
TILL EVERY FOE IS VANQUISHED,  
AND CHRIST IS LORD INDEED

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS,  
STAND IN HIS STRENGTH ALONE  
THE ARM OF FLESH WILL FAIL YOU,  
YE DARE NOT TRUST YOUR OWN.  
PUT ON THE GOSPEL ARMOUR,  
EACH PIECE PUT ON WITH PRAYER;  
WHERE DUTY CALLS OR DANGER,  
BE NEVER WANTING THERE.

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS,  
THE STRIFE WILL NOT BE LONG;  
THIS DAY THE NOISE OF BATTLE,  
THE NEXT THE VICTOR'S SONG.  
TO THOSE WHO VANQUISH EVIL  
A CROWN OF LIFE SHALL BE;  
THEY WITH THE KING OF GLORY  
SHALL REIGN ETERNALLY.



GEORGE DUFFIELD, 1858

## INTERLUDE

### SINGING: PSALM 66:1, 8

1 Let all the earth with loud rejoicing  
the greatness of our God acclaim  
with shouts of praise let all adore him,  
sing to the glory of his name.  
Let all then say, "How awe inspiring  
are all your works, how great your power;  
before your strength, O God Almighty,  
your enemies all cringe and cower.

8 If I had cherished any evil,  
the Lord would not have heeded me.  
I know that God indeed has heard me;  
he has attended to my plea.  
Forever blest be God my Saviour,  
who has not turned away my prayer,  
nor has withheld from me his mercy,  
his never-failing love and care.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Why is it significant that Paul emphasises twice in this passage to take up the FULL armour of God?
2. In 6:12, who are identified as our enemies, and where do they reside? What do we understand of the 4 listed?
3. In verse 15, Paul uses the phrase 'having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace', not simply 'the gospel of peace'. What is the distinction he is making?
4. How does the sword function differently from the other pieces of armour?
5. How can we use our knowledge of God's word to engage in our battle with Satan? (Heb 4:12, Mat 4:1-11)
6. Discuss the practical applications of wearing the whole armour of God in our lives today?
7. How do we understand the difference by how we, soldiers for Christ wield the sword, compared to Christ? See Isaiah 49:2, Revelation 1:16, Revelation 19:15
8. What are some of the methods the devil uses to keep us from prayer, and how can we overcome them?
9. Prayer: Do we underestimate its power in our lives today? See James 5:13-20, 1Kings 18:36-39, Isaiah 38:5
10. What does it mean to 'pray in the Spirit'? (see Romans 8:15, 26-27)
11. Why is it necessary to pray continually, when we believe that God knows all things and has planned all things, including future outcomes?

SINGING: HYMN 61:1, 2

1 We thank you, Father! You have planted  
your holy name within our hearts.  
True knowledge, faith, and life immortal  
Jesus your Son to us imparts.  
You, Lord have made all for your pleasure;  
you gave man food for all his days.  
giving in Christ the Bread eternal  
Yours is the power, yours be the praise

2 Watch o'er your church, O Lord, in mercy;  
save it from evil, guard it still.  
Perfect it, in your love, unite it,  
cleansed and conformed unto your will.  
As grain once scattered on the hillsides,  
was in the broken bread made one,  
so from all lands your church be gathered  
into your kingdom by your Son.

CLOSING PRAYER

THANKYOU FOR JOINING US!  
MAY WE CONTINUE TO BE EDIFIED  
BY THE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD IN  
THE WOMEN'S CLUBS OF  
MUNDIJONG FRC.

