

LESSON 7

AS A SOLDIER

**"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."
(Ephesians 6:12)**

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CONCEPT OF THE PICTURE

1. **Battlefield** The Christian life has the aspect of a spiritual battle.
2. **Light shining in from above** This battle is the Lord's battle.
3. **Burning Arrows** There are three enemies that attack Christians.
 - (1) **Dark Shadow** Satan
 - (2) **Throne** Desires of the flesh
 - (3) **Food, Clothing, and Shelter** worldly desires
4. **3 Soldiers** There are three types of soldiers that fight the spiritual battle.
 - (1) **Wounded Soldier** The natural man
 - (2) **Soldier in Despair** Those who belong to the flesh (Infants in Christ)
 - (3) **Fighting Soldier** Those who are with the Spirit
5. **Equipment of Fighting Soldier** You must wear the spiritual armor given to us by God.
 - (1) **Belt** Belt of truth
 - (2) **Breastplate** Breastplate of righteousness
 - (3) **Sandals** Readiness for the gospel of peace
 - (4) **Giant shield** Shield of faith
 - (5) **Helmet** Helmet of salvation
 - (6) **Sword** Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)

LESSON 7. AS A SOLDIER

INTRODUCTION

To live is in itself a constant battle whether you are a Christian or not. An infant is thrown into the new battle as soon as it is born. Human bodies incessantly fight against bacteria that enter them. Plants will die without water and maintenance. Marriages are not a matter of luck, but something that requires nurturing by two people. To live, in that sense, is to fight.

1. The Christian life has the aspect of a spiritual battle.

Becoming a Christian does not mean that you no longer have to fight. Before his death, Jesus prayed for his disciples:

"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it."

(John 17:15-16)

What is guaranteed to a Christian is not freedom from problems, but freedom within problems.

2. This battle is the Lord's battle.

However, Christians do not have to fight this spiritual battle on their own. Jesus Christ will fight with you.

"for the battle is the Lord's,"

(1 Samuel 17:47)

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them."

(1 John 4:4-5)

3. There are three enemies that attack Christians.

These three enemies are not distinct from one another but rather intertwined, but for the sake of this lecture let's split them into three parts:

(1) Satan

Even those who believe in God sometimes doubt the existence of Satan. Once you decide to listen to and follow God's voice, the existence of Satan starts to be a reality.

Satan acts not only to trouble us, but to completely destroy us.

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

(1 Peter 5:8)

Satan will:

- Interfere with God's work. (Mark 4:15)
- Attempt to separate people from God (Job 2:4~5)
- Demand worship (Luke 4:6~8)
- Disguise himself as an angel (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- Abuse the Bible (Matthew 4:6)
- Raise the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:9)

Satan's obstruction of evangelism is obvious from the accounts about the work of the Apostles.

- Simon, the Samaritan sorcerer (Acts 8:9)
- Bar-Jesus, the Salamisian false prophet and sorcerer (Acts 13:6)
- Young female slave in Philippi who was taken by the spirit of divination (Acts 16:16)
- Evil spirit in Ephesus and the Jewish exorcist. (Acts 19:13)

(2) Satan

We need to be aware that in this context, the word "flesh" does not mean our physical bodies or human nature, but rather the fundamental evil that resides within us.

"As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."

(Romans 7:17-18)

Our selfishness must be crucified consistently. While it is a decision to be made at a certain point, it is also something that must be continued every day.

"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

(Galatians 5:24)

Galatians 5:16~26 illustrates the contrast between physical and spiritual principles, but because Christians have both of these characteristics within themselves, they experience unending troubles.

(3) Worldly Desires

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever."

(1 John 2:15-17)

The word "world" may refer to the mainly human world created by God, but it may also refer to the forces that oppose God. In this case, it is the latter. In the previous section we discussed the two polar characteristics of Christians (physical and spiritual) but here, too, is another set of polar characteristics—that Christians are not of this world, but are sent to this world.

- Not of this world. (John 17:14-16)
- Are sent to this world. (John 17:18)
- Cannot conform to the pattern of this world. (Romans 12:2)

A blessed life is the life in which one confesses to being a sojourner.

4. There are three types of soldiers that fight the spiritual battle.

How do people fight this spiritual battle?

- The natural man
- Those who belong to the flesh
- Those who are with the Spirit

Let's think about it in terms of the three parts mentioned above.

(1) The Natural Man

To these people, only what they can see is real—the spiritual world, and the reality of the Word appear foolish to them. Consequently, they will absolutely lose the spiritual battle.

"The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit."

(1 Corinthians 2:14)

(2) Those who belong to the flesh (Infants in Christ)

Paul called the Corinthian Christians the following (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)

- Not ready for solid food.
- There is jealousy and quarreling.

These are the people that are aware of the spiritual battle, but cannot win.

(3) Those who are with the Spirit

"The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,"

(1 Corinthians 2:15)

Let's now think once again about spiritual breathing (the Lord's prayer) which we learned about in section 5.

5. You must wear the spiritual armor given to us by God.

Those that are with the Spirit can put on the divine armor and win the battle.

"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

(Ephesians 6:14-17)

(1) Belt of Truth

People will find freedom if they follow the truth, and if they oppose it, they won't get anything done.

"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

(John 8:31-32)

"For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth."

(2 Corinthians 13:8)

(2) Breastplate of Righteousness

A breastplate is for protecting the heart. Paul spoke of the change in your values when you understand the righteousness of God.

"What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."

(Philippians 3:8-9)

(3) Readiness for the Gospel of Peace

It is important to be ready to act on God's Will. Soldiers wore sandals so that they could move at a moment's notice.

(4) Shield of Faith

The faith mentioned here must be faith in the Word. Faith is to have assurance of something that you haven't seen.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

(Hebrews 11:1)

(5) Helmet of Salvation

This means to be sure of salvation. Without assurance you will fall into the enemy's traps.

"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

(1 Thessalonians 5:8)

(6) Sword of the Spirit (the Word of God)

Jesus' trials in the wilderness all ended with victory by the Word.

The battle of Christians will be lost if we turn our backs towards the enemy. The armor given to us by God are all meant to protect the front of our bodies. Let's keep moving forward without turning our backs to the enemy.