

Ephesians 6:14–17 | “Suit Up!”

Preached on January 4, 2026 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 6, verses 14–17, as we are close to finishing out the book of Ephesians. *[pauseeee]*

Last week, we saw that we are in a spiritual battle and heard that we are to put on the armor of God. *[pause]*

Today, we will be looking at the specific pieces of that armor. *[pause]*

Let’s READ the passage. *[READ]*

My sermon this morning is titled, “Suit Up!” *[pause]*

When I think of suiting up, I think of soldiers in an army called to suit up, so that they’re prepared to go to battle. *[pause]*

They have to quickly put on their armor and gear, in order to be ready to go. *[pause]*

You don’t suit up when it’s time to go to sleep or go home—no, you suit up because *it’s time to go to war*. *[pause]*

So they put on their armor, belt, helmet, weapon, etc., and each piece of gear is important and plays a part in what they need. *[pauseee]*

To not be suited up is to be unprepared, but suiting up readies you for the mission.

And that’s what Paul is calling us to here when he tells us to put on the armor of God. *[pause]*

He’s not saying, “It’s time to go to sleep,” nor is he saying, “Retreat!” Instead, he’s telling us to get ready to go, get protected, and be resolved to fight. *[pauseeee]*

Christians are not to be running away in defeat, scared of the evil around them. *[pause]*

So many are doing this—they are hunkering down in fear, trembling—all the while, grumbling under their breath at how bad it is out there.

But the Lord doesn’t call us to do that, rather, He’s calling us to stand firm, suited up with His armor. *[pauseee]*

We are not to have a defeatist mindset, but we must remember that we are on the side of victory. *[pause]*

This means that a Christian is an “ever-ready” soldier in the faith—he or she is suited up and ready to go. *[pause]*

We can't be in love with the world, lethargic spiritually, or caught in sin, if we are to be suited up.

No, we suit up, equipped with the armor that God provides. *[pauseee]*

Back on Monday, it was a super windy day with really strong gusts of wind.

And I was walking outside with a couple bags in my hands, and all of a sudden, a strong gust hit my back, and knocked me slightly off balance. *[pause]*

The reason why it knocked me off balance for a moment was because I wasn't ready for it.

So also, you have to be prepared to stand in the faith, or you won't stand. *[pauseee]*

Many wonder why they are caught in sin, and when you look closer at their lives, you see that they lived an everything BUT a battle-ready life. *[pause]*

But you must have a battle-ready mindset as a Christian, for why else would we need *armor*? *[pauseeeee]*

A Christian soldier cannot despair and put on the armor of God, for despair means that you have given up, and have not been resolved to be prepared.

So before we get into the specific pieces of armor, I want you to consider your general mentality to the Christian life—is it despair? *[pause]*

Are you lethargic or distracted by the things of this world, or are you ready and resolved to “fight the good fight of the faith”?¹ *[pauseeeee]*

“Author Irving Stone spent a lifetime studying greatness, writing novelized biographies of famous men. *[pause]*

Stone was once asked if he had found a thread that runs through the lives of all these exceptional people.

And he said, “They are beaten over the head, knocked down, vilified...But every time they're knocked down, they stand up. You cannot destroy these people.”² *[pauseee]*

That's how we as Christians should be, but in an even deeper way...

Not because we trust in ourselves, but because we simply stand firm in what God has provided. *[pause]*

¹ 1 Timothy 6:12.

² Original from: *Crossroads*, Issue No. 7, p. 18. Found at: <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/perseverance.htm>.

The devil should think, “These people will not stay down, no matter what I throw at them!”
[pauseeee]

So are you ready to suit up? Then let’s see what exactly the Lord has put in our armory. *[pause]*

First...

I. Put on the belt, breastplate, and shoes.

Paul begins sharing the armor of God by telling us 3 different items to “put on.” *[pause]*

What’s interesting is that God in the Old Testament is said to be clothed with similar things...

In Isaiah 11:5, it’s talking about the Messiah who will come, and it says this: “Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.” *[pause]*

In Isaiah 59, it pictures the Lord intervening in the world, and it says, “He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head...”³ *[pause]*

Clearly, this imagery of being clothed with certain virtues is this picture of possessing these things so much, that it can be said that you are *clothed* with them. *[pauseeee]*

Think of someone’s clothing that they are wearing...

When you see them, you see their clothing, and it’s with them wherever they go.

So likewise—truth, righteousness, faithfulness, and other things should be so linked with us that it’s like the clothing that we wear, and this clothing reflects God’s own characteristics. *[pauseeee]*

The first piece of armor is called, “the belt of truth,” and we are to fasten it on. *[pause]*

Now some people say this truth entails being truthful, and we could probably say that it’s *both* truth and being truthful, for they go hand-in-hand.

That is, you must know the truth and live in light of it. *[pauseeee]*

Our world is devoid of truth in many regards. *[pause]*

First, many do not know what is true because there is so much fake news and misleading stories.

Many days, we think, “How do I know what is true?!” *[pause]*

Likewise, our world is trying to twist the truth by twisting the meaning of words and institutions. *[pause]*

Marriage is no longer what marriage is supposed to be, and the truth of gender is all tangled up now with lies. *[pauseee]*

³ Isaiah 59:17a.

Our world is devoid of truth because it has been neglected, twisted, and deformed, but what Paul is showing us here is that Christians are to be people of the truth.

We not only know and speak the truth, but we live in line with it. *[pause]*

We don't intentionally live as if lies were real, but we are to be "wrapped" in truth, like a belt. *[pauseeee]*

When someone puts a belt on, it steadies and anchors everything else. *[pause]*

In Paul's day, a soldier's belt held everything together and even held the sword in place.

Without a belt, it would all be loose, and make an ineffective soldier, in fact, they would be tripping over their clothing. *[pause]*

So what we see here is that truth stabilizes and holds everything together. *[pause]*

If you follow after lies, it's like you will be tripping over things constantly, and veering off to the side. *[pause]*

You will trip and fall into sin.

You will turn down the wrong path.

You will hear something and go, "Oh, that sounds good, I'll go that way," but it will lead nowhere good. *[pause]*

But if you have on the belt of truth, then you are stabilized and held firmly together. *[pauseeee]*

We are to be people who love the truth, want the truth, believe the truth, and speak the truth.

Lies and all falsehoods should be *detestable* to us. *[pauseeee]*

So are you someone who says, "I want to know the truth, I don't want to believe lies"? *[pauseeee]*

The key to any battle is knowing who the enemy is and what the dangers are.

And truth is vital to that, for if you don't see things clearly in battle, then you won't stand. *[pause]*

So are you steeped in the truth of God's Word? *[pause]*

Do you know the doctrines of the faith? *[pause]*

So many make light of these things, but they give us a certain stability, as we are wrapped in them.

They allow us to see truth from error. *[pauseeee]*

There's a story of a Scottish pastor, who taught some in his congregation to read because they were illiterate. *[pause]*

He helped one man begin to read the easy portions of the Bible, but the pastor had to leave for a few months. *[pause]*

When he returned, he stopped by to see the man, and saw the man's wife. *[pause]*

He asked her how her husband was doing with reading through the Bible, and the wife said, "Oh, no! He's got out of the Bible and into the newspaper long ago."⁴ *[pauseeee]*

Sadly, that illustration is characteristic of many Christians—they have moved out of the Bible and into everything else. *[pause]*

They know more about needless trivia than about the great truths of Scripture, but we should be people of truth, so much so, that we know it well. *[pause]*

May we fasten on the belt of truth! *[pauseeee]*

The next piece of armor that we must put on is the breastplate of righteousness. *[pause]*

Now the question is: is this the righteousness that God provides us through Christ, or is it the righteousness that we live out? *[pause]*

It's probably both, for the one affects the other...

Because we are declared righteous by faith in God's sight, then God works in us to live righteously in the world. *[pauseeee]*

So how is righteousness a breastplate?

Well a breastplate protects the most vital places, like the heart. *[pause]*

If you get stabbed in the chest, then you are done for—so righteousness protects the central and innermost places of us. *[pauseeee]*

What the devil does is he uses accusation to try to get us right in the heart. *[pause]*

If we let his accusations get through, we could get stabbed with guilt and shame.

And that guilt and shame only makes us idle, ineffective, and possibly want to give up. *[pause]*

But when Satan tries to stab us with accusation, our breastplate of knowing that I'm righteous in Christ should deflect it. *[pause]*

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *Ephesians: An Expository Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 245.

Like that one hymn so beautifully says, “When Satan tempts me to despair, and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see Him there, who made an end to all my sin.”⁵ *[pauseeee]*

Not only does knowing I am righteous in Christ help deflect accusation, but living righteously can also help defend against the devil. *[pause]*

Think about it this way: a life of *unrighteousness* opens up your chest to Satan’s attacks. *[pause]*

When you follow after sin, you give the devil more and more opportunities to stab you. *[pauseeee]*

If you remain angry, he can tempt you to become even more angry and bitter.

But if you choose to live for the Lord, then the devil only finds your chest protected and closed up with a breastplate. *[pauseeee]*

How could he be effective in causing you to become bitter, if you are continually forgiving others? *[pause]*

How could he bring you down, if you are faithfully living for the Lord? *[pauseeee]*

I think of Joseph in the Old Testament...

Potiphar’s wife tried to tempt him to be with her, but Joseph’s breastplate of righteousness was on.⁶ *[pause]*

He kept choosing obedience to God, and it guarded his heart from sin. *[pauseeee]*

The next item that we are to put on is shoes. *[pause]*

Paul says, “as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.” *[pauseeee]*

When you put on shoes, it gives you a certain readiness to act—it prepares you to go to battle. *[pauseee]*

Sometimes my children will play football in the backyard and they will be playing with no shoes on. *[pause]*

I can tell they are struggling a little bit, so I tell them to put on shoes because then they could play better, and it makes a difference!

Shoes give your feet some protection, but also better grip. *[pause]*

⁵ “Before the Throne of God Above,” by Charitie L. Bancroft.

⁶ A reference to Genesis 39:6b–10.

That's what these shoes of readiness do—they prepare a soldier to be ready for anything!
[pauseeee]

Shoes keep you grounded, steady, and confident.

So also, when we have firm footing on the gospel of peace, we can be ready for whatever comes our way. *[pause]*

To know that I have peace with God due to the good news of Jesus Christ makes a world of a difference—I am prepared to meet anything! *[pause]*

To know that I have peace with God: what can they do to me?! *[pauseeeee]*

The gospel of peace also brings peace between others...

Through Christ, people are brought together into one, and so reconciliation can happen. *[pause]*

Knowing this, I am ready to forgive, ready to reconcile. *[pauseeee]*

The gospel of peace gives me a readiness to stand firm, a readiness to reconcile, but also a readiness to go share it with others. *[pause]*

Listen to Isaiah 52:7 and notice the mention of good news and feet...

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace...” *[pauseeee]*

Do you have your belt, breastplate, and shoes on? *[pause]*

Put on truth, righteousness, and the readiness of the gospel—and in doing so, you will be stabilized, heart guarded, and prepared to meet the enemy. *[pauseeeee]*

So the first three items are things that we must “put on,” but now we will see three items that we are to “take up.”

So secondly...

II. Grab the shield, helmet, and sword.

Shoes, a belt, and a breastplate are a great start for a soldier. *[pause]*

Things are fastened, they are ready to move around, and their chest is protected.

They are now ready to go out to battle, right? *[pause]*

Actually, they are missing some vital pieces of armor—they need head protection, a shield, and a weapon. *[pause]*

That's what we find next to round out the armor of God, and so let's see the shield of faith first. *[pauseeee]*

Having a breastplate on is an important piece of protection, but having a shield makes you *extra* protected. *[pauseeee]*

My sons have these toy swords and shields that they like to play with. *[pause]*

They will battle each other, and the shields take the brunt of the hits...

They will just keep hitting each other's shields with the swords because the shields are hard to get around. *[pauseeee]*

The shield is an excellent form of protection and defense. *[pauseeee]*

This shield is called "the shield of faith," so it's trust in the Lord that shields us from the enemy's arrows. *[pause]*

Oh, how important faith is!

How often do you view trust in the Lord as a shield? *[pause]*

Little do many people realize how faith can protect them from so much. *[pauseeee]*

When a person is facing temptation to sin, to doubt, or to give up, they often think that what they need is just to muster up more personal strength.

Or they think that they just need some new tips and tricks.

Or maybe they think, "I just need to stop it, that's all," yet how often do they see their need as more faith? *[pauseeee]*

When doubts creep in, do you believe that you need to trust the promises of God more? *[pause]*

When temptations assail, do you trust in God's provided ways of escape?⁷ *[pause]*

When anxiety arises, do you cast your cares upon the Lord in faith?⁸ *[pauseeee]*

This trust in the Lord acts like a shield against the devil's flaming arrows.

In fact, this shield "extinguishes" his arrows—it suppresses and quenches them before they can do anything. *[pauseeeee]*

These darts are "flaming" darts, for they are dangerous and destructive.

⁷ A reference to 1 Corinthians 10:13.

⁸ A reference to 1 Peter 5:7.

The dart could hit you, and then the flame could overtake you, and that's a vivid image of sin's destruction. *[pauseeee]*

Satan is on the attack; he is no friend.

He wants to shoot you and set you ablaze in sin, doubt, guilt, or despair, yet Paul says that this shield will be able to extinguish ALL his flaming darts! *[pause]*

What a promise—when you trust God, the evil one's darts do no damage to you.

They are extinguished, and all of the devil's efforts go in vain. *[pause]*

What a glorious joy to thwart the devil's darts!

Make him frustrated by having a firm trust in the Lord, so that he flees in defeat. *[pauseeee]*

The helmet of salvation comes next. *[pause]*

Over in 1 Thessalonians 5, Paul says that we must put on “for a helmet the *hope* of salvation.”⁹ *[pause]*

This shows us that this ‘helmet of salvation’ is the confident assurance of our salvation, and it affects our mind. *[pauseee]*

In battle, your head needs to be protected, for a head shot is disastrous.

Likewise, a healthy head helps you to be focused and effective in battle. *[pause]*

Your mind can't be all over the place in battle, but it must remain clear, confident, and focused.

So also, the assurance of our salvation guards our minds. *[pause]*

No doubt can infiltrate a head that has the helmet of salvation.

No despair can pierce through your headgear. *[pauseeee]*

To know that I am secure in Christ protects my mind from myriads of false thoughts. *[pause]*

Fear is nowhere to be found in a soldier, whose mind is fixedly assured on the salvation they have in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

To know that Christ has saved me, will preserve me, and will bring me home someday is like kryptonite to doubts, fear, and despair in the mind.

They just keep deflecting off of your helmet. *[pauseeee]*

⁹ 1 Thessalonians 5:8 (italics is mine).

The sword of the Spirit is the last piece of armor mentioned, and we are told that this is the Word of God. *[pause]*

Now, why is the Word of God called a sword?

It's because it not only defends against attacks, but pierces through lies like a sword. *[pause]*

Hebrews 4:12 says...

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” *[pauseeee]*

The Word of God cuts through lies to expose the truth—it can cut through falsehood like butter. *[pause]*

This is why it is an excellent weapon, and why it's called a sword.

We wield it against the devil's attacks, exposing his lies for what they are, and defeating temptation with the slashes, strikes, and stabs of the Word of God. *[pauseeee]*

The prime example of someone using the Word of God like a sword is Jesus in the wilderness against Satan.¹⁰ *[pause]*

After every temptation attempt, Jesus would just respond with the Word of God, piercing through the temptation, and showing it for what it was.

And eventually, Satan left because the sword of the Spirit was used *masterfully* against him. *[pauseeee]*

What a model to follow!

Slash every temptation down with the sword of the Spirit—it works effectively! *[pauseeee]*

As we think about all of these items, we see that we are to...

Prepare to stand in battle by suiting up with the armor of God!

To finish out this morning, let's put all of this armor together into one, using a practical example. *[pause]*

Let's say that someone sins against you and you are tempted to not forgive them. *[pause]*

The belt of truth helps you see that it's wrong to not forgive a person, for the Word of God says to forgive. *[pause]*

¹⁰ A reference to Matthew 4:1–11.

The breastplate of righteousness is used as you walk in obedience to forgive, for the devil could have gotten to your heart, if you didn't forgive because bitterness would have taken root. *[pause]*

The shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace remind you of the peace that Christ has brought you, so you are willing to reconcile with that person. *[pause]*

The shield of faith deflects the arrows of doubt about what you are doing, for you trust God's way of forgiveness. *[pause]*

The helmet of salvation assures you are secure in Christ, so you don't have to come out on top, triumphing in an earthly sense over that person.

And the sword of the Spirit is used to cut down the temptation to seek revenge, for you recall that Scripture says...

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."¹¹
[pauseeee]

Christian, there is a spiritual battle raging, in which we need to stand.

But rejoice, for the Lord has given us all that we need to be prepared to stand against sin and Satan. *[pause]*

You have the armor of God available, but will you make use of it? *[pauseee]*

Stand therefore, suited up with your God-given armor.

Look to the truth, trust the Lord, and live for Him. *[pauseeee]*

Let's look to the Lord with confident hope, knowing that He has given us what we need to be victorious.

So discouraged and despairing ones: if you put on the armor of God, you *will* stand! *[pause]*

Those caught in sin's tangle: God has what you need to be free. *[pause]*

Those consumed with anxiety: there's armor available for you. *[pauseeee]*

So Christian, let's suit up.

¹¹ Ephesians 4:32.