

Old Orchard Church

October 7, 2012 — 10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

The shield of faith—**form of attack: unbelief**

Paul himself wants his readers to be especially careful to have this protection. “Above all” he writes (Ephesians 6:16). For unbelief in its various guises is the most formidable kind of attack, and the shield of faith is the most important part of the gospel armor. The tense of the verb implies a constant and un-flinching attitude of faith.... This is where our faith needs to be placed: firmly in the promises of God....

The helmet of salvation—**form of attack: calamity and accident**

The word “salvation” (*soteria*) is used in the New Testament to describe physical as well as spiritual well-being. For instance, it is used to describe the strength gained from eating in Acts 27:34.... [I]t was commonly used of “deliverance from every calamity, and victory over enemies.”

Satan will not stop at anything to destroy the work of God. He will make Christians ill.... Satan will sometimes try to kill God's servants. Jesus said of him, “he was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). He tried to kill Jesus on several occasions before the divinely appointed time for that death. Once Jesus was miraculously saved from mob violence.... (Luke 4:28-30)

Of course there will be times when God allows death by violence. There was the case of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, whose career seemed to be so full of promise. Satan must have been glad to see him removed so quickly from the scene of his triumphs. But little did he realize that standing by was Saul of Tarsus, who was so obviously deeply affected by what he saw of the sufferings of Stephen, and who was before long to become an even more effective evangelist....

With God's protection, and wielding his weapons, we can enter confidently into warfare with Satan.

—Michael Harper (1970)



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Cover art

The Knight, Death, and the Devil. Woodcut by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528).

**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-

Celebrating Jesus Christ, Our Captain in Spiritual Warfare

And the Baptism of Grant Steven Gerlach

Blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ
Who has defeated our Ancient Foe,
And now trains our hands for war.

Our arms can bend a bronze bow,
And he gladly gives us daily a shield for victory,
That we may endure every attack.

The Lord's right hand sustains us,
He stoops down to make us great!
The Lord arms me with strength for battle;
God will crush my Enemy, Satan of old, under my feet.

The Lord lives, Praise be to my Rock!
Let God my Savior be exalted.



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: 2 Kings 6:8-17

New Testament Lesson: Ephesians 6:10-18

Sermon

“The Civic Responsibility of Subjects in the Kingdom of God”

Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:11-17; I Timothy 2:1-2

Ron Lutjens, pastor, preaching

(Here is a thoughtful interpretation of the “spiritual warfare” passage in Ephesians 6 to ponder)

Our Protection

Every Christian needs protection from enemy *attacks*. . . . The classic chapter on protection is Ephesians 6. Paul uses the armor that the Roman legionaries used to illustrate the means of protection that God has provided for the Christian. It is very important at the outset to grasp the fact that this is not *our* armor, but *God's*, given to us to protect us. It is not *our* righteousness, or *our* faith, or *our* gospel which can stand in the evil day. It is God's provision alone which will give us adequate protection. . . . Notice [see Ephesians 6:11] that we need to put on this armor *before* the battle. A fairly elementary point, but sometimes overlooked. It is no good waiting until the dart is on its way before holding up the shield of faith. . . .

One of the best ways of considering the pieces of armor is to see them as protecting us from various points of attack, thus enabling the enemy's blows to glance off us and not penetrate. . . .

The girdle of truth—form of attack: lies and errors

Satan has been a liar from the beginning and is the father of lies, Jesus tells us (John 8:44). The first attack he made on man took the form of a lie: "you shall not die," Satan said, in defiance of the fact that God had clearly said they would if they took the forbidden fruit. Someone has helpfully summarized the truth as: "God is what He says He is; I am what God says I am; God does what He says He will do; I can do what God says I can do." Satan is always causing us to doubt these statements. "God can't be a God of love;" "God can't really be in control of the universe;" "I'm too sinful to be a child of God"

The breast-plate of righteousness—form of attack: evil and sinful desires

If Satan cannot pierce our armor by lies, he will try evil. He will bombard our minds with evil thoughts; he will try to influence our motives and sway our wills. The answer to this is—God's righteousness, not our own! How many have tried to ward off these blows with the flimsy armor of their own goodness. Satan's arrows pierce it immediately. But, if we are Christians, we have God's righteousness to defend ourselves with. Then let us wear it like a piece of armor. Evil thoughts are not sin until they are entertained. They are like gate-crashers at a party; we can accept them and let them stay, or firmly show them where the door is. That is what we must do when Satan attacks us with evil—show him the door. . . .

The sandals of the gospel of peace—form of attack: an easy and lazy life

If Satan cannot disturb us, then he will try to make us as comfortable and cozy as possible—so that we won't disturb him! He will stop his attacks and sue for peace, but on completely unacceptable terms for a Christian. "Leave me alone," he will say, "and I will leave you alone." We dare not parley with Satan. The early Christians would not have been persecuted had they stopped their evangelism. But they suffered at the hands of the Jewish authorities because they refused to do so. . . .