

SERIES: DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?

PART 16B: I AM VICTORIOUS

Good morning, CVCHURCH family. Today we conclude this life-changing and transforming series through the book of Ephesians on who Jesus says you are. If you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, here is a truth that is important for you to embrace this morning (afternoon) as we review what Paul has written to us in the book of Ephesians concerning who we are in Jesus Christ. If you are living your life in honor to Jesus Christ in humility rather than pride, in unity rather than division and conflict, in the identity of your new life in Christ as opposed to your old life dominated by sinful self-centeredness, in love rather than lust, in light rather than darkness, in wisdom rather than foolishness, the fullness of the Spirit rather than the drunkenness of wine and alcohol, and in mutual submission rather than self-serving independence, then, loved one, you can be absolutely certain that you will experience ongoing opposition and conflict. So, according to the book of Ephesians and chapter 6:10-20, I want to look at with you this morning (afternoon) **HOW TO PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD** that He has provided for us, and it is essential to learn to put it on and how to use it so you can fulfill His purpose for you to stand in the middle of the spiritual conflicts you will experience in your life. Four times Paul says God's will for you in the midst of the spiritual attacks is putting on God's armor and learning how to use it so that you will successfully be standing when it is all said and done. Paul says the way you stand and learn to resist the enemy is by putting on the armor of God. N. T. scholar Andrew Lincoln writes concerning the importance of standing as the main

thrust of this exhortation: **“It involves standing firm, holding one’s position, resisting, not surrendering to the opposition but prevailing against it. It is a mistake to interpret the call to stand as implying that the battle is open-ended and its result in doubt. The decisive victory has already been won by God in Christ, and the task of believers is not to win but to stand, that is, to preserve and maintain what has been won. It is because this victory has been won that believers are involved in the battle at all. They are in a decisively new situation in contrast to their previous condition described in 2:2-3, where there could be no battle or resistance because they were in total bondage to the enemy. So, the call to the readers (us) to stand against the powers is also a reminder of their liberation from the tyranny of these powers.”** So, let’s look at **THE WHY AND THE HOW TO PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD**. Would you please follow along as I read Ephesians 6:10-20, **“¹⁰A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. ¹¹Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹²For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. ¹⁵For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the**

Word of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. ¹⁹And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. ²⁰I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for Him, as I should.” Ephesians 6:10-20

I. Ready yourself, for your conflict is against the demonic realm

“Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹²For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies.” Ephesians 6:11-12a. This is amazing, saints. This is the only place in the 13 books that Paul wrote in the N.T. where Paul says explicitly that you are in a spiritual battle against evil spirit powers. This is why it is imperative that you understand that your war, your battle, is not against other humans but entities that are invisible and you cannot see them. Paul makes this very clear in Ephesians 2:1-3, **“Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ²You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³All of us used to live that way, following the passionate, desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”** How do you ready yourself for this battle against the demonic?

A. Realize you're in a spiritual battle

In vs. 12 the Greek word for fight, war, conflict, or wrestling match comes from the word "pale." It was used of hand-to-hand combat and, especially, wrestling. As in the WWE of today, wrestling was characterized by trickery and deception, with the difference that in the fights in Rome the conflict was real, and, many times, it was a matter of life and death for the loser. Paul is saying that our conflict is with the devil through his minions, and they all know that they are doomed for eternal destruction. They will do whatever they can to thwart you from loving God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength and to try to stop you from sharing your faith with others. Four things to know about the conflict and battle you're in:

1) It is spiritual

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 says our weapons are not of this world but are spiritual. God's Word, prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit and putting on and using God's armor is how we pull down the strongholds and barriers that the demonic realm keeps raising up against us.

2) It is personal

Jesus told Peter and His disciples in Luke 22:31-32 that satan has asked to sift you like wheat. Sift means to shake you violently like wheat to cause you to give up, fall and fail.

3) It is strenuous

Jesus and Peter both said in John 16:33 and 1 Peter 4:12-13 that you will go through fiery and difficult trials and circumstances because of your faith in Jesus. It is not unusual that difficulties will be common. Your life was not meant to be easy, because you're in a spiritual battle with an enemy that absolutely hates you.

4) It's continual

Revelation 12:10 says, **“It has come at last—salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser, (satan, the devil, the slanderer) of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night.”** Notice this spiritual battle you are in is relentless. It is spiritual. Personal. Strenuous and continual. It will not let up until you die and go to be with Jesus. It will ultimately end when Jesus comes back, and final judgment takes place, and satan and all of God's enemies will be cast into hell.

B. Unmask your spiritual opposition

Your opposition involves a whole range of evil spiritual beings of varying rank, authority and capability. The listing of these four different ranks of evil spirits are subject to the devil, according to Paul in vs. 11. We must put on the armor so we can stand against the methods and strategies of the devil. We are told that they get their marching orders from the devil himself, who, Paul says in chapter 2:2, we used to live in our sin obeying the

devil the commander of the powers in the unseen world. Harold Hoehner, a world renowned N.T. scholar, refers to these supernatural beings as spiritual “Mafia.” Gudorf according to Hoehner argues that Paul used the term “pale” for conflict instead of the normal term for conflict, “maxe,” because it “...**indicates that the fully armored soldier was an accomplished wrestler who on occasion would be involved in close-quarter encounter struggle against a cunning opponent. Due to the cunning scheme of the devil, believers need to be ready for both remote and close-at-hand assaults.**” The grammar denotes a face to face encounter with the evil emissaries of the devil.

1) Against evil rulers

The Greek word “archai,” according to Hoehner, refers to primacy or the first position in rank, power and dominion. Your spiritual battle entails a wrestling match with these powerful beings. Paul references these rulers in Ephesians 1:21, 3:10, and Colossians 2:15. We don’t need to fear them, but we must know who we’re dealing with.

2) Against authorities of the unseen world

The Greek word used is “exousiai.” This term means that these spiritual beings, angelic leaders or, as Black labels them, “Cosmic or celestial potentates,” have the freedom to act. We stand against them and their tactics by having our armor on and using them to stand the ground that Jesus Christ has given us.

3) Against mighty powers in this dark world

The Greek word is “kosmokratores.” It appears only here in the N.T. Most likely Paul is using a term—according to the majority of scholars I looked at—that was used in the first or 2nd century A.D. of magical or astrological traditions. In the 4th century magical papyri, it is used as one of the magical titles of deities like Helios, Hermes, and Sarapis who were thought to aid the pagan petitioner. Paul uses this word, according to Michaelis, to indicate, **“...the terrifying power of their influence and comprehensiveness of their plans, and thus, to emphasize the seriousness of the situation.”** The noun “dark world,” Paul used in chapter 5:8 to refer to the realm and power of sin, the place where the God of light does not dwell. These evil rulers are described in direct conflict with the God of light. In 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Paul says in verses 3-4: **“If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. ⁴Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe.”**

4) Against evil spirits in the heavenly places

Clinton Arnold writes that these spirits are **“...to be understood as a comprehensive designation for all classes of hostile spirits.”** We can understand better how these evil powers try to oppose us by the armor God has given to us to put on and use.

II. Identify your armor and keep it on at all times

A. Stand your ground by putting on the belt of truth

“Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth.” The repetition of the word stand—the fourth occurrence strongly emphasizes the goal of the struggle. Arnold writes, **“God not only makes it possible for believers to stand but expects them to do so by depending on and using the weaponry God has provided.”** The weaponry is best explained when you understand that the images come from future Messiah King as prophesied by Isaiah and the Roman soldier in Paul’s day. The first of the six weapons is truth. Arnold writes, **“This refers to both knowing and appropriating the truth of one’s new identity in Jesus Christ and developing the practice of speaking and living the truth. The verb in this context expresses both a defensive posture believers are to assume as they come under fierce assault by the powers of darkness (illustrated by inflamed arrows flying at them; 6:16) and an offensive movement into the kingdom of the evil one.”** MacArthur informs us that the Roman soldiers always wore a tunic, an outer garment that served as his primary clothing, usually made of a large, square piece of material with holes cut out for the head and arms. It usually draped loosely over most of the soldier’s body. With the greatest part of ancient combat being hand-to-hand, a loose tunic was a potential hindrance and even a danger. Before a battle, it was carefully cinched up and tucked into the heavy leather belt that girded the soldier’s loins.

The belt bound everything tightly together and demonstrates the believer’s readiness for war is the truth. The Greek for truth basically refers to the content of that which is true. Truth is essential for each of us to stand against the schemes and strategies that satan deploys against each one of us. Without the knowledge

of biblical teaching Paul warned us in chapter 4:14 that, **“We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever, they sound like the truth.”**

Truth also refers to the complete attitude of truthfulness. Not just the accuracy of truth but the quality of truthfulness in every area of our lives—our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and actions toward ourselves, others and—most importantly, God. The belt covered the soldier’s loins which stands for your hips, lower abdomen and groin which includes your reproductive organs. We use the acronym **SERFVIP which stands for your Spiritual, Emotional, Relational, Financial, Vocational, Intellectual and Physical/Sexual**. I find it interesting that the truth is to govern our sexual identity, thought and actions. One of the leading ways demons attack us is in our sexual identity and how we use our sexual abilities. This is why sexual immorality, in any expression, is demonic, and it is meant to separate you from your self and your relationship with Jesus. To have your belt of truth on means you’re prepared with the attitude of readiness and genuine commitment. To have the belt of truth primarily has to do with self-discipline and total commitment. There was a young Jewish man from the United States who decided to go to Israel and live. After working there for two years he was required either to serve in the army for a given period of time or to return home. He decided to join the army. His father was a good friend of an Israeli general, who at first was afraid the young man would use that friendship to secure an easy, safe assignment. Instead, he went to the general and said, **“My present duty is too easy. I want to be in the finest, most strategic, diligent, and difficult regiment in the Israeli army.”**

Commenting on that spirit of dedication, the general said, “People think Israelis are so successful at war because we are a super people or that we have super intellect or super strength. But our success is not built on any of these things, it is built on commitment, unreserved and sacrificial commitment.” John MacArthur writes, **“To be content with mediocrity, lethargy, indifference, and half-heartedness is to fail to be armored with the belt of God’s truth and to leave oneself exposed to satan’s schemes.”**

B. Stand and put on the breastplate of righteousness

Refers to the practical righteousness of a life lived in obedience to God’s Word. It is righteous behavior that is in line with the new self in Ephesians 4:24-27: “Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. ²⁵So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶And ‘don’t sin by letting anger control you.’ Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷for anger gives a foothold to the devil.” No Roman soldier would go into battle without his breastplate—a tough, sleeveless piece of armor that covered his full torso. It was made of leather or heavy linen, onto which were sewn overlapping slices of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body. The purpose of that piece of armor is obvious—to protect the heart, lungs, intestines, and other vital organs.

To the Jews, the heart represented the mind and the will, and the bowels were considered the seat of emotions and feelings. The

mind and the emotions are two key areas where satan and his demon hordes attack the most fiercely. Our culture, which is motivated by satan, tempts us to think wrong thoughts, to have impure motives and to feel negative emotions. He tries to seduce us with wrong thoughts about God, His Word and His Kingdom purposes for our lives. He is motivated to snatch God's Word from our minds and replace it with self-centered and perverse ideas. He seeks to undermine pure living and replace it with immorality, greed, envy, hate, and every other vice. God's protective device against satan's pernicious attacks is the breastplate of righteousness. Righteousness is meant to be wrapped around our whole being just like the ancient soldiers covered themselves with the breastplate of righteousness. Paul is not thinking about self-righteousness or even Christ's righteousness that He applies on our behalf. The breastplate of righteousness Paul is talking about is the righteousness that we put on as spiritual armor against our adversary; it is the practical righteousness of a life lived in obedience to God's word. It is putting on the righteous behavior in line with the "new self" in Ephesians 4:24-27 Paul says takes away the foothold the devil tries to gain in your life. You put on the breastplate of righteousness by living daily, moment-by-moment in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word. God Himself gives us His applied righteousness, but we must put on our practical righteousness. Colossians 3:12-15 practically tells us how to protect our heart from the attack of satan. **"Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with**

love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.”

C. Be prepared by putting on the shoes of peace that comes from the Good News

Ephesians 6:15, “**For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.**” Today, we have shoes for any kind of activity that can be imagined. A soldier’s shoes are more important even than an athlete’s, because his very life could depend on them. As he marches on rough, hot roads, climbs over jagged rocks, tramples over thorns, and wades through streambeds of jagged stones, his feet need much protection. A soldier whose feet are blistered, cut, or swollen cannot fight well and often is not even able to stand up—a perilous situation in battle. He cannot handle his sword or shield and cannot advance rapidly or even retreat.

The word for “fully prepared” basically means to be ready at all times. In Titus 3:1 he exhorts, “...**be ready for every good deed.**” A good pair of boots allows the soldier to be ready to march, climb, fight, or do whatever else is necessary. Jesus Christ demands the same kind of readiness from each one of us who have surrendered our lives to His Lordship. In this passage, the Good News states that believers are at peace with God. The unsaved person is not at peace with God. They are His antagonists because they refuse to receive the Good News that Jesus gave His life for their sins, and they still think that their own self-righteousness is good enough.

The Christian, Paul says in Romans 5:6-11, has been reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ His Son. **“⁶When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷Now most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, He will certainly save us from God’s condemnation. ¹⁰For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. ¹¹So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.”** Romans 5:1 says, **“Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.”** The Good News of peace is that freeing peace that in Jesus we are now at peace with God and are one with Him. When your feet, loved ones, have the shoes of God’s peace on so that you are prepared, you can stand in the confidence of God’s love for you, in His union with you and His commitment to fight for you and with you. As you put on God’s armor and you take your stance in Jesus and His peace and power, you do not need to fear any enemy, even satan himself. As Paul writes in Romans 8:31, **“What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us.?”** The answer, no one of any consequences. But you must be strong in the Lord and in His power, and you must put on the full armor of God so you can stand against the strategies, tricks and methods satan throws at you. Colossians 1:21-22 says, **“This**

includes you who were once far away from God. You were His enemies separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²²Yet now He has reconciled you to Himself through the death of Christ in His physical body. As a result, He has brought you into His own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.”

D. Take up the shield of faith

Ephesians 6:16, **“In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.”** In addition, Paul introduces the last three pieces of armor. The first three—the girdle of truth, breastplate and the shoes were for long range preparation and protection and were never taken off on the battlefield. The shield, helmet and sword, on the other hand, were always kept close by in readiness for use when actual fighting began, thus the verbs hold up, put on and take. The Roman soldiers would use several shields, but two were the most common. The first was a small round shield, perhaps two feet in diameter, that was secured to the arm by two leather straps. It was rather light and was used to deflect the blows of their opponent in hand-to-hand combat. The 2nd was the thureos. This is what Paul is referring to. It stood two and half feet wide and four and half feet high. It was designed to protect the soldier’s entire body. The shield was made of a solid piece of wood and was covered with metal or heavily oiled leather. The spiritual flaming missiles from which we need protection are basically the thousands of temptations that this invisible army uses against us. Temptations to immorality, hatred, envy, anger, covetousness, pride, doubt, fear, despair, distrust, and every other sin. Satan’s initial temptation to Adam and Eve, our first human

parents, was to entice them to doubt God and instead to put their trust in his lies. That, loved ones, was the first of his flaming missiles, from which all the others have lit their flames. Please hear me, CVCHURCH: every fiery arrow directly or indirectly is the temptation to doubt and distrust God. The purpose of all of satan's missiles is to cause believers to betray their trust in God, to drive a wedge between their Lord and Savior just like he did Adam and Eve. Satan even tempted God's own Son to distrust and betray Him in the wilderness and in the garden just before His crucifixion. Christ-centered faith will never fail because Jesus cannot fail.

When John Paton was translating the Bible for a South Seas island tribe, he discovered that they no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary's house, flopped himself in a large chair and said, "It's good to rest my whole weight on this chair." "That's it," said Paton. "I'll translate faith as "resting one's whole weight on God." The only way to extinguish satan's fiery arrows of temptations to doubt God is to believe God, taking up the shield of faith. **"Every word of God is tested;"** the writer of Proverbs tells us. Proverbs 30:5-6 says, **"Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who comes to Him for protection. ⁶Do not add to His words, or He may rebuke you and expose you as a liar."** 1st John 5:4 tells us **"For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith."** Hebrews 11:1-2 says, **"Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. ²Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation."** The only way you can learn to use your shield of faith effectively is to be a woman and man of God's Word. Please, I encourage each one of you to use our Bible bookmark and get into God's word with us

every day. If you use the bookmark you will go through the entire Bible once and the N.T. twice. The key to learning how to use your weaponry that God has provided for you is to become intimately acquainted with God's Word for yourself. Small group leaders, please make sure as you work through these parts of the armor of God, that you have people in your group look up all the Scriptures, I have provided for you. There is so much here, I cannot make it through all of them in service.

E. Put on the helmet of salvation

“Put on salvation as your helmet.” A soldier would never go to battle without their helmet. Some of the helmets were made of thick leather covered with metal plates, and others were of heavy molded or beaten metal. They usually had cheek pieces to protect the face. The purpose of the helmet was to protect the head from injury, particularly from the dangerous broadsword commonly used in the warfare of that day. This was a large two-handed, double-edged sword that measured three to four feet in length. It was often carried by cavalrymen, who would swing at the heads of the enemy soldiers to split their skulls or decapitate them. The fact that the helmet is related to salvation is a sign that satan's blows are directed at your security and assurance of your salvation in Jesus Christ. MacArthur writes, **“The two dangerous edges of satan's spiritual broadsword are discouragement and doubt. To discourage us he points to our failures, our sins, our unresolved problems, our poor health, or to whatever else seems negative in our lives in order to make us lose confidence in the love, mercy, care and protection of our heavenly Father.”** When a coal truck delivered a ton of coal on the sidewalk

in front of her house, a little London girl took her small shovel and began carrying the coal into the basement. When a neighbor man who was watching told her, “You’ll never be able to get it all in,” she replied, “Oh, I will sir, if I work long enough.” Hear me, church—the test of a person’s character is what it takes to stop her, to stop him. Some people retreat as soon as the first shot is fired, while others fight through battle after battle with no thought of giving up. Satan will try every means to discourage and deter us, reminding us of defeats and dangers and setting every possible object in our way to destroy our assurance in Christ. God allowed Satan to strip Job of every good thing he possessed except his life; that man of God declared, **“God might kill me, but I have hope in Him.”** Job 13:15. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 says, **“But let us who live in the light be clearheaded, protected by the armor of faith and love, and wearing as our helmet the confidence of our salvation.”**

F. Take up the sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17b says, **“And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”** The sword which Paul refers to is the machaira, which varied in length from six to eighteen inches. It was the common sword that the foot soldier would use in hand-to-hand combat. They carried it in a sheath or scabbard attached to their belts, it was always at hand and ready for use. It was the sword carried by the soldiers who came to arrest Jesus in the Garden in Matthew 26:47, it was wielded by Peter when he cut off the ear of the high priest’s slave in vs. 51, and it was used by Herod’s executioners to put James to death (Acts 12:2). The word for word here is not the usual word logos, but the word rhema,

which refers to individual words or particular statements. Paul is not talking about general knowledge of Scripture, but he is emphasizing the precision that comes by knowledge and understanding specific truths. The best example we have is of Jesus when He used specific texts to combat the satanic falsehood from Satan in Matthew 4:3-11. Satan tempted Jesus to provide bread from stones, and Jesus took the sword of the Spirit and quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, **“No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”** He shut the mouth of the devil as He stuck the knife into the liar. In vv. 5-7, Satan tempted Jesus to commit suicide by quoting Scripture from Psalm 91:11-12: **“He will order His angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands, so you won’t even hurt your feet on a stone.”** What’s amazing, church, is Jesus didn’t disagree with what Satan said but how he interpreted the Scripture. Vs. 7 Jesus responded, **“The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the Lord your God.’** In vs. 8 Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the world and said, **“‘I will give it all to You,’ he said, ‘if you will kneel down and worship me.’”** This is amazing, friends. Jesus created all that He was seeing. Why would He kneel to a created being? In vs. 10 Jesus uses the sword of the Spirit a third time and says, **“‘Get out of here, Satan,’ Jesus told him, ‘For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’”** Vs. 11 says, **“Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.”** This is so awesome. Jesus uses the Scripture both defensively and in an offensive fashion. Loved ones, the Word of God is powerful; it transforms men and women from the realm of error to that of truth, for the realm of darkness to that of light, and from the realm of sin and

death to that of righteousness and life. It changes sadness into joy, despair into hope, stagnation into growth, childishness into maturity, and failure into success. Church, as we each learn to put on God's armor that He has supplied to us, we will find ourselves being more successful in standing against the strategies, wiles and plans of the devil and we will see God's Kingdom having its effects in our lives, families, our church life and our community and our culture. This is who we are in Jesus Christ. We are victorious together.

Let's pray.