

The Sword of the Spirit

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[0:00] This is a sermon from King's Church West Virginia. Hello everyone. My name is Angelo, for those of you who don't know me and I'm just going to set the timer on.

What a great set of worship songs. I just felt really touched by them, just reminding us of what a great saviour.

We serve one of them, Be Thou My Vision. Sorry if I'm ringing. Be Thou My Vision was actually we had at our wedding to my wonderful Claire 20 years ago in October.

So thanks for sharing those with us and bringing us into God's presence. So over the next 25 minutes or so, we are going to conclude the series on the armor of God from Ephesians 6.

And just to give you a bird's eye view of where I'm going to go, I'll give you a brief introduction, then three or four application points from today's verse, and then conclusion, and then just to pray together for the last five minutes or so, because we want to kind of make those, what we hear today, reality in each of our lives.

[1:19] So yeah, we've been going over the various components of God's armor to help us live the everyday battles of being a Christian for us here in 2026, West Lothian, Scotland.

Today's verse is going to be, it should hopefully come up on the next slide, Ephesians 6.17. No, no next slide.

Okay, Ephesians 6.17, which basically says, Receive the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. So, all the other bits of armor that we've been looking at so far have been offensive.

So, helmets to protect our spiritual heads, obviously not our bodies, we don't walk around with clunky armor, that would look a bit weird. Breast plates to protect the vital organs, feet to get us ready for the gospel, shields of faith, all defensive bits of armor to protect various very vital parts of our spiritual being from the attack that this chapter has been telling us does happen.

The sword of the Spirit is actually, oh, and I've got one here. I stole this from my son, Luca. Is the one offensive bit of kit.

[2:39] It's the one that we attack with. Everything else is defensive. This is offensive. So, sword of the Spirit, word of God. How do the two connect? Well, let me show you.

Hopefully. So, very helpfully, the scripture tells us right here, gives us a bit of interpretation, does my work a bit easier.

The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. We would have never gotten this connection without this, I don't think. So, what's the word of God? The word of God is a scripture. It's the Bible that most of you will have either in your hands or on your apps, on your phones.

It's God's own word. It's God's own word. His witness to himself to reveal himself to a lost mankind. Ultimately and most completely revealed through his own son, Jesus Christ.

That Bible tells us is God's word. The word of God is God's word. The word of God made flesh. Made a person. We see this in Hebrews 1 verses 1 and 2.

[3:42] In the Bible, we receive the perfect and inherent words of a perfect and holy God. So that we may know his ways, how to walk in them, how to follow them, how to be blameless, scripture tells us.

And then, through following the same words, we can come to know who Jesus is. We can come to know him as a person. We can receive his gift of salvation through the good news of the gospel, also in the scriptures, which we accept with faith.

And then we are declared justified before this holy God. All of this scripture attests to itself. Please mind me when I just quickly take a glass of water. So, and once we've come to know Jesus as our Lord and Savior, those same scriptures keep going with us on the path of what's called sanctification.

What's sanctification? It's the daily, gradual, through gritted teeth, lifelong, growing more like Jesus every day. And scripture helps us on that journey with the work of the Holy Spirit working hand in hand with scripture.

So that's introduction. Coming to the application now. I just, there's so much you could say about the word of God. I just drew out four bits that I thought were important for today.

[5:08] So the first one is from Deuteronomy 8.3, which says, People will not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

What proceeds out of the mouth of God is words. What are his words? The Bible. So this tells us that the Bible, scripture, is essential for maintaining a spiritual life as Christians.

Jesus confirmed this in Matthew 4.4 during one of the toughest times he was, he faced as a man walking this earth when he was tempted in the wilderness by his enemy, the enemy devil.

In the same way, our spiritual life is maintained by daily feeding on the scripture. Just like bread or whatever physical food you eat, you need to eat it regularly to keep yourselves alive and healthy. Scripture is exactly the same. And feeding here, I believe, goes beyond reading. Reading is a start. But if you read through scripture again and again, you'll find it telling us, meditate on the word of God.

[6:19] Even right at the start of the Psalms. Psalm 1, verse 2. The blessed person's delight is in the law of the Lord. On this law, they meditate day and night.

This might sound daunting. It's actually great news. Because reading, we all live busy lives. And we don't have time to walk around reading our Bibles all the time.

And God knows that. He knows where we're at. He meets us where we're at. So, the pattern that I think this is outlining for us is reading sometime during the day, 10, 15 minutes, whatever you can fit in.

The important bit is to have it regularly, just like you would feed on that bread, to bring scriptures into your memory. And then, as you go through the day, bring them forth from your memory and meditate on them through your mind.

The word meditate is actually related to the word matter in the original Hebrew. And, okay, if you're walking around the office muttering to yourself, Bible verses, people might look at you.

[7:34] But, and muttering is normally a negative thing. You know, you mutter against the politicians. You mutter against, you know, the state of the economy. You mutter against sometimes even God himself when life gets tough.

But, in this case, the Bible shows us that muttering can actually be a positive thing if you do it in the right way. So, instead of muttering, why did that job not come through?

Why is my health not where I wanted to be? Why did I not get the grades I wanted in my exam?

Why did, you know, this person fall out with me? Why did I not get the grades I wanted in my exam?

Just random, meaningless things. Refocus your mind to engage it to those verses that you read.

You don't need much. Two or three verses. When you read them, read them over, you know, a couple of times just to bring them into your memory.

And then you mouth them over. And you kind of chew through them, mutter them, like rolling them over in your mind, over and over again. Asking yourself questions.

[9:03] What sorts of questions? Why did God say it that way? What does it mean for me today? How can I apply it to my life? Is there a great and mighty promise from God I can trust Him for today?

How can I follow what it says to become more like Jesus? And asking for the Holy Spirit to come in and help you with that meditation. You will find that you unlock the, not talking about some deep and secret meaning, but just some meaning that's applicable to you, where you're at on that day. That you can then bring on, bring it on board and start using it and following it. And gain spiritual strength and nourishment and hope. Okay. Okay.

That's the first application. The second application is actually right from this verse. The sword of the Spirit.

The sword is of the Spirit. I think this is a beautiful picture of word and spirit working together.

There's a lot of talk about being people of the word, being people of the spirit.

[10:09] We firmly believe to be both word and spirit people. And here I see the Spirit of God like a warrior, a highly skilled swordsman. I won't try fancy tricks because I'll probably just knock myself on the head or something.

But wielding the sword, the scripture, in his hand like the skilled swordsman to powerfully cut down God's enemies. Everything and everyone that's opposed to God and His righteous rule. Including the rulers and principalities mentioned earlier in this passage. But not just them. The Bible tells us our own natural self is also opposed to God.

Unredeemed. We're in rebellion to Him. Through our sins, unrighteous thoughts, unrighteous deeds, unrighteous actions. So the sword of the Spirit, we see in Hebrews 4.12, is actually able to judge the thoughts of intentions of our own hearts.

It's able to show us, shine a light, if you will, on where we are misaligned. From God's way. So that we can bring it back into alignment.

[11 : 16] Use scripture to analyze and judge your own thoughts and motivations. To help you through that journey of sanctification. To become more like Jesus every day.

And one very simple way we can do this is going back to the Psalms again. That famous Psalm 119, which is all about the Bible. There's a bit in verse 18 there that says, Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from your law.

Seeing these things is not a natural work of our mind being mega clever. It's a supernatural miracle of God opening our blind eyes to see what's in His word.

To see wonders. Without the Holy Spirit doing that, it will just be scribbles on a page that you can read over a gazillion times and will not change us.

We need the Holy Spirit's illumination to see what God is saying to us. And then the Holy Spirit's power to apply it to our lives. Let's check how I'm doing it for time.

[12 : 23] A couple hours to go. I never started it. Twelve minutes in. Twelve minutes in. Thanks, Gordon.

Thanks, Gordon. Page one. Oh, dear. Moving on swiftly. Application number three from 2 Peter, chapter 1, verse 4.

He has granted us His precious and magnificent promises so that by them we may become partakers of His divine nature.

Some of the main opponents we will face in our Christian life will be things like discouragement, doubt, and fear. These will conspire to tempt us away from God, doubt Him, doubt His goodness, stop fighting the good fight of faith, no longer work in His path, and just think, what's the point?

The enemy will use every scheme he can to get us to fear tomorrow to a point where we're so discouraged and doubtful that we will stop doubting, stop trusting our good, good Father.

[13 : 39] He will even use your own thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Attack from within. What we need during these times are not helpful thoughts, constructive suggestions, helpful advice, life hacks, of which there seem to be many these days.

What we need is something real and solid that we can rest the whole weight of our life, of our hopes, our expectations on. Something that will never give way.

Something like a true promise from our great promise giver. Who can and will make every one of his promises come true no matter what.

Don't listen to your thoughts. Don't listen to your feelings. Don't listen to your emotions. A lot of the time they're lying to you. Listen to what the Bible says. And you don't need to look far in the Bible. It's full of them. Tons of promises. You know. Lo, I'm with you till the end of the age. I will never leave you or forsake you. Just to pick a couple.

[14 : 49] Just off the top of my head. It's full of them. And they're for you. If you're a believer in Christ, those promises are for you. And then when you have that promise, here are a lot of talk about attitude of gratitude.

I don't believe gratitude will help you get through tomorrow. What you need to get through tomorrow is faith. But gratitude is important because we look back with gratitude at what God has done in the past.

And we use that gratitude to feed our faith, to look forward to tomorrow, to trust that promise. That it will come true based on his faithfulness. Never having that down in the past.

We can know that he will never let us down in the future either. Okay. And the last application is from the next verse.

After the sword of the spirit. Verse 18. Which says, Through all prayer and petition, pray at all times and seasons in the spirit.

[15 : 48] It would be easy to stop at the end of verse 17. After all, we've closed head to foot in armor. We've got the sword of the spirit. You know, what else do we need to do? Just go out, fight, defeat the enemy.

Job done. No. This reminds us that because it flows uninterruptedly from the verse before it. And it opens with through. The translations can be different. It can say through all prayer and petition. Through all prayer and petition. With all prayer and petition. By all prayer and petition. They're all accurate. It indicates that how we put on the psalmah, how we receive the psalmah, is by praying and petitioning God. Every day. Every day. To grant them the various bits of armor that we're going to need for that day to us.

As undeserved gifts of grace. And then to enable us to use him effectively for his glory and sanctification in all in every situation.

[16 : 49] Complete dependence on God never ceases in the Christian walk. For when it does stop, your life of faith can risk becoming a life of works.

There's no self-effort here. No sheer determination. No gritting your teeth. No, you know, doing your bit so that God can do his. Jesus has already done it all.

Done it all. By prayerful dependence on him, we can appropriate his finished work on the cross into each of our daily lives. Okay, so to conclude.

What have we learned from this short summer preaching series? Well, many things. I've just picked three that spoke to me most. First of all, life is a battle.

Gee whiz. Thanks, Angelo. No surprises there. I think we probably figured that out for ourselves, mostly. All of our battles. We all have battles in our lives.

[17 : 56] All of us. They look different from each one of us. And they look different at various stages in our lives. But God has clothed us head to foot in his own armor to help us fight these battles.

He's not left us on our own just to run off, you know, play in the middle of the street. You'll be fine.

Sort of parent. No. He's with us. He walks beside us. He fights those battles with us.

He clothes us in his armor. And he's cheering us on. Sounds a bit trite. But it's true. And he's more than cheering us on.

He's right beside you fighting that battle. Secondly, stand. Stand. The word stand appears again and again and again in this chapter. In verses 11, 13, 14.

Standing firm and holding our position. Not surrendering our progress to date in the face of the constant onslaught that we face as Christian believers. To temptation, to sin, to quit, to whatever.

[19 : 02] Is often all we are called to do. Not to gain massive ground. But rather to stand. Knowing that that's all we need to do.

Because it doesn't matter how the battle goes. If you stand your ground, Jesus has already won the war. And finally, we fight in his strength.

His strength. Thank goodness we're not fighting using our own puny strength and resources. We're strong in Jesus and in the strength of his might. Paul tells us.

Jesus is in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 verse 9. Jesus's grace is sufficient for you. Because his power is perfected in your weakness. Now this doesn't mean an imperfect power is made perfect by our weakness.

The word perfected is quite a complex one. It can mean completed, accomplished, reaching its target. And what this is telling us is that basically he is strong for us.

[20 : 07] And through grace, we can receive his strength. So, finally, we can conclude that scripture, as God's word, is a vital part of our grace-given spiritual resources.

To enable us to fight better and finish the race well. To be sanctified into looking more like Jesus each and every day. But scripture is so much more than that.

There's so many passages in the Bible telling us what scripture is and what it does. Which we do not have time to cover here. That it sustains us like food.

It teaches and trains us. It corrects us. It judges us. It equips us for every good work. It instructs us for salvation. It fills our lives with God's precious and great promises.

It lights our paths like a lamp to our feet. And it refreshes us when we're dry and weary. And most of all, it tells us about Jesus.

[21 : 11] In John 5.39, Jesus tells his hearers, Search the scriptures diligently. It is these that testify about me. All of scripture leads back to Jesus to tell us about him and to enable us to walk

more close to him.

He is a complete revelation of God himself to humankind. And that's why we hold the Bible as precious. It is our ultimate authority in everything we do as Christians and as churches.

So I was just going to spend the last five minutes just praying for us. And just to kind of pray for us together, myself included.

I'm not standing here as someone who's got the Bible reading perfect. I can't believe you me. But I think these passages are here to encourage us and remind us to just keep grazing regularly in the scripture.

Keep meditating. So last five minutes. I'll just pray for us if that's okay. Dear Lord Jesus, we thank you for your word to us.

[22 : 28] During worship, I was reminded again and again about that great passage in Romans that says, There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

And I just want everyone here to receive that. There's no condemnation. It doesn't matter if you've been the worst Bible reader in the world. It doesn't matter what you do tomorrow or what you do next week.

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I just pray that everyone, Lord Jesus, you would meet them where they're at this week. And that tomorrow you'd enable them to snatch five, ten, fifteen minutes, if more, great.

If less, great too. To just delve in your word and to keep that going every day by your power and strength. And as the day progresses and the mind wanders, to just help them focus and start to meditate on what they've read.

Open the eyes of their heart by your Holy Spirit to see what you're trying to say to each of us in your scripture. And help us to live lives that reflect Jesus more and more each day.

[23 : 41] By your Holy Spirit and by your word and by walking in your mighty strength. Amen.