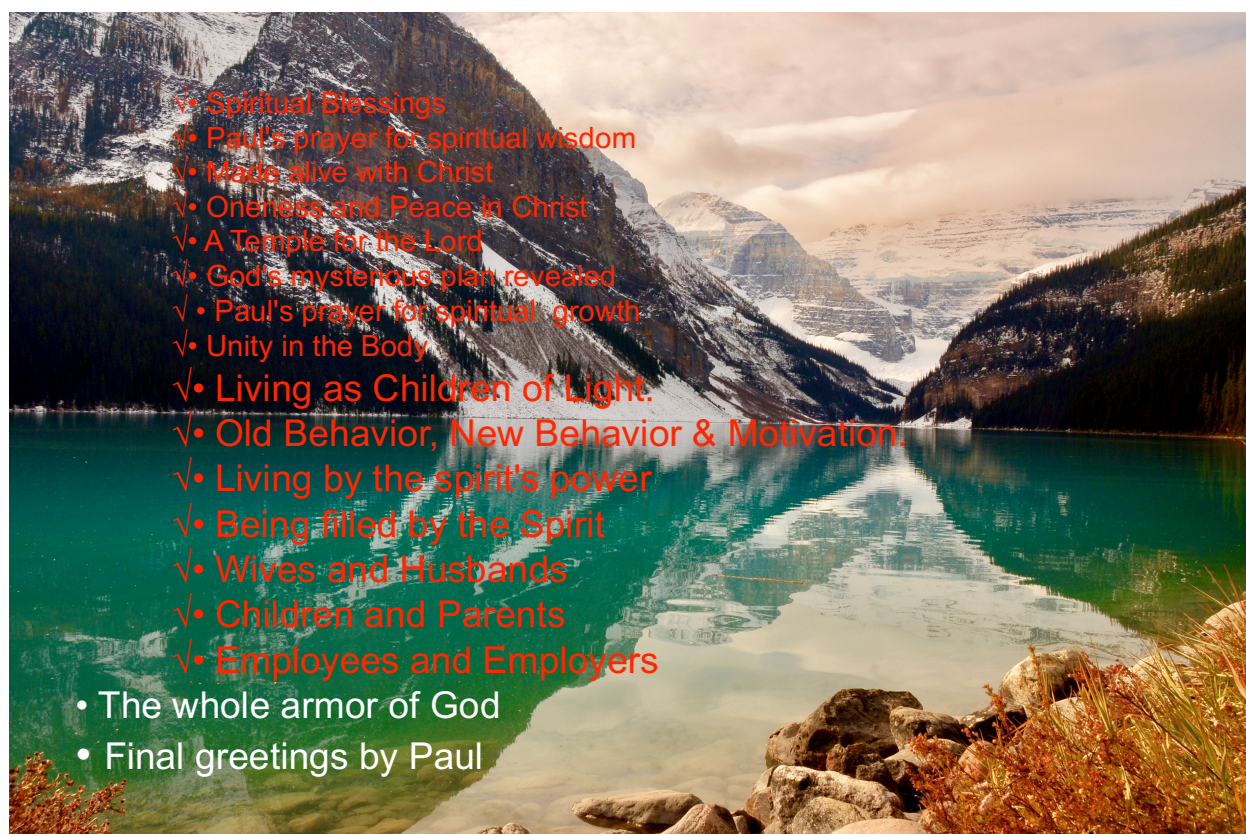




**Pathway Visalia Men's Ministry:**  
**Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> - "The Whole Armor of God"**  
**"EPHESIANS"**

This next Pathway Men's Ministry will be Feb. 5th at 6:30 pm. For those who were unable to attend, and for anyone that is interested, we post the study on our Pathway Visalia website. I pray that you will be able to join us. It is such a blessing to share with one another. Below is an overview of the topics that we will discuss as we work our way through the book of Ephesians.



**11. Put on all of God's armor (for His precepts are like the splendid armor of a heavily-armed soldier) so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12. For 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.**

**QUESTION:** Let's discuss the increasing pace, or the acceleration, that we can see in this world as the "evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world" are attacking.

**QUESTION:** We have seen new cloaking technology (optical camouflage) being used in warfare. What are some examples of how the devil deceives people?

13. Therefore, 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. 14. Stand your ground, putting on the **belt of truth** and the **body armor** (put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral virtue and right standing with God).

**"Therefore" - This is the connection between the warning from Paul regarding the spiritual battle that we are facing, and what we need to do to stand firm.**

**QUESTION:** The first point that Paul advises us to do is "to put on every piece of God's armor". "Every piece"- What situations could people find themselves in where it was critical for their own safety to make sure that they had all the equipment that they needed to protect themselves?

**QUESTION:** This first piece is the **"belt of truth"**- Why do you think Paul starts with the belt, and why do you think that Paul says that the belt is "truth"?

**QUESTION:** Many of us were with unbelieving family members during Christmas where "truth" is defined in a different way. Can you share any conversations that you had about the truth of the Gospel message and perhaps the worldly message that others shared with you.

**QUESTION:** **Body armor/breastplate of integrity** - when Paul wrote this passage, he was very familiar with the Roman soldiers metal plates or chains that covered the body from the neck to the waist, both front and back. Today, we have police officers using Kevlar vests. What is the spiritual body armor that is discussed here in verse 14?

**QUESTION:** It is interesting that Paul says to: "put on the breastplate of integrity and of moral virtue and right standing with God" - in that we are all sinners and there have been, and are, times where we may fail in "integrity and moral virtue", but it doesn't affect our "right standing with God" - why do you think that is true?

**QUESTION:** When we find ourselves in a position of weakness, where our body armor is not going to protect us from spiritual attacks, what should we do?

15. For **shoes** [to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news] of the Gospel of peace. [Isa. 52:7.] put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. 16. In addition to all of these, hold up the **shield** of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

**Isaiah 52:7. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!**

**For shoes:**

**QUESTION:** Have you ever played a sport or been in the mountains where you had to wear cleats or ice cleats? How did they help you to stand your ground or in keeping your from falling on the icy ground?

**QUESTION:** Why is it so important "to face the enemy with the firm-footed stability, the promptness, and the readiness produced by the good news"?

**QUESTION:** What do we need to do to keep moving forward in ministering to others - so that that we don't trip ourselves up and to make sure that we are ready to share?

**QUESTION:** "put on the peace that comes from the Good News" - What does it look like when a believer has cloaked themselves in the peace that comes from walking in the Good News?

**QUESTION: Can you share a time where your peaceful countenance ministered to someone without you even sharing a word to them.**

**Greg Lauri's devo a few weeks ago was addressing the issue of every believer taking the responsibility and privilege of sharing the Good News.**

**“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. ” —2 Timothy 4:7**

One day, we will give our final words. We may be aware they're our last words, but then again, we may not have that luxury.

In 2 Timothy 4, the apostle Paul wrote his final words. His turbulent life was coming to an end, and he had truly made a difference.

An amazing series of events led to his being in the dungeon where he wrote his epistle to Timothy. It began when Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem and preach there. But a prophet named Agabus took the belt Paul had been wearing, wrapped it around his own arms and legs, and said, “So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles” (Acts 21:11 NLT).

When the believers heard this, they pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But Paul told them, “Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but even to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus” (verse 13 NLT).

Jim Elliot was a twentieth-century martyr who died in his endeavor to take the gospel to the Waorani tribe of Ecuador. Years earlier he wrote in his journal, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

In the same way, Paul gave his life completely to the Lord. He didn't fear what others could do to him. Writing to the church in Corinth, he said, “Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19–20 NLT). **hold up the shield**

16. In addition to all of these, hold up the ( protective) shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.

"in addition to all these" - At this point Paul has identified about half of the tools that we need to; "stand firm". The first 5 are defensive tools and the last 2 (this includes probably the most important: PRAYER) are offensive tools - GOD'S WORD AND PRAYER.

QUESTION: What is the "shield", and what do we need to do with it?

QUESTION: Share how faith can be 'held up' or used?

The Roman soldiers would form small teams when they were attacked by the enemy, using their shields to extinguish the "fiery arrows" - 3+ soldiers would face back-to-back forming a circle with their shields

QUESTION: How would you say that this relates to us when we are fighting the spiritual battle "against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world"?

QUESTION: What practices do you regularly use to shield off attacks?

QUESTION: What are some new practices that you can start implementing tonight?

17. Put on salvation as your **helmet**, and take the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

**your helmet**

Jon Courson wrote: "Paul defines the helmet of salvation as the hope of the coming of the Lord. - 1 Thessalonians 5:8. "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."

I'll become greatly distressed as I see the world and culture

collapsing around me unless the blessed hope of the coming of Jesus Christ is constantly on my mind. I am thoroughly convinced His



coming is very close. So was C. H. Spurgeon, Martin Luther, Augustine as well as Paul and Peter. All were great men who lived their lives anticipating and looking for the coming of Jesus Christ. Put me in their company any day! The great saints of history all live in the anticipation that Jesus would come shortly. I will live until the day I die looking for and believing in the hope, the blessed hope of Jesus appearing and calling me home. That's the helmet of my salvation".

**QUESTION:** So, we are told to "put on salvation"- how do we repeatedly put it on since salvation is a once in a lifetime event?

**QUESTION:** How would you rate your faith meter tonight?

**QUESTION:** What can you do to increase our faith?

## **The sword: God's Word**

The sword that is referred to here is not big battle sword, but a small dagger used for hand-to-hand combat, we could even refer to the sword as a scalpel to surgically use God's Word in our words as we minister to others.

**QUESTION:** Share how you have seen the Holy Spirit give you the right words and the right time as you shared with others.

**QUESTION:** How do you personally incorporate the Word of God in your life?

**QUESTION:** How have you seen your personal spiritual growth increase because of studying and meditating on God's Word?