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Read Ephesians 6:10–24 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.

THE ARMOR OF GOD:

10 Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. 11 Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. 13 For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace, 16 and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God). 18 With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and petitions for all the saints. 19 Pray for me also, that I may be given the right words when I begin to speak—that I may confidently make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may be able to speak boldly as I ought to speak.

PAUL'S FAREWELL IS COMMENTS:

21 Tychicus, my dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will make everything known to you, so that you too may know about my circumstances, how I am doing. 22 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 23 Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

COMMENTS ON ARMOR OF GOD:

The section on the Armor of God is one of the best known in the Bible. It begins with a call for us to be strong in the Lord and recognizes we get our strength from him. Then Paul says we are to protect ourselves by putting on the WHOLE armor of God. This is a reminder that each part of the armor is important. We are seeking protection from the plots of the devil.

This is all part of spiritual warfare. We are fighting against an enemy we can't see. When you see someone carrying a weapon in a war zone, you become conscious of danger. Because we don't see the danger, we let our guard down. We need to look at the world with spiritual eyes.

When we see or experience hatred, anger, theft, murder, sexual immorality, hatred of God or any violations of God's laws, that is your reminder you are living in a war zone. The cosmic power of evil is at work in our world. You are encountering the strongest and most dangerous forces of evil in existence.

That is why Paul again warns in v. 13, you need the WHOLE armor of God to stand against evil and to take and keep a firm stand against evil. You need the belt of TRUTH. Yes, there is truth and there is falsehood. Some will call you narrow minded and bigoted. God sees the conflict as between righteousness and unrighteousness. You want the breastplate of righteousness.

I may be without shoes in my house, but when I go outside I will have on shoes. God says our foot protection is the "good news (gospel) of peace." Isaiah 52:7 unfolds this: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

How important is faith? Paul says our shield is faith and with faith we can extinguish ALL the flaming arrows of the evil one. Our head is one of the most vulnerable parts of our body. I remember an accident which occurred in winter back in Nebraska.

The gentleman driving was going very slow because the streets were covered with ice. As he turned the corner, the car began to slide. The right rear wheel bumped the curb. It didn't even bend the wheel, but the passenger door popped open and his wife fell out of the car (before seat belts), hit her head on the curb and was killed. A fatal accident, but no damage to the car.

Jesus' death on the cross is our sin seat belt, our helmet of salvation. We are spared eternal death and injury because of Christ. And then we find our only offensive weapon: the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God! The Bible is your weapon!

Since the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the Bible, when we use or study it, we should always be praying in the Spirit. If you are not sure what supplication means, use this simple explanation: "God supply all my needs." Keep alert all the time and pray for all the saints and for me.

Paul's message in vs. 19b–20 is to pray for boldness. My favorite story on this is found in Acts 4:23–31. When persecution faced the early Christians, they didn't think the big issue was whether they lived or died, but would they be bold to speak God's Word. I have heard many more suggestions for people to pray for new rulers, rather than boldness.

He suggests three things for us to pray: 1) Give us the right words to speak, 2) Help me make clear the mystery of the gospel, and 3) Help me speak boldly.

Paul's situation is full of irony. He is an authorized delegate of the Lord who is exalted above every creature in heaven and earth and whose title excels every other name (1:20, 21). Yet the rulers of this age have chained Paul as a prisoner, showing their ignorant blindness to the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2:8).

His ambassadorial office demands that he speak on behalf of his Sovereign, while his chains tempt him to timidity, prompting him to plead for prayers for his boldness.

COMMENTS & FINAL GREETINGS:

The lack of personal greetings here is one of the reasons many feel that this letter was intended to be circulated by congregations. Paul shows that he is very aware of their concern for him and the effect of his imprisonment on the spread of the gospel. Thus he sent Tychicus who will be able to give them a detailed report on everything.

The last phrase, though loaded with meaning, offers some difficulty. The key Greek word is "aphtharsia," which literally means "immortality" or "incorruption." The difficulty perhaps is in the fact that Paul compressed his thought too much.

Some believe he was saying, "those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and share in his undying life." That fits Paul's tone and the message of his letter. The epistle which opened with a bold glance into the eternal past closes with the outlook of an immortal hope."

REFLECTION QUESTION: How do you strengthen your bodies muscles? You have to exercise them to build them up. The same is true of our spiritual muscles and strength. God uses the trials and tribulations of life to strengthen them. Instead of focusing our prayers on getting us out of

our difficulty, pray for God to help you get through the difficulty. Now God can strengthen you and prepare you for other difficulties which will come.