

## Christians in Spiritual Warfare

### Course: The Armour of God

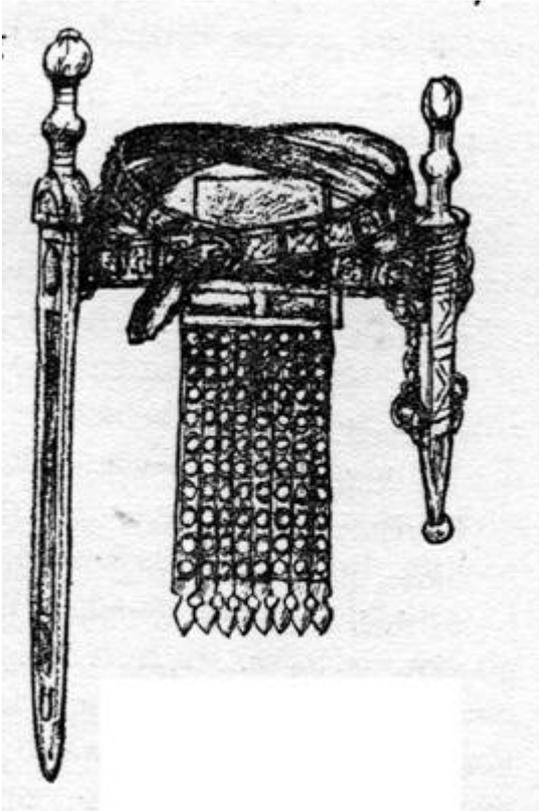
#### Lesson 5

##### Lesson Title: The Belt of Truth

**Lesson Goal:** ...that the student will hold firm to the truth of the gospel.

**Text:** Ephesians 6:10-14, 'Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth'.

**Theme:** The Truth of God's Word must be fastened like a belt to our lives.



##### Introduction:

Details of the belt.

The Belt was an essential part of the armour and not for decoration.

The sword and the Roman dagger were suspended upon it.

Held much of the armour in place.

Needed to be firmly fastened.

Allowed soldier to be ready for action.

Gave soldier confidence in battle.

- The belt is the whole gospel of Jesus Christ. It is 'the faith', Jude 3
- Only the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, Romans 1:16

**Introductory Story:** The benefits of religion may be highly valued by those who have no interest in the truth.

### **The Social Worker.**

Some years ago we fostered two small children who stayed with us for about 15 months. The boy was only two years old, and had a lot of problems caused by the rejection of not being with his natural parents. His sister was younger than him and did not appear to have the deep rooted problems that he had.

We always used to pray as a family, and we would ask the Lord to keep us safe before we drove anywhere. So whenever we got into the car to leave home, they expected us to pray together.

One day the social worker came to our home to get them because they were going to visit their parents. We watched as they got into the social workers car and drove away from the house. The car had not gone far when it stopped for one or two minutes before driving off again. I knew exactly what had happened. They would have said 'we haven't prayed, we haven't prayed'.

The social worker had a degree in religious studies, but he did not have a belief in God. His concern was for the children. He appreciated the benefit of prayer to them because it gave them a feeling of security. For this reason the social worker was willing to stop the car and I presume some kind of a prayer was made in the car.

Although the social worker was willing to pray, truth was not important, what was important was the benefit the children received from feeling secure through prayer.

**Quote:** General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army at the end of the nineteenth century said:

'I am of the opinion that the greatest danger facing the twentieth century to be:

Religion without the Holy Spirit;

Christianity without Christ;

Forgiveness without regeneration;

Morality without God and

Heaven without Hell.'

**When the benefits of religion are regarded as more important than truth.**

**Then religion used to meet people's needs**

The scriptures are not regarded as relevant

**Only concern**

Does religion help people?

If it can give a sense of comfort then it's held to be good

### **Question**

What about truth?

Not regarded as relevant.

### **Main Points:**

**1. The Belt of Truth is Foundational.** (1 Peter 5:9) 'Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.'

#### **Stedfast in the Faith (1 Peter 5:8-10)**

##### **Watch - The devil seeks to devour**

1 Peter 5:8 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'

##### **Resist – Stedfast in the Faith (we face the same conflicts)**

1 Peter 5:9 'Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.'

#### **The Belt of Truth in which we stand.**

It is the Faith that we must earnestly contend for. Jude 3, 'Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.'

**Question:** What is the faith?

It is the Gospel message that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-4) 'Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein you stand; By which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.'

#### **The Faith is 'trusting Christ alone for salvation'.**

The believer will always be pressured into adding works to faith.

Salvation is through faith in Christ alone

**Example:** The thief on the cross, Luke 23:39-43.

The thief had no time to do any works; it was his faith in Christ alone that brought eternal life.

**The Belt of Truth keeps us from being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.**

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

**Illustration: Sailing Boat**

A sailing boat that loses control in the wind will be tossed about in either direction.

Without the belt of truth we can be taken in any direction by clever words.

**Being steadfast in the faith at every stage of our Christian life.**

**NEW RECRUIT** - New in Christ

**The Gospel** – Christ died for us (1 Corinthians 15 :1-4)

Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again the third day

**In which we trusted** – by faith in Him (Ephesians 1:13)

Salvation by faith – by grace not works

**STRONG SOLDIER** - Growth in Christ

Become strong through **daily application of the word of God**

Overcome the devil through faith in the word of God

**UNSHAKEABLE SOLDIER** - Maturity

Close relationship with the Father – **Know Him**

Resting in His will, trusting His guidance, and secure in His purpose.

We are to be steadfast in the faith. This means being immovable. 1 Peter 5:9 ‘Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.’ If the belt is not in place then everything is out of place and it is not possible to stand steadfast.

**2. The parts of the armour are closely associated.**

**A soldier was not ready to fight in warfare if the belt was not correctly fastened to keep the armour in place.**

If the Belt is loose the armour will make it harder to fight.

The breastplate would not be held firmly to the body of the soldier.

### **The Belt is essential to keep the breastplate in place.**

Being sanctified by the truth. John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth'.

When the Belt is rightly fastened then the breastplate can be kept firmly in place.

If we do not keep the Faith then we will not stand in His righteousness

Without truth there is no breastplate of righteousness.

- A person does not become righteous by being decent and good living.
- Our own righteousness is not acceptable to God.
- We must stand in His righteousness alone.

### **The belt of truth cannot be separated from the breastplate of righteousness.**

Righteousness and truth must always be together. Psalm 85:11, 'Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven'.

'For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;' (Ephesians 5:9)

This goes against the teaching that what we believe is not as important as how we live. We can only live right if our lives are built on right beliefs.

Compare Matthew 7:24-27.

Righteousness without truth is self righteousness.

It is righteousness built upon our own works.

There is no righteousness outside of truth.

Living a good life cannot save, Ephesians 2:8-9.

Our works of righteousness are as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:6.

### **The righteousness of Christ is held in place by the doctrine of Christ.**

Who Jesus is - the eternal Son of God became Man.

What Jesus has done - gave Himself a ransom for us.

### **3. The Belt must remain tightly fastened.**

**If the belt came slack then the soldier was not ready for the battle.**

**Keeping the belt tightly fastened requires discipleship.**

2 Timothy 2:15, 'Be diligent to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.'

Remaining continually in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 1:9).

**A soldier must be taught discipline in putting the uniform on correctly.**

An undisciplined soldier cannot be relied upon to follow orders.

An undisciplined soldier will not be ready for action.

An undisciplined soldier will put himself and his associates in danger.

**Illustration: The disciplined soldier**

A soldier must take great care in putting on his or her uniform.

A soldier in battle must dress differently from a soldier on ceremony but every soldier must be just as disciplined.

**In Christian warfare we must know what we believe.**

**Question: Why is it important to know what we believe?**

**The way of salvation is not negotiable.**

Repentance and Faith

The Christian life is 'the life of Christ in us'.

This is a living reality not a theological discussion.

**If the belt is loose then we will not stand the trial.**

Consider the stability of Job in the trial.

He didn't understand the circumstances he was going but his faith stood firm on truth.

'For I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God' Job 19:25-26.

**Keeping the belt tight means being diligent to uphold the Truth,**

'Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (Jude 3).

Truth can be divisive, but unity can only be built upon the word of God.

### **The High Priestly prayer of Jesus (John 17).**

The prayer of John 17:11 'that they may be one'

must be taken in the context of John 17:14 'I have given them Your word'.

## **CHURCH HISTORY**

### **Story: 'I am captive to the Word of God' – Luther at Worms (1521)**

When Martin Luther (1483-1546) was asked to denounce his writings at Worms in 1521, he thought it would probably cost him his life but he boldly declared that he was 'captive to the Word of God'.

History has described his stand with the words 'Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me'.

Scripture is the final authority of the church and scripture can only be understood when it is read in context.

### **Keeping the belt tight - The Creeds**

**The Creeds were designed to clearly define the truth against error.**

### **The Apostle's Creed (2nd century) – a clear presentation of the Faith**

'I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.'

### **The Nicene Creed (325)**

#### **A clear affirmation of the deity of Christ**

'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten - that is, of the substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made, both in heaven and in earth, Who for us men and for our salvation came down, and was incarnate, and was made man; suffered and rose the third day; ascended into the heavens; and will come again to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.'

### **Church of England has 39 Articles,**

The Sixth Article upholds the authority of scripture.

Article VI: Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scripture for Salvation - '*Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*'

Scripture is the final authority of the church and scripture can be understood by anyone who is willing to read it in context.

#### **4. Wearing the belt of truth means to take the scripture as a whole.**

##### **The Belt of Truth refers to the whole counsel of God.**

Making known the whole counsel of God. 'For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.' (Acts 20:27)

Paul did not just preach nice messages.

He preached 'the whole counsel of God'.

The whole will of God.

We are to tell the whole gospel not just the parts that are pleasing to people.

##### **Comparison between the Belt and the Sword.**

The Belt provides a place to keep the sword.

Wearing the belt of truth means to take the scripture as a whole.

The sword of the Spirit is taken from the belt because scripture must be understood within the context of scripture.

Scripture is not for private interpretation.

We understand scripture in the light of scripture. It is not just what the Bible says but it is what the Bible also says.

We must rightly divide the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15, 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'.

It is not enough to use a verse of scripture – what does the Bible say.

The cults use particular scriptures but they do not 'contend for the Faith'.

It is good to finish by reminding ourselves once again of the words of William Booth at the end of the 19th century.

‘I am of the opinion that the greatest danger facing the twentieth century to be:

Religion without the Holy Spirit;

Christianity without Christ;

Forgiveness without regeneration;

Morality without God and

Heaven without Hell.’

These words apply even more to the 21st century.

### **Summary:**

- 1) The belt of truth is foundational. The belt of truth is the Faith in which we stand. We are to be steadfast in the faith (1 Peter 5:8-10). Standing on the firm foundation of our faith.
- 2) The parts of the armour are closely associated together. The belt of truth holds the breastplate of righteousness in place. There is no righteousness outside of truth.
- 3) The belt must be kept tight. We must hold firm to the truth of God's word.
- 4) The belt of truth is the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Truth cannot be divided into segments depending on whether they are pleasing to people. We must always declare the truth. The sword of the Spirit must be taken from the belt. We must rightly divide the scripture.

### **What should the student do?**

- 1) Study to know what we believe
- 2) Let the truth abide in our hearts and minds
- 3) Rightly divide the scriptures.
- 4) Stand for the truth of God's Word.
- 5) Let our lives be 'captive to the word of God'