

Armor – helmet of salvation:

Ephesians 6:17 ESV
(17) And take the helmet of salvation.

Introduction:

We come now to the discussion of the helmet of salvation.

As a Christian soldier you must always stand in a defensive posture ready to defend all that Christ has won **for you**, ready to defend what He has done **in you**.

Now I want you to think about this, how do we know that this armor is any good?

How is Paul able to testify that this armor is all of the armor that we shall need?

How is he able to say that that this armor will enable us to stand successfully against the onslaught of the evil one and his minions?

How does Paul know that the armour provided by God will work for you?

Because his was tried in battle and he knows the quality of the armor and the quality of the One who constructed the armor.

Armor is not designed to be worn beside the fireplace at night; it is by its very nature made to be worn to war.

William Gurnell in 1655 said: *He who wants to live on an island of pleasure where the whole year is summer will never make a good Christian.*

There have been teaching down through the years that the best way to live the Christian life is to just *“Let go and Let God”*.

That as Christians we should just sit back and let Jesus take the wheel.

Now this may sound nice.

It certainly is attractive in someone.

We just go with the ebb and flow with life, not fighting, not striving, not trying not struggling and in the end it is all God's fault either way it is all cool baby.

It may make a nice little country song, but it sure doesn't lead to a victorious Christian life.

It is not a biblical position, nor part of the mandate that we have as Christians.

Hebrews 12 tells us that the Christian life is a race.

1Corinthians 9 tells us that we are athletes fighting in a great fight. We are boxers in a tremendous battle.

Ephesians 6 tells us that we are Christians in a spiritual war.

We know that Paul's armor was good because it was tried in battle.

You will only learn the value of your armor because of the attacks that it can withstand.

None of the language suggested here by Paul is one of defeat.

All of the language is of preparation for engagement of the enemy.

We live as Christians committed to engagement.

We live committed to the battle.

We live in commitment to victory.

Only one piece of armour in our arsenal is offense – the sword.

The only offensive weapon that we need is the sword.

The only defense that a Christian needs is this armour that Paul describes.

The helmet:

Let's look at this helmet that Paul talks about.

Our armor is designed to cover and protect every part of who we are as Christian warriors.

Every part of the body has to be protected, that is true in spiritual warfare as it is in ordinary warfare.

They knew that blows to the chest could be fatal because their vital organs are there, so they wore a breastplate.

They also knew that a blow in the head could be fatal, and so they protected their heads with a helmet.

The helmet worn by the every day soldier of Rome was a kind of leather cap that had been strengthened with plates of metal.

It was designed to protect a soldier from blows to the head that could crush your skull and kill you.

When the roman soldier knew he was going into battle he would pick up his shield, put on his helmet and draw his sword.

As far as our army and armour is concerned, this helmet that we wear, that protects us from the devastating and fatal blows of the enemy, is a helmet that is constructed with our salvation.

The helmet of salvation:

Now it has been suggested that 'salvation' here that makes up our helmet means an awareness of our eternal salvation, awareness that we are Christians.

Some suggest that this means that we should not go into battle unless we are saved.

But it can not mean that.

You would not even have this armor if you were not saved, so it can not mean that.

You wouldn't have the shield of faith, you wouldn't have the shoes of the gospel of peace, you wouldn't have the breastplate of righteousness, and you wouldn't have the belt of truth, if you were not a believer.

This salvation that is being talked about here is not about the salvation that we are enjoying at the moment, the born again experience that happened at some point in the past.

Paul is not saying to us you need to be a Christian.

We are already believers.

What is he talking about here?

He's talking about salvation in its future aspect.

Three aspects of Salvation:

There are three aspects of salvation...past, present and future.

At the time you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you were saved from the penalty of sin. That's what happened. That's called the doctrine of justification. You were saved from the penalty of sin.

You are now in the second phase of your salvation and you are being saved continually from the pollution of sin, in the sense that sin longer has dominion over you. That's the current phase, that's sanctification.

The third phase is that you shall be saved from the power of sin. The power of sin to keep you out of eternal relationship with Jesus Christ.

So the first phase is justification, salvation from the penalty of sin.

The second phase is sanctification, salvation from the dominating pollution of sin.

But there's a third phase of salvation and that is to be freed from the power of sin, and that speaks of your glorification, the eternal hope of our salvation.

The promise of an eternal relationship with our heavenly Father through Christ Jesus.

Our helmet of Hope:

Maybe another term that would help you understand this helmet is if you saw it not only as a helmet of salvation, but as a helmet of hope.

1 Thessalonians 5:8-10 ESV

(8) But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

From the moment you receive Christ to the time you enter into heaven, your salvation is secure.
Salvation has happened to you.

Every day that you walk with Christ your salvation is being walked out and worked out in your daily life.
Salvation is happening to you.

There will come a day, where in a twinkling of an eye we will not be this side of the veil, but we shall cross over and be in the presence of he who first loved us, and that salvation, will happen to you.

The helmet of hope, the helmet of salvation that Paul writes to the Thessalonians is something that they had to look forward to.

The church of Thessalonica had suffered ongoing persecution.
The initial outrage by the community at the impact of the gospel had not abated.

People were dying.
The church didn't understand what happened to Christians who died, they had no true understanding of what heaven held or meant.

They were fearful for their eternal destiny.

They were unsure of how to deal with the day to day troubles that just seemed never to end.

Every chapter of 1 Thessalonians mentions the second coming of Christ and the glory and hope that should give us as believers.

This second coming is something in which we have as our future hope, the hope of glory.

The future hope of salvation is what I believe Paul is talking about here.

Hope that we will not perish but obtain eternal life in the presence of Christ.

Hope that we will one day be completely delivered from the struggles and affliction of this life.

Hope that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Hope that even though I may hear of wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes and famines I am secure in Christ.

I met with some Christian men this week and they were fearful. They were talking of the state of the world, talking of the effect that it might have on their business, talking fearfully about the effect that it might have on their children and family.

The answer to them is the same that Paul spoke to this church in Macedonia.

You need the protection to your mind that hope brings.

Hope of a sure deliverance.
Hope of a Savior Redeemer.
Hope of a soon coming King.

You see what these men needed then, is what so many of us need daily.

We need to protect our mind from fear with the helmet of our salvation, the helmet of our future hope.

Every day we are bombarded with the pressures and the pessimism of the world.

The hopelessness of the deficient.
The rise of crime.
The rise of lawlessness.

The fear for our children.
The promiscuity of the age.
The divorce and adultery that assaults our marriages.

And these articles, these proclamations, these conversations, they are attacks.

They attack how we think, what we think, and how we act.

And these attacks affect how we feel, how we pray, how we respond and how we view our future.

That is why we wear this helmet of salvation, this salvation of hope.

Hope absorbs the blows that are aimed at our mind, these near fatal blows of affliction, oppression and depression.

Now blows will still come in war and in life.

Helmets don't prevent blows.

They just prevent them from destroying us.

Our hope is an anchor for our soul:

An anchor is something that holds a boat in position in the midst of a storm.

The trade ships of Paul's time were small in comparison to what we see to day.

They could not stand the wild storms of the winter months on the Mediterranean Sea.

So often a ship would race to a harbor seeking protection. But because they were loaded down with the goods of trade they could not get into port or get their goods ashore before the storm hit.

So as the storm approached them, they would cast off an anchor, one to the front, one to the back. They would take lines ashore and secure the boat to a tree.

It would secure them to the shore line of the bottom of the ocean and as the waves broke against them, and as the storm raged around them they were safe and secure.

The storm was still present, but they knew that their life and property was protected for as long as the ropes were secure because they could not be swept into the rocks.

Hebrews 6:19-20 ESV

(19) We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,

(20) Where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf,

It is this hope in Christ that is our anchor.

It is this hope in Christ and all that he has done for us and all that we will experience with Him that peels back the fear of today and allows us to look ahead to what tomorrow will bring once the storm of this life has past.

Our anchor is sure.

That is, it is secure.
It is certain.
It is definite.

This anchor is steadfast.

That is, it is firmly grounded.
It is unalterable.
It is valid.

You see our hope in our future salvation does the same thing that an anchor does for a ship.

It makes it secure and tied fast to a fix object beyond itself.

When the waves come and beat against the ship, when the wind blows, when the trails of the life come-
As long as the anchors are steadfast and secure, then all that the ship has to do is ride out the storm and it will remain in tact.

In the tempest and the trials of life our mind can remain secure and steadfast on Christ.

In the tempest and the trails of life.
Our hope is assured.

In the tempest and the trails of life our faith is unmovable.

We have an enemy who hates us, Paul infers.
An enemy who would like to see us destroyed.

Yet, we can remain unmoved in these situations and trials because
our hope is not in ourselves.

Our hope is not in our ability to fight.

Our hope is not in what we obtain or achieve.

Our hope, the guarantee of our future, is in Christ.

This hope is a great hope, a mighty hope that enables us to fight and
live victoriously every day.

Here are four things that this hope gives us:

Our helmet of Salvation, of hope, enables us to live with only one anchor:

I believe it was Socrates who died in 399 BC said-

A ship ought not to trust to one anchor, nor life to one hope.

The Apostle Paul 500 years later in a country and culture saturated in Socratarian thought would rise and say...*"Socrates was wrong... you don't need multiple false anchors to live in this life, you need only one true anchor. There is only one hope and that hope is Christ Jesus".*

And you see, that is what I believe is the problem for many Christians today.

They want more than one anchor.

Today we want to walk by sight and not by faith.

I want all the promises that a venture will work before I try it.

I am not talking about not doing due diligence – don't hear what I am not saying- I am talking about living in fear and foreboding.

If I don't have financial backing I won't step out and serve God.

If I don't have venture capital raised, I won't follow my dream.

If I don't have all the answers, I am not prepared to even discuss the question.

If all my friends aren't doing it, then I don't believe I should make a stand at school for Christ.

I won't pray for the sick, it might not work.

Friend, I believe we should cast off all anchors except Christ.

Rid ourselves of the baggage and fear that keeps us living small.

Loving small-

Thinking small-

Being small-

Praying small-

Dreaming small

Socrates is also famous for saying:

"The only real wisdom is knowing you know nothing"

Friend, the only true wisdom is to fear God and to love Him forever.

To claim Him as your own.

To be loved by Him and love Him in return.

To cast our cares and fears onto the shore of our Christ and hang on and enjoy the ride.

Enjoy the ride friend.

Ride out the storm and have stories.

Our helmet of Salvation, of hope, enables us to live as if heaven matters:

Our helmet of hope, our helmet of salvation should be the driving force in our life.

You see friend, we should be living as if heaven matters.

We should be living with eternity on our mind.

We should be talking, praying, singing, reading like heaven is ever present and the difference between eternal life and eternal death is our passionate belief in this God we know and His Son and Savior of all of mankind, Jesus Christ.

Charlie Peace was a notorious English burglar and murder who died on February 25th 1879.

Though he never went to church himself, Charlie Peace sent his children to Sunday school. Peace was an avowed believer in both God and the devil. As he said, however, that he feared neither, it did not restrain him from crime.

Finally the law caught up with him, and he was condemned to death for the murder of Arthur Dyson.

On February 24, Peace was visited for the last time by his wife, stepson, his daughter, Mrs. Bolsover, and her husband. Mrs. Peace reminded him that he had promised to pray with them at the last. Peace knelt with them and prayed for half an hour. He then shook hands with them, prayed for and blessed each one singly, and cried as they left.

On the fatal morning of February 25 in Armev Jail, Leeds, England, a group of prison officials meet him to take him on his final walk to the gallows.

Among them was the prison chaplain who's job it was to prepare Charlie for his eternal destiny. The prison chaplain walked sleepily

ahead of Charlie mumbling and yawning his ways through a series of recitals and bible verses.

Suddenly he felt a tap on his shoulder; he turned startled and was confronted by Charlie Peace who asked him “What are you reading?”

The preacher replied “The Consolations of Religion”.

Peace asked him “Do you believe what you are reading?”

The Chaplain said “Well, yes, I guess so”.

Peace stared at the chaplain shocked and stunned. Here he was going to his death, knowing that his earthly deeds utterly condemned him to damnation and the clergyman was mouthing words about heaven and hell as if they were a boring chore.

Peace stared at the preacher and said:

“Sir I do not share your faith. But if I did believe what you say you believe and even though England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would crawl the length and breadth of it on hand and knee and think the pain worthwhile, just to save a single soul from this eternal hell of which you speak”.

Our helmet of Salvation, of hope, allows us to face adversity.

If we truly lived like heaven matters-

If we truly had a vision of glory, an understanding that this life is but a short trial, we would fear nothing, long for nothing, be thankful for everything and love passionately everyone we met for the greater cause of the kingdom.

What ever besets us here friend, is but for a moment.

This Hope allows us to face it with full confidence and fully utilizing our shield of faith.

John Piper recounts how the helmet of salvation was a great comfort to him in the midst of a personal crisis.

One of my clearest experiences of how this works was in December, 2005. The urologist said there was an irregularity in the prostate. He would like to do a biopsy. When? Right now. I'll be back in a few minutes with the instrument. You can wait on that table.

In those ten minutes of his absence I felt a blow. He thinks I have cancer. He wants to do the biopsy instantly. As the blow descended on my head, the Lord positioned my helmet with loving firmness so that it wouldn't fly off.

(God) brought this text to my mind as I sat on the table awaiting the biopsy. It did its work. It fixed hope on my head. It put brass between me and the blow.

In retrospect, God covered my head with the promise that this blow was not his wrath. He positioned the helmet of hope perfectly without my even thinking of helmets. I simply thought: This is not wrath; and if I live, I live with Christ, and if I die, I also live with Christ. With that he covered my head.

So go to the arsenal of God's word and get your armor. The blows are going to come. Without a helmet they will crush your skull. God has a helmet of hope fitted for your head. Put it on.

Our helmet of Salvation, of hope, gives us comfort when the promises of God are delayed:

To hope without a promise is like trying to claim a debt that was never owed.

God promised Abraham a son, but waited many years to fulfillment of that promise.

God promised Abraham and his seed Canaan, yet hundreds of years transpired between the promise and the fulfillment of the promises.

Lamentations 3:26 ESV

(26) It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Hope may groan but it never grumbles when the promises of God do not come straight away.

Abraham's faith was strong enough to follow God even though he did not know where he was going.

Habakkuk says that the vision is for an appointed time.

Not our time.
Not our schedule.

But God's promises happen in God's time.

God's near, often feels like our far.

God could have easily told us the exact time that he was to do a thing, but he has chosen not to. His ways are above our ways.

Our helmet of hope allows us to look into the future with promise.

William Gurnel said that -

“Patience has two shoulders, one to bear the present evil and another to wait for the future good promised but not yet paid.

Hope makes the burden of your present cross light, it makes the longest delay of promised good seem short.”

When I was a young man about 15 or 16 years of age, I had a dream of the wife I would marry.

It was a very vivid dream, a very clear dream. I saw the color of her hair, the dress she was wearing, the smile that she had and the necklace that she wore.

We were hoping into a car, we had two children a girl and a boy and she was pregnant with our third, she was dressed up and looked beautiful we were going out somewhere special.

All my life, every woman I met, girls I dated, every mistake I went out with, I compared them consciously and unconsciously to the picture I had in my head.

Red heads, blondes, brunettes, but they could not compare to the picture that I had. They were not my promise so I waited.

When I met Beccy, it didn't matter how long I had waited, my promise was paid and the time that I had spent hoping, wondering, waiting simply vanished.

It was about 16 years after that and we were heading out one night and she gave me that same smile and I remember the dream.

And friend, that is the glory of this helmet of salvation that is so readily available to us.

It doesn't matter how long something takes to manifest.

It doesn't matter what this life throws at us.

It doesn't matter the battles that we are engaged in.

It doesn't matter the things we might have to face and the disappointments we are confronted with.

We have a hope-

A sure hope.

A certain hope.

An eternal hope.

A glorious hope.