

## I. Introduction

- A. Today we are doing things a little out of order. We are saving some of our musical worship time for later, because today we are making some time for one of the greatest moments in the life of a church.
- B. Today, we will get to watch the ordinance of baptism. The number of people getting baptized today over two services is twenty.
- C. So I'll get right into God's Word today.

## II. Scripture

- A. *"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."* (Ephesians 6:12-13)
- B. I have been speaking a series of messages. The series is called the Christian in Complete Armor.
- C. This talk is part 6 in the series. These verses we've just read, and the theme we're focusing on is called spiritual warfare. This is a series about spiritual warfare.
- D. There is a fierce and unceasing war between God and the devil, heaven and hell, angels and demons, truth and lies.
- E. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life... even as the devil hates you and has a diabolical plan for your life.
- F. The devil's plan does not confine itself to religion. He is not fighting you on the religious plane only.
- G. He is attacking you.
  - 1. In your emotional health too.
  - 2. And in your love life.
  - 3. And in your sense of confidence.
  - 4. He will mess with your identity.
  - 5. Ambush your relationships.
  - 6. Fracture your family.
  - 7. And poison your morality.
  - 8. He'll depress your personality.
  - 9. He'll sabotage your sexuality.
    - a) He is subtle. He is manipulative. He never goes on vacation.
    - b) If you give him a foothold, he'll create a stronghold.
    - c) If you give him an inch, he'll take a mile.
- H. For the devil, nothing in your life is off limits.
- I. Satan spews his acid spit onto absolutely everything you touch, and he doesn't play fair.
- J. But thankfully, God has given us everything we need to live in victory.
- K. We have the Armor of God.
  - 1. *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying always..."* (Ephesians 6:13-17)
- L. So Paul gives us a list with six pieces of armor. These are taken from the armor of a Roman soldier. St Paul, who made this list, is very familiar with this, because he was in Roman custody on his way to trial before Caesar. He saw these soldiers all day long. And he saw them put on and take off their armor countless times.
- M. Here are the six plus one pieces of armor.
  - 1. **The Belt**
  - 2. **The Breastplate**
  - 3. **The Boots**
  - 4. **The Shield**
  - 5. **The Helmet**
  - 6. **The Sword**
    - a) Then we have to add...
  - 7. **Prayer**
- N. Each piece represents...
  - 1. **The Belt of Truth**
  - 2. **The Breastplate of Righteousness**
  - 3. **The Boots of the Gospel**
  - 4. **The Shield of Faith**
  - 5. **The Helmet of Salvation**
  - 6. **The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God**
  - 7. **Prayer**
- O. Last time I said that these are not magic words to say if you're scared of the devil.
- P. This is not superstition. These are not incantations.
- Q. These pieces of armor are an outline for spiritual growth. These pieces of armor are your workout routine to go into the spiritual gym, and pack on spiritual muscle.
  - 1. That way, when the evil day comes, you're ready.
- R. So we're finally ready to look at the armor of God, piece by piece.

S. So I invite you to please think with me on the topic:

**1. The Belt of Truth**

T. So I have five lessons today about spiritual warfare, the belt of truth, and a Christian in complete armor.

III. The Belt of Truth

**A. BELT: The Belt of Truth is first and main piece of armor that holds everything else in place.**

1. The armor of God in the Bible is based on the armor of God of a Roman soldier in biblical days.
2. The belt back in those days was not like what we think of as a belt today. It was really wide. It was made of tough leather. It covered the soldier's whole stomach and all the way around the back. It had protection for the soldier's whole midsection.
3. When a soldier geared up, the belt was the first thing you put on.
4. The reason it was first was because everything else attached to the belt one way or another. There was a scabbard to hold the sword. A connection to lock in the bottom of the breastplate. Some hooks to help hold up the shield. Hooks and pockets for armor, knives, food, and a leather pouch for drinks.
5. Not only that, the belt kept soldiers from tripping over their clothes. It held everything tight, so nothing got in the way.
6. You could say that the Roman belt was the main piece of armor that held everything else in place.
7. And when St. Paul instructs us on how to prepare for conflict, and for stress, and for war, the one supernatural weapon that best matches the belt is truth.
8. Having girded your waist with truth.
9. If you're going to stand against the devil...
  - a) If you're going to push back the darkness in your life and your world.
  - b) If you're going to be a champion and not a casualty in the great conflict of the ages...
  - c) If you're going to step into the confidence, the wholeness, the deliverance... and all that Jesus gained for you by his cross... then you have to start here.
10. Truth.
11. Stand, having girded your waist with truth.
12. Let's dig deeper.
13. What is truth? What exactly should we buckle on every single day?

**B. DEFINITION:**

1. One of the longest running debates in philosophy is what is truth. How do we find it? Where do we get it? What is its source?
2. What is truth?
3. Truth is reality. That's all. Truth is reality as God creates it, God sees it, and God reveals it. That's what truth is. Truth is reality.
 

**a) DEFINITION: Truth is reality as experienced, created, seen, and revealed by God.**
4. I'm not going to try to defend that or prove that right now. I've actually done that in other sermons.
5. But I do want to think about it for a minute with you.
 

**a) This means that the deepest truths start outside of us.**
6. You are not the source of truth. I am not the source of truth.
  - a) God is the source of truth.
7. God himself is the ultimate reality check.
8. If you want to find truth, you don't look inside your heart, you have to look to God. You have to look outside yourself first. You have to look to God's reality and to God's heart.
9. All these things are realities. All these realities are external to ourselves.
10. The universe God has made. Its laws and all its motions. The fact of your own existence. Who am I? Why am I here? Where did I come from?
  - a) These truths originate in external, objective reality, not in your own mind.
    - (1) You do not define truth, God defines truth.
    - (2) You do not define reality, God defines reality.
    - (3) You do not define me, God defines me.
    - (4) You do not define yourself, God defines you.
11. This also calls into question the radical position that has now gone mainstream. That is the position that says you have your truth and I have my truth.
12. When engineers calculated the size of the I-beams for the roof trusses in this building, I really hope they didn't look within to their own truth. I hope they looked without to externally calculated charts showing the tensile strength of steel relative to the span of the roof... The my truth, your truth thing simply can't work in the real world.
13. If truth is reality as experienced, created, seen, and revealed by God, then the source of truth is outside of us, and we have to submit our opinions to his truth. Anything contrary is actually a kind of rebellion.
14. And when Scripture says to buckle on the belt of truth, it is telling you to see your life as God sees it and to see your world as God sees it.
15. Truth holds everything together. Reality.
16. Everything connects to truth, one way or another.
17. You are to buckle on reality, to buckle on truth, so you can see your life in crystal clarity.
  - a) Truth makes sense of your intellectual world.
  - b) Truth makes sense of your moral world.
  - c) Truth makes sense of your spiritual world.

d) Truth enables you to live without deception, evasion, or distortion.

18. The deepest truths start outside of us, because truth is reality as experienced, created, seen, and revealed by God.
19. And by the way, if you go to any secular university, they will laugh at all this. Actually, they will attack it.
20. They will say that truth isn't objective, meaning outside of you, it is subjective, meaning your truth and my truth, even if they contradict.
21. The problem is simply that if there is no outside, external reference point for truth, then all we're left with is radical self-ism, with no values but what we make up, and no moral code but survival of the fittest.
22. When the devil plotted the downfall of our culture, he started in the exalted halls of academia, with all these philosophers who said there is no truth and told us God is dead.
23. Truth doesn't matter, they said. What matters is feelings.
24. And now look at the mess we're in.
25. But truth does matter. Because of the most important things in life.

**C. IMPORTANCE: Truth matters because love matters.**

1. Stay with me on this. As Christians, we are committed to truth. We believe it comes from God, through his Word, to us.
2. So we learn the truth. We live the truth. We stand for truth. We fight for truth with respect and grace.
3. But why?
4. It's not about wanting to win a battle. It's not about proving ourselves right, and everyone else wrong.
5. The battle for truth is a battle for love, and here's why.
  - a) **Truth matters because love matters. You can't have love without trust, and you can't have trust without truth.**
6. If you're in a relationship with someone, and they're not telling the truth to you, that hurts.
7. You're not going to trust them. You're going to keep your shields up.
8. And your relationship is going to suffer.
9. Truth matters because love matters. No truth, no trust. No trust, no love.
  - a) *"Therefore, putting away lying, 'let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another."* (Ephesians 4:25)
10. Truth is the glue that holds relationships together and makes love possible.
  - a) Because truth is reality, and when you're real with each other, you grow closer.
11. Here's reality.
12. Here's unreality.
  - a) Put on the belt of truth, love one another in grace and truth, and stand against the wiles of the devil by standing on God's truth.

**D. ATTACK: Satan attacks truth to damage our lives and to drive a wedge between us and God.**

1. Satan and the demons tear at truth like vultures on road kill.
2. Since the Garden of Eden, when the serpent tempted Eve, the main thing the devil does is undermine reality. He's sneaky and subtle, and he cheats.
3. Jesus called the devil a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44).
4. If you don't wear the belt of truth, you're going to be sucked into Satan's lies.
5. Here's a really important Bible verse from a super readable translation:
  - a) **"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within..."** (Romans 12:2, Phillips)
6. Yes, the world is squeezing us into its mold... all the time.
7. But when you read the word "world" don't just think about culture.
8. The world, in this sense, has a really dark side.
  - a) *"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the Wicked One."* (1 John 5:19)
  - b) *"Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."* (James 4:4)
  - c) *"Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world [Satan] will be cast out."* (John 12:31)
9. When Scripture says to not let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, world has a very specific and very demonic meaning.
  - (1) **The World is the prevailing philosophies of a culture in rebellion against God, under the influence of Satan.**
10. That world.
11. That evil world.
12. That demonically influences world.
13. Don't let that world squeeze you into its mold.
14. And it's so hard, because this is where we live and work and play and study and hang out with friends.
15. So we need to buckle on truth...a massive helping of truth... so that we can walk in reality and not be neutralized by the devil.

**E. PROBLEM:**

1. I was listening to two pastors talk about what's going on with Gen Z and younger generations today.
2. They ran through a list of ten moral and spiritual problems with younger generations.
  - a) Father issues. Melting down of truth. Crisis in knowledge. Shift from a culture of authority to a culture of authenticity. Digital distraction. Misdefined freedom. There are no facts, only interpretations. A sinful desire for autonomy. Skepticism toward the Bible among Christians. Fear of being canceled.
  - b) I think that's a great list. I'm either going to preach it or do a podcast on it one of these days.

3. And then they condensed it all down into one thing... and this is where I'm going to disagree, just a little, and make a change to what they said.
4. They said that all these issues build down to an authority problem with God. And that's so true.
  - a) People have a basic refusal to submit to the rule and reign of God, so they come up with all kinds of mental gymnastics to rationalize that refusal to submit.
  - b) It's a giant authority problem.
  - c) Yes it is.
  - d) But I think it's deeper than that, and if we're going to reach younger generations with the gospel, we have to understand this.
5. The real tragedy of a generation raised in our post-Christian, post-modern society isn't just an authority problem. That is a symptom of a deeper problem.
6. It's a reality problem.
  - a) **PROBLEM: The deepest problem today is not with AUTHORITY, it's with REALITY.**
7. For people today, there's nothing solid, there's nothing real, there's nothing true.
8. Along came postmodernism to rip away truth from underneath our feet. So we're not grounded on anything. There's no anchor. There's nothing solid, nothing dependable. IN 2014, the Oxford English dictionary said that the word of the year is "post-truth." We live in a post-truth era. And that is a very scary way to live. And that's what postmodernism has given us.
9. But then add in secularism. Secularism says there is no God, no heaven, no angels, no supreme being, nothing above us.
10. Postmodernism ripped away the floor... so there's nothing real below us to anchor us.
11. Secularism ripped away heaven... so there's nothing real above us to inspire us or give us hope. There's no meaning but what we invent. There's no sacredness to us. Nothing transcendent toward which we can aspire.
12. So there's no truth beneath us and no transcendence above us so we're just kind of floating with no purpose and no direction and no meaning and no joy.
13. It's absolutely depressing.
14. And this may sound like a bunch of philosophy, but it's the reality of who a whole generation has been raised. And it's playing out in an epidemic of sadness, and cynicism, and despair and pain.
  - a) **To take away truth is to take away reality. To take away reality is to take away trust. To take away trust is to take away love. To take away love is to plunge a person, a society, or a world into a frantic search for happiness that is ultimately futile. This is the devil's endgame.**
15. The devil said to Eve in the Garden of Eden four words... HAS GOD INDEED SAID? And then he said, You shall not die... a direct defiance against the reality that proved to be all too real.
16. It's a question that he keeps on asking for all the long ages of time.
17. He is calling truth into question.
18. And that is what we are seeing today.
19. But it's the same thing that was happening 2000 years ago, when this brilliant writer and thinker named Paul said to take up the belt of truth.

**F. SOLUTION: The Belt of Truth is your starting point to walk in victory in the great spiritual conflict of the ages.**

1. When Scripture tells you to put on the belt of truth, it is telling you the starting point for victory in the great spiritual conflict.
  - a) Start here with the Word of God.
  - b) Stay here in the Word of God.
2. You've been infected by lies. Cleanse out the infection with the washing of water by the Word.
3. Here is the belt of truth.
  - a) **Put it on, every single day.**

**IV. Prayer**

- A. Almighty God, today, I put on the full armor of God.
  1. I put on the BELT OF TRUTH, to understand the times in which I live.
  2. I put on the BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, to discern the evil from the good.
  3. I put on the BOOTS OF THE GOSPEL, for my mission in a hurting world.
  4. I take up the SHIELD OF FAITH, to believe my God no matter what.
  5. I wear the HELMET OF SALVATION, to guard my mind from delusion and despair.
  6. I carry the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, to defeat the darkness and lift high the Cross.
- B. I declare myself a soldier of the Cross.
- C. I stand in the Victory of Christ.
- D. I make you, God, my stronghold today.
- E. Amen.