

**Ephesians**  
**The Helmet of Salvation**  
**Ephesians 6:17a**  
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I want us to return today to Ephesians 6 and to the believer's armor or more accurately, Christ's own armor that He has given to us for our spiritual protection against Satan's attacks. Today we need to examine the protection for the soldier's head – the helmet. The only helmet that I personally have ever worn or experienced is a high school football helmet. It's interesting today that in light of the more advanced, more technologically advanced helmets of today that there are increasing concussions and injuries to the head. Of course, I think part of the reason for that is just the heightened awareness of the problem. When I played, we used to joke about somebody getting his bell rung or ringing someone's bell and you know, that could be describing anything from someone just being temporarily dazed to being actually knocked out. I'm sure that there were concussions in those days on the football field, but I don't think we were very aware of it, and it certainly didn't stop us from playing. Now you know if I ever start losing it up here, you'll know what the cause of that is - it goes back to an old football injury.

There are undoubtedly more concussions reported today in the NFL simply because of a greater awareness, but that isn't the only reason. I recently read an article that identified what I think is a surprising reason behind the increase in concussions in modern football. Ironically, one of the main reasons may be that today's helmets are too well made. The increased protection tends to make many, particularly the more aggressive players, overconfident. Once they've experienced the reality and once they become confident that they can run into someone with their helmet at full speed and not be hurt, they start taking more risks and they actually begin to conclude that they're practically invincible. So, the better, more technologically advanced helmet breeds great confidence - of course, in the case of the NFL, even overconfidence.

But that's important because as we come to Ephesians 6 today, we're going to learn that the helmet that comes with the believer's armor not only protects us, but part of the crucial benefit of that helmet is to give us confidence. And that confidence frees us up to fight without hesitation and without fear.

The last several weeks we've been studying the armor that Christ has made available to us. So far, we've examined four of the six pieces. The first piece found in verse 14 is the belt of truth.

Paul writes, “Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH.” We discovered that this belt is a growing knowledge of biblical truth. This really is the foundation. This is the anchor point for our spiritual protection – a growing knowledge of biblical truth.

The second piece is the breastplate of righteousness. Verse 14 goes on to say, “HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”, a breastplate that consists of or is made of righteousness – not our own righteousness, but the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. So, we defined the breastplate then that protects us and our vital spiritual organs as it were in this way - the practical application of our justification; practically understanding and applying the truth that we have been declared righteous before God through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

The third piece of armor we examined was the shoes of the gospel. Verse 15, “having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.” These sandals, like the Roman soldier’s cleated sandals that provided stability in the midst of the battle, the sandals we’re to put on has to do with the gospel of peace. We said these sandals have to do with a growing confidence in the personal implications of the gospel of peace; a growing confidence in the personal implications of the good news that there has been declared peace between us and God.

The fourth piece of armor is the shield of faith. Verse 16, “in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith.” We defined the shield of faith as an unwavering trust in God and in His Word. And this shield is very effective. In fact, it’s a hundred percent effective when we actually use it. Notice how the rest of verse 16 reads, “with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” When Satan hurls any one of his missiles on the spiritual battlefield in which we are engaged, we raise the shield of faith, an unwavering trust in God and in His Word and that absorbs his attacks because when we give in to his attacks, it’s because we’ve lost confidence in God and His Word.

Now today, we come to the fifth piece of our armor. It is the helmet of salvation. Look at verse 17, Paul writes, “And take the helmet of salvation.” Again, the first century believers sitting together hearing this letter read for the first time would have had an immediate mental picture of this helmet because they were constantly exposed to the Roman soldiers around them. For us, we have to sort of reconstruct that a bit, so let me do that for you.

Roman soldiers used a wide variety of helmet styles throughout the Roman Empire. The earliest helmets were made of simple leather and to that leather, they would sometimes attach pieces of bronze to increase the protection. Later, however, as the empire grew, the helmets were actually made entirely of bronze in the shape of a bowl really, sitting on top of the head, and then they added cheek protection on each side of the face. But historians tell us that during the first century, actually during the reign of the emperor Claudius who reigned from about 37 A.D. to 41 A.D., the Roman helmet was completely redesigned. The new design, these new helmets, were called the *coolus* helmets. That's interesting. That's c-o-o-l-u-s in Latin. It was these redesigned helmets to which Paul would have been referring because he would have written after that redesign.

Now let me describe this new design of helmet for you. Usually, it was made, at its base, of an iron skull cap. Picture a small, little skull cap made of iron. That would've been the base. And then that iron skull cap would have been covered with metal that was pressed or beaten out of a single sheet of bronze. If you've forgotten what bronze is made of, it's an alloy made of a combination of copper and tin. If you really want to know what it's like, it's really much like the material our modern cymbals are made out of – the same basic material. So, a single sheet of that bronze over the iron skull cap. But in this redesign during the first century, they also added to the helmet, to that bowl if you will, a piece that hung from the back of the helmet down across the neck and actually overlapped and hung over the back of the breastplate so that there was no exposed area between the helmet and the back. In addition to that, they added a brow ridge so that if there was a thrust of a sword, it wouldn't hit the nose. It would bounce off of that, that brow ridge. Picture a visor, about a one-inch visor, that ran from ear to ear and about eyebrow height. In addition to all of that, they added hinged ear guards and cheek guards that hung down from that bowl and came down on each side of the face. In effect, the entire head was shielded except the eyes, the nose, and the mouth.

This helmet was often decorated with all kinds of decorations including sometimes it was embossed with a raised design of some kind. Other times, they would attach small pieces of metal of different colors, of different kinds, to sort of give it some relief and to make it appear more attractive. Now you can probably guess with all of this metal – an iron skull cap, a sheet of bronze, cheek guards, a neck guard – this thing is getting pretty heavy. And so, to make it as

comfortable as possible, the Roman helmets were lined with either fabric or leather and then inside the top of the head, inside the skull cap, it was padded with either natural sponges or scraps of wool that were pushed together and then the skull cap of fabric or leather would have been placed over that - that would have gone against the head.

The helmet was secured by a strap that ran from cheek guard to cheek guard under the chin and secured it, tied it on so that it didn't come off in the middle of the battle. On the top of the helmet, at the crown, there was usually a knob or a spike. It was called a crest block or a plume holder and to that knob or spike, they could attach a crest of some kind usually made of horsehair, often in a fan shape and often dyed red. Standing up on the top of the helmet, it gave the soldier the appearance of greater height and made him appear more imposing, more commanding. We're told that the lower-ranked soldiers only wore that crest in parades and official occasions, but historians think that the centurions wore those crests in battle to enable their soldiers to see them, to recognize the leaders quickly, and to serve as a kind of rallying point for the troops. That's the helmet.

Now the obvious function of the helmet is very simple – to protect the head and the brain from injury. They tell us that the only ancient weapons that could penetrate one of those bronze helmets, there were only two - one was a hammer specially designed to crush the helmet and therefore the skull of the person wearing it, the other a battleax. Those were the only two weapons that could penetrate one of these bronze helmets. It was absolutely essential in battle. Just as the breastplate protected the major organs and thereby secured the life of the soldier, in the same way the helmet was crucial because it protected the brain and the head from injury and the soldier from death.

Here's Paul's point. In the same way, we as soldiers in Christ's army have been issued a spiritual helmet that is intended to protect our heads, that is intended to protect our minds and to preserve our spiritual lives against Satan's attacks. Notice our spiritual helmet in verse 17, "take THE HELMET OF SALVATION." Now, first of all, I want you to notice that Paul changes his expression here in two ways from what we have come to recognize as we've flowed through this passage. First of all, notice he changes the mood of the verbs from participles to an imperative. As he's gone through this analogy, this sentence has gotten a little long as sometimes happened with

Paul. And so, he begins a new sentence here, but before this, he has described the armor and our putting on the armor with participles. Look back at verse 14, the main verb – “stand firm”. But then he says in verse 14, “having girded”; verse 14, “having put on”; verse 15, “having shod”; verse 16, “taking up”. But now in verse 17 as he begins a new sentence, he changes to an imperative, to a command: “take the helmet.” Now this is important because it shows us that although the others are participles, Paul meant them to have the same force as commands, as imperatives. The fact that in verse 17 he changes to a direct command shows us that throughout this passage, Paul intended to give us commands to do something. God is commanding us to gird our loins with truth. He’s commanding us to put on the breastplate of righteousness. He’s commanding us to shod our feet with the gospel of peace, to take up the shield of faith. And now He’s commanding us in verse 17 to “take the helmet.”

There’s a second change Paul makes in verse 17 though, and that is he uses a new and interesting verb. In the NAS, it’s translated *take*. The Greek word literally means *to receive*. So, *take* here is in the sense of *receive the helmet* and *receive the sword of the Spirit*. This implies that these two pieces in verse 17, and by implication, all the other pieces as well, are graciously given to us by God. They are issued to us by our general and we are simply to receive them from Him and use them.

So how do you receive concepts and ideas from God? We’ve talked about this before. You do so by understanding these truths and by applying them to our own lives and circumstances. So, notice in verse 17 the piece of armor we are to receive from God: “take THE HELMET OF SALVATION.” That is the helmet which is salvation or the helmet which consists of salvation. Again, Paul draws this expression from the Old Testament, specifically from Isaiah 59:17. In Isaiah 59:16-17, Isaiah is talking about the Messiah and he’s using the picture of the Messiah as a divine warrior. And listen to what he says:

And He saw that there was no man,  
And was astonished that there was no one to intercede;  
Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, and His righteousness upheld Him.  
[Here it is, verse 17.]  
He put on righteousness like a breastplate,

And a helmet of salvation on His head.

So, this is talking about Christ's own helmet. And we are told to take Christ's own helmet to protect us.

Now there's an important difference between Isaiah and Ephesians. In Isaiah, it's the Lord who puts on the helmet of salvation because He is the One who accomplishes it. He is the One who procures our salvation. In Ephesians, Paul says that you and I are protected by what the Messiah, our Lord, has already accomplished. He has already procured our salvation and we put on the helmet of that salvation He's already accomplished to protect us.

Now, what does Paul mean - that we're to put on salvation like a helmet and that it will protect us? Well, we understand the word salvation. It's a concept that absolutely permeates the Christian faith. We've already encountered it several times in Ephesians. In fact, look back at Ephesians 1:13, "In Him [that is, in Christ], you also, after listening to the message of the truth [the message Paul says I preached to you], the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." So, in other words, Paul says I came to you with a message of truth, a message of good news. And that message of good news is what brought salvation to you.

Look over in chapter 2. You see this concept of salvation again. You remember the flow of the early verses of chapter 2. Paul is describing what we were like before God rescued us. He says we were dead in our acts of rebellion and in our sin and we walked in lockstep with Satan and we walked in lockstep with our flesh and in lockstep with the world around us. We were, the end of verse 3, "children of wrath" – that is, wrath was like our middle name. We were given birth to by wrath, that's how sure we were going to face God's wrath. But verse 4:

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ [There's regeneration, new life. How did this happen?] (by grace you have been saved).

Again, in verse 8:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that [package of salvation including faith is] not of yourselves [you're not the source of it], it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

So, salvation then, in Ephesians, is very clear. It is spiritual rescue; spiritual rescue from sin, from its penalty, from its slavery, and from the wrath of God that is coming against sin. Salvation is spiritual rescue. You ask somebody who says they're saved: "What are you saved from?" The right answer is from sin and from God and His anger against my sin. That's what we are saved or rescued from. It is spiritual rescue. So, Paul then is talking about our spiritual rescue by God accomplished through Christ. And his point in chapter 6 is that understanding and applying that spiritual rescue protects our minds and gives us confidence in the middle of Satan's attacks.

So then, let me define for you the helmet of salvation. Let's put it all together and, as I've done with the other pieces, let me give you a definition. The helmet of salvation is a settled confidence in our spiritual salvation; a settled confidence in our spiritual salvation or spiritual rescue. When we find ourselves in the middle of a spiritual battle, our helmet provides us with confidence that whatever may happen, we have been saved and we will be saved. Our helmet gives us confidence about the outcome of the battle.

Now, let me clarify something for you because when we think about salvation; if I were to ask you to tell me what is salvation - for most Christians, we tend to think only of a past event, what happened to us at the moment we believed, the moment we repented. That's our salvation. And that's true, but the New Testament makes it clear that salvation is not merely about that past event.

Instead, the New Testament identifies three distinct aspects of salvation. Or to put it another way, the New Testament speaks of our salvation in three tenses. It speaks of our salvation as a past tense event, a past event. For example, we saw that here in Ephesians 2: "By grace you have been saved." It was an event that happened in the past at the moment that you repented of your sins, at the moment you believed in Jesus Christ. At that very moment in time, you were spiritually rescued. You were transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son as Paul told the Colossians. At that moment, you became a new creation as Paul told the Corinthians. That was an event that can be described as our salvation. If you're in

Christ, it's a past event. This speaks of salvation as rescue from the penalty and guilt of sin and it happened at a moment in time in the past.

Listen, I don't want to assume that everyone here this morning has experienced that event as a past event. Maybe you grew up in the church. Maybe you signed a card. Maybe you prayed a prayer. Maybe you professed faith in Christ. But honestly, nobody around you would ever say you are a follower of Jesus Christ if you didn't tell them you were. There is absolutely no evidence in your life that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. I have good news for you this morning. If you are willing to turn from your sin, if you are willing to turn away from everything you know in your life to be sin and to put your total trust and reliance in Jesus Christ - in His life, in His death, in His resurrection as your only hope of being right with God – if you will do that this moment, at the moment you are willing to lay down your rebellion against God, at that moment in time, you will be spiritually rescued. You will be transferred from darkness to light, from death to life, from God's enemy as He calls you to His own adopted child. That's the good news of the gospel. Salvation, for those of us who have embraced Jesus Christ, is a past event.

But the New Testament also speaks of our salvation not only as a past event but as a present reality. We were saved in the past, but we are being saved today. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Paul is talking about the foolish gospel he preached, the message of the cross, and he says to those who are responding, we are those he describes as “are being saved.” It's an ongoing reality. It's a present reality. We are being saved. We were saved as a past event, but we are being saved today. In 2 Corinthians 2:15 – Paul describes “those who are being saved.” This refers to our spiritual rescue, not as the deliverance from the penalty of sin – that happened in the past. This refers to our salvation as the ongoing rescue from the power and practice of sin, our ongoing rescue from the power and practice of sin. That is the present reality. We are being saved from the power and practice of sin in our lives.

There's a third tense to our salvation. It is a future tense, a future certainty. Our salvation is a past event if we're in Christ. It is an ongoing present reality, we are being saved. We have been saved in the past, we are being saved now. And there is a future tense. In Romans 5:9, Paul says “We shall be saved.” He's writing to Christians, and he says, “We shall be [future tense, we will be] saved from the wrath of God through Jesus.” In Romans 13:11, Paul makes this very unusual



statement to Christians. He says, “Now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.” He’s talking about a salvation that’s still in the future. In 1 Peter 1:5, Peter says to believers, “[We] are protected by the power of God through faith [why?] for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” There is an aspect of our salvation that is still in the future, in the last time. This future aspect or future tense of our salvation describes the reality that we will be delivered from the future display of God’s wrath against sin and from the very presence and possibility of sin.

Now our confidence in God’s salvation, our confidence in His spiritual rescue of us, is a great source of protection - confidence in God’s past act of rescuing us from the penalty of sin, confidence in God’s present process of delivering us from the power and practice of sin in our lives and confidence in God’s future guarantee of rescuing us from His wrath against sin that is coming when Christ returns.

Now understanding our salvation in all three of its tenses and applying it to ourselves protects our minds when we’re under Satan’s attack - when he comes at us with persecution, when he attacks the Word of God, when he brings personally tailored temptations. That’s what it means to receive the helmet of salvation and to put it on. We rehearse, we apply what we know about the spiritual rescue that God has accomplished in the past, is accomplishing today, and will accomplish in the future. That’s putting on or receiving the helmet of salvation.

Now as we’ve done with each of the pieces of armor, I want us to drill down a little bit more and consider how practically to put on the helmet of salvation. You see, having confidence in what God has done, is doing, and will do in all three aspects of salvation helps protect our minds when Satan attacks. And here’s how it works. Satan tries to attack us, and he tries to weaken our confidence and assurance. And he attacks our confidence with regard to all three tenses of salvation – past, present, and future. I want you, in the time we have remaining with me, to consider how he undermines our confidence in each of those three tenses of our salvation.

Let’s take the past tense. Satan tries to produce doubt about our past salvation. Satan tries to produce doubt about our past salvation. You see, the Scripture clearly teaches that every true believer, everyone who has repented of sin and turned and embraced Jesus Christ as Lord has been forgiven in the past, has been rescued in the past, from the penalty of sin. And the results of that forgiveness, of that spiritual rescue, continue today and forever. That’s the reality. But what

Satan tries to do is to convince us that either we never were saved or if we were saved, we must have lost it. He does this by reminding us of our failures and of our sins. There is certainly a place for honest self-examination. Paul calls us in 2 Corinthians 13:5: “Test yourselves to see whether you’re in the faith.” But for those who have repented of their sins and who’ve embraced Jesus Christ as Lord, who are attempting to follow Him day by day - even for those people, Satan brings this doubt. I’ve experienced it. I experience it from time to time today as I know you do. Every true believer has experienced this. One author writes: “Satan’s most disturbing attack against believers is in tempting them to believe they have lost or could lose their salvation. Few things are more paralyzing, unproductive, or miserable than insecurity.”

So how can understanding and applying the past tense of our salvation help protect us? Well, when those doubts come about our past salvation - you know what they are. And this was true in the early days of my Christian life: ‘Well, was I repentant enough? Did I believe enough?’ - as if it were all up to me. Satan brings those doubts, he brings those temptations. When those doubts come about our past salvation, we must put on the helmet of salvation. That means seizing on passages where God tells us and makes promises to us about our past salvation.

One of my favorites is found in John’s gospel. Turn there with me, John chapter 6. John chapter 6 is one of those great passages about God’s sovereignty in salvation. And in the middle of that, notice what he says in verse 35:

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me [that is, in faith, he who comes and embraces Me in faith] will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. [You come me to in faith, you’re going to have your spiritual hunger satisfied, you’re going to have your spiritual thirst quenched - not once, but forever]. But I said to you that you’ve seen Me, and yet do not believe. [There were people who didn’t respond to Christ. Why? Verse 37 here comes the explanation]. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me [we come to believe in Jesus Christ, we approach Him in faith because the Father has given us to Christ. He has drawn us to Himself because He intends to give us as a love gift to His Son. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me], and the one who comes to Me [in faith] I will certainly not cast out. [I love that. Nothing could be

stronger than that. Why? Why is Jesus committing to this? Verse 38.] For [because, here's the reason] I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. [Listen, Jesus said, this is part of a much larger plan. This is the Father's plan. And here's His plan, verse 39]. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all He has given Me [all of those whom He's giving Me as a love gift and who therefore have come to Me in faith, that of all of those] I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone [singular, everyone] who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.

I love that. That's the helmet of salvation. When those doubts come, this becomes a helmet to protect us, protect our minds, and our thinking.

Look over at John 10. You see this same idea in another beautiful passage of security in Christ. John 10:27:

My sheep hear My voice [those who belong to Me, they listen to Me, His voice here in Scripture. And notice what He says], and I know them, and they follow Me. [If they're really My sheep, they hear My voice in Scripture and they attempt to follow Me. It doesn't mean they never stray from the path, but it means that their life as a pattern is one of following Jesus Christ.] And [verse 28, to those who hear My voice and follow Me] I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish [never perish]; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

You go through this tenth chapter of John, you discover that there were thieves, there were robbers, there were wolves all seeking to destroy the sheep. That's to whom Jesus is alluding here.

But it's not just to them. Sheep by nature are wanderers. They get lost. They stray from the shepherd. They followed their own way as the prophet Isaiah says. A good shepherd is determined not to lose a single sheep, not even to let one of the sheep stray of its own will and accord, but to go find it and bring it back to the flock. That's what Jesus has in mind here when He says:

No one [not wolves, not thieves, not the sheep itself] will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one [I and the Father are of equal character, equal power, and equal purpose].

It's not going to happen, Jesus says. This is the helmet of salvation. I love Romans chapter 10 for the same reason. When Satan brings those doubts, my mind comes to this text - Romans chapter 10, Paul says verse 8:

That is, the word of faith which we are preaching [let me just tell you when I say you need to believe, this is what it looks like. Here's the message we're preaching, verse 9], that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord [if you take Jesus as your Lord, your Sovereign, your Master], and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead [in other words, you believe the history and the account of Jesus and all that happened in His life - His life and death and resurrection], you will be saved [you will be rescued]; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Not going to happen. And because we believe, what do we do? Verse 13, we call upon His name and "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." We'll be rescued. Put on the helmet of salvation.

Now if you spend a lot of time struggling with whether or not you were saved in the past, then I encourage you to go to the book of 1 John. Read it carefully - not this morning but take that assignment. Sometime this afternoon, sometime this week, set aside time to read and reread 1 John prayerfully. Ask God to open up your mind and heart because John said he wrote that letter, he says at the very end of it in chapter 5: "[I wrote these things] that you might know that you have eternal life." It's a series of tests. Take the test. Ask the Spirit of God to make it clear whether or not you were saved in the past and if not, you can cry out to Him at any moment that you're willing to turn from your sin and believe in Him. And at that moment, that change will occur. Listen, when Satan brings doubts about your past salvation, put on these passages like a

helmet to protect your mind.

There's a second way Satan uses the tenses of salvation. Not only does he try to produce doubt about our past salvation, but secondly, he tries to produce discouragement about our present condition. He tries to produce discouragement about the present. And he does this in a couple of ways. One is by pointing out the continuing power of sin in our lives – right now, today. You know how this works. You're struggling with sin in your life. You're battling it. You're saying no to it. You're cutting it out of your life as best you can. And you sin again. What does Satan come and tempt you to? Discouragement. "How slow is this process?" He tries to bring discouragement. When that happens, we must put on the helmet of salvation. We must remind ourselves that God is at work to rescue us from the power and practice of sin in our lives.

Look at Romans chapter 7. Paul, in the first part of this chapter, is dealing with his spiritual autobiography before conversion; in the second half of this chapter, his spiritual autobiography after conversion and the struggle with sin. There's a lot to be said here, but I want you to get the big picture. Look at Romans 7:18 - Paul talking about his life as a believer and had been at this point, when he writes Romans, for several decades:

For I know [verse 18 of Romans 7, I know] that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh [that is, in the unredeemed part of me]; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I'm doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Paul here isn't sort of excusing himself. He's recognizing that he is a new person in Christ and that new person wants to obey God, but he still has, there's a part of him that's unredeemed called the flesh. Its beachhead is the human body which has not yet been changed. And that part of him wants sin. And so, verse 22, "I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man." But there's this war going on. Verse 24:

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? [The answer is in verse 25.] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

He says not only am I, and he'll talk about this in chapter 8, being gradually saved from the

power and practice of sin right now in this life as slow and difficult as it might seem, but also when He returns, I'll be like Him. It's coming.

We have to put on the helmet of salvation. We have to remind ourselves. When Satan tries to discourage us about the continuing power of sin in our lives, we must remind ourselves of these passages, that God is at work, that while we're not what we want to be, by God's grace we're not what we used to be. That there is an increasing pattern of righteousness and a decreasing pattern of sin. We are being saved from the power and practice of sin in our lives and we take hope in that decreasing pattern of sin. By the way, if you profess Christ, but you aren't experiencing that decreasing, however gradual it might be, you need to examine your faith and you need to get help.

Another way he tries to discourage us about the present is not only this continual power of sin in our lives but the presence of trials in our lives. He uses that to bring discouragement. We see the trials and when is this going to be done and when I'm going to be over this and what does this mean about God's perspective of me? How do we respond? By putting on the helmet of salvation. We must remind ourselves that those trials are part of God's purpose to be saving us today from the dominion and control of sin in our lives.

Look at Romans chapter 8. Paul has just talked about this groaning of his soul to be rid of sin and "the sufferings (verse 18) of this present time." How does he respond to all that? Verse 28, a verse we quote all the time, he says in response to all of those trials and struggles both with my sin and with the pressures of life:

We know that God causes all [these] things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. [How do I know that? Verse 29, because here's why.] For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son [God intends to make me like Jesus Christ], so that He would be the firstborn [the most important One, the highest One] among many brethren; [verse 30] and these whom He predestined [to be conformed to the image of Christ], He also called [that's the effectual call when God called you through the gospel to Himself]; and these whom He called, He also justified [He, at that moment when you responded in

faith and repentance, declared you to be right with Him, to have the righteousness of Christ]; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

There is an unbreakable chain here and our glorification is so certain that Paul speaks of it as if it were in the past. We have been glorified, He will glorify us and it's so certain that he says, "He glorified us already." Listen, you're going to be like Jesus Christ and the trials you're enduring now are part of the process that God intends. He is working it together for your good to conform you to the image of His Son.

One other passage – look at 1 Peter chapter 1. Peter talks about trials, the people he's writing to have been driven from their homes because of persecution. They're enduring a lot of trials and in 1 Peter 1:3 he says:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. [That's in the future, salvation still coming. But what about now? Verse 6.] In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, [but understand, he says, verse 7, that proves your faith and therefore that faith is] so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, [and that faith] may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; [and, verse 9, the outcome of all of that is] . . . the salvation of your souls.

You know what Peter's telling those people who were going through really hard times? He's saying listen, you look at your trials and you ask yourself what's going on? Satan brings discouragement about the presence of trials in your life. Maybe right now, today, you are weighed down and discouraged by the trials in your life. Listen, put on the helmet of salvation. God is using those trials to deliver you from the ongoing power and practice of sin in your life.

Not only does Satan try to produce doubt about our past salvation, discouragement about the present, but he also tries to produce doubt about our future salvation. When we start thinking about the future, when we start thinking about the reality of death, when we start thinking about the reality that each of us individually will stand before God, the Creator, we begin to have, from Satan, debilitating temptations about the future, to doubt our future. And when that happens, we must put on the helmet of salvation. We must remind ourselves that God has promised we will be saved from God's future wrath and even from the presence and possibility of sin not because we deserve it, but because our Lord Jesus deserves it.

I love Psalm 138:8: "The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting; do not forsake the works of Your hands." The Lord will accomplish what concerns me. Romans 5:9, "We shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." There's no question about it. Philippians 1:6, "I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." God started the work in you, and He'll finish it.

Turn with me to one last passage – 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. I love this. It's the only other place in the New Testament where Paul uses the image of a helmet. And he's talking about it protecting us as we think about the future. Look at verse 8, 1 Thessalonians 5:8:

But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of [future] salvation. [Now why?] For [because, here's why] God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ [now how can we be certain of that? Verse 10], who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

Listen, when Satan tempts us to doubt about our future salvation, put on the helmet of salvation. Put on the truths taught in 1 Thessalonians 5 and in other places. If we're going to be protected from Satan's constant attacks, we cannot go into battle with our heads unprotected. We must receive from God and put on the helmet of salvation. We must have a settled confidence in our spiritual salvation - in the past from the penalty of sin, in the present from the power and practice of sin, and in the future from the presence of sin and the wrath of God. Paul says, "Stand firm,



having put on the helmet of salvation.” Let’s pray together.

Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the rich encouragement that it brings us. Lord may our hope never be in ourselves, in some decision we made, some prayer we prayed. May our hope always be in Your promises. Father, may the promises we’ve looked at together this morning serve as a wonderful helmet to guard our thoughts and our minds against Satan’s attacks of doubt and discouragement.

And Father, I pray for the person here this morning who has never experienced the spiritual rescue we’ve looked at this morning, who still are in slavery to sin, still dead to You, still awaiting only Your wrath. Father, I pray that today would be the day that person would lay down their rebellion against You and respond to Christ in faith and repentance. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.