

TELL THE DEVIL ABOUT GOD'S ARMOUR – OUT LOUD!

By John Gagliardi



One of the most profound and sobering truths we face on a day-by-day basis as practicing Christians, is the fact that we are in the middle of a cosmic spiritual battle. At its core, the battle is light against darkness, good against evil, and God's people against the devil and his minions.

Basic stuff, sure, but crucial to our understanding of perplexing questions we face every day, like, ***why do bad things happen to good people?*** Bad things happen to good people because there is a very bad devil, and his whole aim in life is to pull Christians down and drag them into his hellish abyss.

Every day the battle rages, and there is no middle-ground. No "no man's land" for us, if we want to finish our race well and hear Jesus say at the finish line: "Well done, you good and faithful servant".

One of the most powerful chapters in the Bible on this crucial topic of spiritual warfare is Ephesians 6, written by the Apostle Paul, himself no stranger to conflict and struggle in both the spiritual and physical realms. Paul wrote Ephesians in prison, and as John Maxwell says in some introductory notes on this letter, "... Paul warns on hardship. He doesn't want to scare his readers, but to prepare them for battle. He soberly tells them what to expect in the coming spiritual warfare."

Paul explains that the battle we face, although it may often look material and physical, and the attacks may come through people and events, is really in the spiritual realm. Our real enemies are not "flesh and blood", but "principalities ... powers ...the rulers of the darkness of this age ... spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6: 12).

Paul's advice is to put on what he calls "the whole armour of God", or what is also called the "armour of light" (Romans 13: 12). No stranger to the "wiles of the devil" himself, Paul gives this advice:

"Therefore, take up the whole armour 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 with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit...” (Ephesians 6: 13-18).**

All Christians who are serious about their faith will experience spiritual warfare, and if you are in “marketplace ministry”, as most of us are, you will certainly be no stranger to the “wiles” and strategies of those “spiritual hosts of wickedness” Paul describes.

When I speak to groups in various parts of the world, I always make a point of emphasizing the reality of spiritual warfare, so that people can be prepared, and not taken unaware when “all hell breaks loose”. And I often talk of my own experience, when early in my Christian walk God gave my wife and me a specific strategy for fighting the devil.

Kay and I had gone away for a weekend to pray, and at one point, Kay suddenly said to me: “God just told me that we have to put on the whole armour of God every day – we have to say it out loud together each and every day early in the morning.” Not one to disobey God or my wife (!) I immediately agreed, and since then, we have done our best to carry on that practice.

As I said, I often explain this strategy to groups I speak to, and tell them that it seems to work for me, so why not try it. I don’t preach it as a doctrine, but it seems like good advice, and it works.

On one particular occasion I was speaking to a business group in Australia, and telling the story of how Kay got this word, and how we obey it. All of a sudden, a lady stood up and challenged me!

She said: “I understand the Scripture and what Paul is saying about the armour of God, but what I don’t understand about what you are saying, is why you have to say it **OUT LOUD**. Surely God is not deaf, so why do you have to do it out loud?”

For a second or two I was stunned – I have to confess, I had never really thought about it. “Being obedient to the heavenly vision” – and my wife – I just accepted it and did it.

To this day, I believe, I then received a Word of Wisdom, and this is what I said to her: “Sure, God is not deaf, and He can read our minds and knows our every thought – but the devil cannot! So we are not telling God that we are putting on the armour, but the devil!”

In other words, we are telling the devil and his hordes that we are covered and protected by the whole armour of God, each day, so that when they look at us, they do not see a vulnerable and weak human being, but they see a mighty warrior, resplendent in spiritual armour, an awesome figure of dazzling light, armed with the all-powerful sword of the Spirit, “piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow” (Hebrews 4: 12).

I pity any demon that faces that sight as he sets out to do his dirty deeds – and we have the choice each and every day to decide how the devil sees us – as faith-filled “ultimate fighters” protected by God’s armour and bringing searing light into darkness, or weak and quivering wimps and doormats, leading with our spiritual chins and just asking to be beaten up yet again by satanic bullies.

Like all bullies, the spiritual ones too will turn tail and run when they are confronted by real power and authority – by God’s warriors clad in majestic armour and felling everything around them with the two-edged, all-powerful Sword of the Spirit – the Word of God.

The devil, of course, is a very real, dangerous and implacable enemy – but we can defeat him if we use the tools and the weapons God gives us, and we can call his bluff! He is a liar, an accuser and a deceiver – but in the end, he is a defeated enemy, and we have the legal right by faith to tell him that.

As the old (but true) saying goes, when the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future!

“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith ... Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he WILL flee from you” (1 Peter 5: 8; James 4: 7)