

Weapons of War - Salvation Part 1

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[0 : 0 0] we're returning to our study on spiritual warfare we're getting close to the end of this series of messages that has taken us through much of the fall up into december and so we're returning back to ephesians chapter 6 looking particularly at verse 17 the beginning of verse 17 let's pray our father thank you thank you that you wage war on our behalf and you are always victorious your son has won the battle the spirit has come to unite us with him so we are guaranteed victory in him father but our little skirmishes that we go through they take us for a loop the enemy beats us up he pounds on us lord he tricks us and traps us and even the entire church sometimes gets off course but father we've come to stand we've come to stand against the forces of darkness that threaten us as a church and individually we come to stand we come to stand in jesus and so father as we open your word now will you please help us help us to stand help us lord we are in need of your power we are in need of trust in your armor help us lord for we put our trust in so many things but may our trust truly be in the lord that's your word now oh lord use your frazzled and crazy servant use him lord give grant him clarity of thought and speech and the power of your spirit to proclaim your word that jesus might be exalted visibly and that your people might be encouraged in him and that anyone who doesn't know you might see why they need to trust in jesus and surrender so father bless your word now and your people those online and those in person in jesus name amen amen these is chapter 6 beginning i want to begin reading at verse 14 stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth having put on the breastplate of righteousness as shoes for your feet having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace in all circumstances take up the shield of faith which which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and take the helmet of salvation amen that is the word of the lord please be seated you know we're celebrating you know we're celebrating the lord jesus and secondarily we are noticing the life and ministry of dr martin luther king jr this monday and this coming week and throughout this weekend you know when i thought about that i thought about the history of the african-american church in this country you got to understand something that when the slaves came were were kidnapped and brought here and when many of them were introduced to christianity christianity lived in africa don't get don't get don't get it twisted there was christianity in africa back in new testament times so it's been a long history of christianity in africa but when these particular slaves came here and were introduced to christianity in america they noticed something they noticed the hypocrisy they they recognized right away that salvation in jesus

that the salvation that sets them free from their sins should also mean freedom it should christ came to set us free and they understood right away they saw the hypocrisy right away that the colonial christianity was totally warped it was demonic in in some ways in this way and they began to develop a theology we today we call it black theology um because theology is always done in a context don't get it twisted all theology is always done in a context a cultural context i didn't say the bible is always applied to what's happening now if we don't do that then how can we live for jesus we we have both feet planted on earth and so when we look at the scriptures we right away say god how do i live this out what you say in this context for those of us who are reformed the westminster confession was not written our culturally they were dealing with the issues of their day especially with the conflict with the roman catholic church the slaves did theology in their context and one of the and a paradigm that they held on to for salvation was the exodus oh they realized that just as god delivered his people through moses that they were expecting to be delivered too they had been they had their sins they had confessed their sins and submitted to christ and were trusting in the kingdom to come but they were also trusting and praying and hoping that god would set them free there would be an exodus out of out of egypt egyptian colonial bondage there'd be a even even all the way up until the civil war they knew god that salvation was twofold spiritual most important but

also in life being set free to be all you can be for god for his glory you see that's what when you keep moving and you come up to the civil rights movement and you'll find it's still there too it's still there this belief this is why the civil rights movement was had so many leaders that were preachers and pastors they because the the gospel as they proclaimed the gospel of salvation from our sins they also knew and prayed and hoped that god would set my parents who lived under jim crow would set them free that freedom could come as they trusted in god which is why which is a good portion of the non-violent civil rights movement they recognized that loving your neighbor was the way to freedom not beating your neighbor with your fists but loving them in jesus name many of them all of them weren't saved i'm saying all of them were christian they were not but the heart of the movement was this kind of theology that saw salvation holistically not just spiritually but they recognized the spiritual affects all aspects

of life all that we do that today salvation they were able to persevere under great pressure demonic to use a phrase from rule of the rings they persevered under reckless hate what can men do against such reckless hate trust in jesus live for jesus and they walked forward in his salvation love and sister salvation do you know what it means to be saved do you really understand what salvation does not just in you but through you are you standing in the helmet of salvation or are you trusting in something else remember we're studying what it means to stand against the spiritual forces of darkness in our context in our day these forces are throwing out the kitchen sink at us right now

I think seeking to get the church to focus on anything but the glory of christ and the revelation of his kingdom through us even if we must suffer that's all right we follow a suffering messiah but also a glorified resurrected messiah and sadly I think the forces of darkness are having some success today real success in our country getting us off on tangents and dividing into our different camps shooting at each other and not the enemy last time way back in November we looked at how faith in the lord the shield of faith the faith in his promises in all circumstances is used by god to protect us from the hellish barrage of the enemy now we turn to another piece of this great armor of god a piece that's essential to our spiritual well-being and our all-out war for the souls of humanity I want to talk to you about two helmets one briefly and one more in depth both helmets give confidence in battle but only one is necessary for our spiritual battle only one can defend us in our spiritual battle first let's notice that we see that they had confidence given to them by the helmet of the Roman soldier that's first of all Paul's thinking is this helmet of the Roman soldier the Roman soldier's helmet according to John Stott was usually made of a tough metal like bronze or iron inside lining of a felt or sponge made the weight bearable nothing short of an axe or a hammer could pierce a heavy helmet and in some cases a hinged visor added frontal protection helmets were decorative as well as protective and some happened magnificent plumes or crest you've seen the movies right of the

[11 : 51] Roman soldiers and they're going into battle you see these beautiful plumes and beautiful capes I mean it's like they beautified war or tragic there's nothing glamorous about war but in that culture they tried that was their way of intimidating the enemy show up looking good before it got ugly now the helmet was not usually worn outside of battle but in battle the helmet gave them confidence to go all out just like our soldiers today when they go into combat especially a ground war our soldiers go in wearing helmets to protect their head now most of us can't relate to soldiers a few of you thank you for your service have served but most of us have not served and we don't relate to military helmets so let's talk football are you ready for some football you know

I didn't watch the I missed the game I think we were out of the country at that time but no no we just gotten back and I didn't so I didn't watch the Bama and Georgia game my heart goes out to the Roll Tide fans and you know well done Georgia fans amen my team is playing today the Cowboys are playing the 49ers and my barber and I are going head to head on this one but here's the thing about football helmets I mean I love football but think of it like this you got a football player he's on the sidelines what's he doing on the sidelines he's holding his helmet in his hand most of the time unless he's really ready but go back in he's got his helmet off he's got his hands on his shoulder whatever he's sitting down and he's talking to the guys watching the game talking to the coaches developing strategy but his helmet is usually in his hand he's full of energy right he wants to get in the game you watch some of the guys on the sidelines they're like bouncing you can almost hear them say put me in coach put me in put me in you can almost hear them screaming I want to go let me in sometimes guys will be hurt and still put me in shoot me up and put me in now here's the

thing this guy is full of energy he knows his position he knows his role on the team he's trained he's practiced he's studied in order to play his role well he's not trying to go in the game haphazardly he's trying to get in the game he's prepared to go into the game he knows his conflict as John Madden said football is a collision sport you just can't jump out there and play football you're going to get hurt because the job is to hit somebody so he's on the team and then at one point coach looks at him and says buddy get in there buddy grabs his helmet he runs out on the field and what is buddy doing when he's running on the field putting this helmet on you see him all the time they're running on the field they're putting their helmet chin guard getting that stretch done and they're ready sometimes they're coming with a play coach said do this but they're ready the helmet and I like when you see this guy put the helmet on sometimes they'll hit it they'll shake it make sure it's set make sure it's in place make sure they're ready because they know they're going to get hit and they're going to hit and the last thing they want is to have their bell rung in other words big word concussion

I've had one so believe me it's not fun playing football actually tummy but he's not ready until that helmet's in place he's got once that helmet's in place he's ready to hit he's ready to hit and be hit he's ready to go he knows he's protected he knows he trusts his equipment to protect him against any hits he must give or receive that's football that's war physical warfare but then but now we are to know that we must find our confidence not in a football helmet or a soldier's helmet per se but we are to find our confidence in the helmet given to us as Christians and since the helmet protects the head it seems maybe we should consider it protects our minds in thinking about what this salvation is all about so first of all we have to ask two questions what first of all what does it mean to be saved if we're talking about wearing a helmet of salvation what does it mean to be saved now listen the word has the idea of being delivered or being rescued from some type of danger what Paul first of all is letting us know is that we are in danger human beings are born in danger

I don't care if you're born in the hood or in the suburbs or in Capitol Hill or in the Appalachia or in the slums of Kibera I don't care where you're born you are born in danger you are born into a spiritual conflict and the bible says we are born dead and our trespasses and sins we'll come back to that in a few minutes so we're born in danger danger is all around us as human beings whether we see it or not this seen and unseen danger spiritual forces of darkness so say from what then all right that goes right in there and it makes sense right as a thing go back to the Old Testament and you will see that God was always delivering always rescuing his people from earthly dangers wars of the nations famine all kinds of dangers came against the people of

[18:20] God note this the people of God were not exempt from the dangers of this life they had to deal with that and the only way they could deal with it is when they called upon the one savior the one who can save them from danger and of course the paradigm for that just like the slaves understood and even throughout up through civil rights movement understood the paradigm for that of course in the Old Testament was the exodus when God pimp slapped Pharaoh and all of Egypt and said not just let my people free my people are coming free you see that was the mistake that Pharaoh made he thought when Moses showed up and said God told me to tell you to let my people go he was thinking that was a suggestion God doesn't make suggestions when God shows up to deliver his people it is not with your mind letting them go it says let them go or you gonna pay that's what happened the exodus keep in mind you gotta know this

I said this before I hope you probably know but the exodus when God sent those ten plagues those ten plagues were on the gods of Egypt each one of those plagues deals with a particular god of Egypt and he was showing them that your gods are whack they don't exist Paul even says in the New Testament that the things that the Gentiles worship are demons so the son god Rod and all these other different Egyptian gods and any false god he says that's really demonic forces people are worshiping and God displayed his power over them by usurping their power you got power you think you got power of the son let me show you got power of the son let it be dark you think denial you think denial is a god you think you got power denial has power so god slew denial he stabbed it and made it bleed so there was blood all throughout the land of Egypt that's our god he is the savior he can't he can't help but save his people he loves his people and when his people cry out to him his heart moves and his arm moves to bring them salvation hmm and then he sends his son on the ultimate rescue mission ever seen you see the salvation that god did in the old testament was actually a shadow of the full salvation he was going to bring you see the real enemy

Paul tells us is not earthly but god was showing us that just as he can defeat our earthly and physical enemies even more he can defeat the spiritual enemies lurking behind many times the physical and so jesus comes and he takes on our humanity becomes one of us the world became flesh dropped among us and defeated our enemies he defeated the ultimate enemy enemies the world the flesh and most of all the devil so we have this salvation that is holistic because jesus will also come again we'll come back to that and everything will be set right and we will walk in true freedom but what does paul mean then that salvation serves as our helmet how does that work because he isn't i don't think he's talking about being saved because he's already dealt with that in his letter matter of fact in this very section in verse 10 when paul says to us be strong in the lord and in his mighty power only those who have been saved who have experienced god's salvation can live that can apply that it's implied right there that we are saved i don't think he's saying put on helmet as a salvation put on salvation as a helmet you are no that's that's done you already have the helmet so what's he mean then i think the best commentators are correct i certainly agree i've seen it that way for many years he's speaking of our assurance of salvation let me give you another way paul puts it in first thessalonians 5 8 but since we belong to the day let us be sober having put on the breastplate of righteousness and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation i remember many times in the bible the word hope does not mean uncertainty like i hoped it wasn't going to rain today i really did but well that's that's that's not the kind of hope paul's talking about when paul talks about hope here he's talking about something that's certain certain that something that is sure you see it's one thing to be saved by the sacrifice of jesus for our sins it is another thing to walk in the confidence of that fact at all times confidence trust in the work of christ to save you first of all we should walk in confidence because this is god's armor god's armor remember we've seen this several times and here we go again isaiah 59 17 speaking of god himself he puts on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on his head he put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak once again god is promising to come to save his people he's promising to come to deliver them and he's coming with his armor on his armor of righteousness and his armor of salvation he will deliver he will not be stopped he is bringing vengeance he says he what do we know vengeance is mine says the lord i will repay he brings vengeance against the forces of darkness that will oppress his people jesus comes not as a victim but as a divine warrior to conquer all our enemies the world the flesh and the devil and he calls upon us to trust in that victory to trust in his salvation god saves us by faith in his salvation salvation do what do you want to say salvation is of the lord and paul has been hinting at that he's been talking about this if he would have turned back even to chapter 1 actually and he begins to outline this wonderful salvation chapter 1 verses 3 through 5 he's singing blessed be the god and father of our lord jesus christ who has blessed us in christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even as now here comes those blessings he's talking about even as he chose us in him in christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through jesus christ according to the purpose of his will and verse 7 in him christ we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace my goodness what a beautiful salvation and what a costly salvation most costly gift humanity's ever seen this gift of salvation cost the eternal son of god his earthly life saved we've been saved and we are to have assurance that that is so i'm going to give you a definition of assurance of salvation by don whitney nifty little book how can i be sure i'm a christian he says assurance of salvation is a god-given awareness that he has accepted the death of christ on your behalf and forgiving you all your sins it involves confidence that god loves you that he has chosen you that you will go to heaven assurance includes a sense of freedom from the guilt of sins relief from the fear of judgment and joy in relationship with god as your father that's a good definition that's why i wanted on the screen take a picture of it save it that's what i do and this assurance saints has a present reality and a future reality to it assurance of salvation first of all is a present reality and that's what i just been talking about when i read to you from ephesians chapter one that's the present reality we've been chosen we've been predestined we've been adopted we have been redeemed redemption through his blood that is the present reality of our salvation you are enjoying this right now you know that your sins are forgiven because a historic objective act has been done not subjective not something inside of you first of all christ came historically he came in perfect vision of all who were there he was real he was touched he was hugged he was he

was seen what he did was visible it didn't happen in a cave it didn't happen somewhere in a spiritual realm where no one could see it happened in time and space this present reality is historic and our present salvation is based upon what god's word says god has done stay with me that's very important your your present assurance of salvation is based upon what god's word says that god has done here's how he puts it in chapter 2 of ephesians verses 5 and 6 even when we were dead in our trespasses he made us alive together with christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in christ you have been made alive you were dead god says you were dead but now he says you are alive he says what does it mean to be alive spiritually you are alive to god you are alive to his reality you are alive to what he says it means something now before but when you were dead who cares what this says you didn't want to hear that you would say something like yeah yeah yeah but tell me tell me what tell me what's real right now this was real to you in spiritual deadness god's voice is muffled if heard at all muffled can't hear what he's saying god's voice can be so muffled that other things are louder in your life because you you're dead you can't hear and so so you can't hear him that is everything else is quite audible everything else is quite visible but when you're dead he's not but when he makes you alive you're born again he makes you alive by his spirit that's that real guess what god has done for you right now he says he's made you alive and now christ is everything christ is glorious christ is beautiful his word you you can't get enough of his word his word actually means something to you when when you have a problem or when something happens in the culture and you have to deal with it the first thing you should ask is what does god's word say about it because you know he's got something to say and he's always right see when you're alive when you're spiritually alive you recognize god is always right and most of the time you're wrong that's one of the things about being a christian as you grow you realize how wrong you've been but that's okay that's good because now you because you're seeing and when and when god speaks it's not a suggestion i'm trying to my wife and i thought about this today last yesterday evening how we're just watching a culture and it's not just young people though that's a big portion but it's not just young people 20s whatever millennials z whatever who who grew up in christian homes and yet the world is telling them all these other things is true and they're struggling because they're not starting with scripture to answer the questions some of us are struggling too some of us 40 50 60s etc we're not starting with the scripture to answer the question that's what being alive means we have the ability now to start with [33 : 41] scripture to start with god's voice okay i heard what you said news person abc fox i've heard what y'all said uh commentators republican or democrat i've heard what you said that's fine what does god say you're alive now he says you're alive act like you are alive listen to the voice of god over all voices all voices all voices all voices we're acting like we're dead and it's killing us we must rely upon the fact that our salvation is our present reality and we must listen to the voice of father he's always speaking turn to father he says he seated us with christ he says that we're no longer just living on this earthly plane here we've been seated in the heavenlies with christ we have a vantage point prophet he says that you understand by being seated with christ we have a vantage point to look over the world we can see the big picture if we look and we can recognize the victory jesus has won and the truths that jesus wants us to hold on to and to present you're seated with him that's our reality reality of our salvation we're no longer trapped down below as it were we're seated in his victory do you believe it do you really believe it seated in his victory this means that this assurance is also confidence of victory over all present spiritual foes because of our union with christ jesus has triumphed they thought you know the devil knew he didn't know y'all poor guy he thought killing jesus was the way to get this thing done he didn't know he didn't know that killing jesus was the worst thing he could do so when so when he's chasing jesus around the the promised land he's chasing him around and pharisees after sadducees and everybody wants to kill jesus could have in a movie kill jesus when he finally got it done he and his boys were going they were they were rocking and they were like we got it it's done and then he rose from the dead wow greatest defeat in all of history when jesus rises see this is why he can tell us put on the armor of god because that it is in his armor which he's given us that we too stand against the forces of darkness we we don't we never get to say the devil made me do it we you're not a slave to sin any longer

i know we still sin but that's because of where we are right now we're still in our humanity we're still in the human our fallen humanity yes and but but here's the thing you have the ability now to resist the devil and he'll flee from you james 4 7 you have the ability what paul says in ephesians to stand

against the force of the darkness before you were a prisoner of war now you've been liberated you've been set free in the kingdom of light out of the kingdom of darkness and you can stand listen this is good news saints that means that all the isms and schisms that are coming into our culture we don't have to give in to the lies of the enemy we can stop listening now don't get me wrong we listen enough to understand what people are saying when people what things are being you got to listen enough to do that but then but we don't go native you and i can resist all of the power of the enemy i'm thinking of a passage within my notes but i'm thinking of a passage you know i'm thinking of second corinthians 10 sound on the screens listen to what paul says in corinthians 10 verse 3 for though we walk in the flesh we are not waging war against the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds we mean my strongholds paul we destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of god and take every thought captive to obey christ we destroy strongholds the strongholds of crazy sexuality the strongholds of hedonism the strongholds of you know just you know how to raise your children oh you you you you you can't discipline them you have to give them choices so you do they you know your child can decide for him him or herself what he or she wants to be family do you know how wrong that is but that's the isms of this culture you know you know why do we call them children because they're immature they lack knowledge a lot of that and they lack something more they lack wisdom a lot of that too and so therefore they need parents or guardians and aunts and uncles who are wiser and no more to help raise them you don't give a child certain choices you don't hand a child a gun and a banana which one do you want five-year-old pick one which one this is not one of those kung fu movies where the guy did that with his child he gave his child a sword or or banana or or an orange or something which one do you want or no it was a sword and a ball which one do you want it's a five-year-old kid I mean maybe it might have been four he's crawling around and the guy decides what he's gonna do with his child based upon what he takes the child chose the sword so he said okay come with me if he had chose the ball he was gonna kill him that's a very classic kung fu movie by the way we're doing that today with our children we're giving them these kinds of choices and and and and listen they're not able to make that choice that's why they need us this kind of this the schisms the isms that are just one ism I'm thinking about that's coming into a culture and parents even Christian parents are falling for it be a parent please lovingly parent your children you give them choices when they can handle it and that's probably and you give them small choices not big

ones you let them mature you walk with them yes it's okay to tell them what to do and no you can't have a lock on your bedroom door that's my door and that's my room I'm sorry put that in there some crazy stuff out there today parents being told what to do by their children but that's what our culture thinks how do I raise my children where do I go even Ephesians 6 even above above our diversity it talks about parenting to train them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord which involves discipline loving discipline not just I'm not just talking about spanking or something guys I'm talking about setting parameters guidelines no you cannot cross this line that's what God does for us and we cross the line what happens we feel it repercussions we get spanked because he loves us too much to just let us run off and do anything family I know

I seem like I'm on a tangent but I'm not I'm just trying I'm talking about some of the isms that are affecting the church that we can take authority over through the word of God and not let the culture dictate to us how to live how to think because we know we are saved we know we're safe we know by whom we're saved we and we know from what we're saved and we know to what we are saved the freedom of the children of God to walk with Christ to walk with him in victory yes we'll fall and the devil will try to accuse you and tell you you're not saved anymore but a source of salvation says in the name of Jesus get behind me I am he has saved me for eternity we'll talk more about this next week he has saved me for eternity and will never let me go is that your story is that yours do you know this are you walking in the confidence we'll talk more about this next week and the confidence that that brings for your life when you are walking and knowing that you are saved that your life is that you're that eternity is yours that death is not the end when you're walking in that assurance that you've been set free from slavery to the isms and schisms and and lies of this life when you know that gives you confidence you put the helmet is on baby and now you're ready to hit something you're ready to go you're ready to do battle not not hit people we're not trying to hurt people we want to save people you can see beyond the person and see what's happening how you doing are you walking in assurance of your salvation are you living in doubt and fear you know you can tell because you're probably angry a lot if you are probably for anxious a lot angry angry and

anxiety you're probably fighting with people a lot because you're not secure and you're not fighting the wrong battle secure let's take a step back step back turn off social media take a take a break from social media always amazes me when I see people saw something on Twitter the other day somebody's taking a break from social media can I just tell you something if you have to take a break from social media you have a problem something's wrong it shouldn't control you like that it shouldn't be that important it shouldn't be that damaging to you it's not meant that's not for us y'all to live in that damage if you're if you feel like you need a break okay take a break but then go back to Jesus and say Lord remind me that

I'm saved remind me that I'm yours remind me of the reality of my salvation in Christ help me to trust in that salvation trust that I'm yours forever trust that Lord I am not a slave of my sin to sin or the forces the darkness remind me I came across a story a really cool cool story reminded me of my trip to Australia with my wife's mission trip we did some years ago they were coming back out of the outback from Uluru big the big rock and we saw these they were setting brush fires these fires you know to and he was setting fires to control fires it was very fascinating but a father and some were caught in something like that they were riding in a wagon and were on their way bringing some hay back to the barn or something whatever and they found themselves trying to outrace the prairie fire but it was catching up to you know this fire's move fast y'all and they were soon going to be caught because the fire was moving so rapidly so the father and son got out they got out the wagon which is counterintuitive by the way the fire is coming I'm I'm whipping the horses baby come on come on Bessie let's keep going but they got out the wagon and they the father dug a ditch around them in a circle and he put some brush in it and was able to set fires something that hay to set fire to it and so he burned a big space around them as the fire came upon them the this his son is going crazy dad we we've got to get out of here we're trapped what are you doing he says no son stand but dad the fire the fire is coming is coming so surrounding us why are we standing here trust me stand yeah we gotta run that was Kevin Smith that was me no we don't son we don't have to run all we've got to do is trust all you have to do is trust your father and stand listen to me I can imagine him grabbing by the shirt listen to me listen trust me stand right here how can we stand when we're surrounded by fire good question because son this place where we are standing has already been burned once I just set it a fire there's nothing left all the fire can do is come up around us it can't touch us because once the ground has been burned it can't be burned again

[49 : 20] Jesus was burned for you who trust him he was burned he took he took the thunder bolt he took the lightning bolt in his body as it were he took the the justice of God for us he was burned for us now family all we have to do is stand in him the fire world is raging all around us don't panic don't panic it's not the end of the world for the church or for new city or for any God Bible believing Christ honoring church listen it's not the end stand the flames will lick up all around us don't panic stand in Christ you will not be burned father help us help us to stand in you stand in your son to stand in what you have done grant us true assurance of our salvation Lord that gives us confidence in this fight the flames are hot ah but your salvation is cool it warms it just wafts over us it warms our hearts it satisfies our soul help us to trust in Jesus and help us Lord to walk in the confidence that comes from knowing we have on the helmet of salvation you