

## *Devotional for April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021: Belt of Truth*



Talking today about the Armour of God – and the first item mentioned is a belt. Did you know that a belt with a watch on it is a waste of time. A bad joke, I know!

In the Macquarie Dictionary the word “truth” has 10 different definitions.

- ◊ “Truth” can be a description of actual facts.
- ◊ “Truth” can refer to a state of genuineness.
- ◊ “Truth” also plays a major part in integrity.

So when we buckle on the belt of truth what are we doing? Are we buckling up a set of facts? Are we talking about being genuine Christians? Is it an issue of being people of integrity?

### **What is truth?**

Jesus says in John 17:17, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” So we need to be surrounded by Jesus, encircled by His Word.

Paul puts the Belt of Truth first on the list! Right at the top of the list. The belt was one of the key components to the soldier’s armour. Why? Because on a Roman soldier, the belt held everything in place. They had these big, baggy

tunics which they wore under their armour, and the belt kept the tunic cinched in close.

In battle, if they had a longer tunic, they would take the four corners of the tunic, and fold it up underneath the belt to keep their legs free and to keep from getting tangled. This was called "girding up the loins."

In fact, here in Ephesians 6:14, probably the most literal translation of the verse would be "Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth." We don't use the word "loin" much, so just so you know, your loin is your thigh. But nobody wears their belt on their thigh. Paul, by phrasing the first piece of spiritual armor in this way, is referring to that practice of tucking the robe up under your belt and out of your way.

In fact, they still do this in countries in the Middle East where men wear robes instead of pants. In India a high percentage of men wear robes. But when these men needed to run, or to do some sort of manual labor, they would bend over, take the back edge of their robe, and fold it up into the front of their belt. It is a quick and convenient way to turn a robe into a pair of shorts.

It looks sort of like a baggy diaper...but the point is that it gets the robe up out of the way, so that the person can run faster or work better without having the robe get in the way.

So with this in mind, we can see why Paul, although talking about a belt which is worn around the waist, tells us to gird up the loins. He has in mind both the belt, and getting the robe out of the way for movement.

The belt also had other purposes beyond just girding up the loins. It also kept the breastplate tight and secure around the soldier, and kept it from banging against his chest when in battle, and the belt also held a sheath for his sword or dagger.

So if a soldier got rid of his belt, his breastplate wouldn't be secure, his tunic would trip him up, his sword would drop to the ground. In short, he wouldn't be much good in battle.

Because of all of these things, the belt was one of the most important pieces of the soldier's armor.

To talk about the belt for the Christian, let's just take the way the soldiers used the belt and try to discover what similarities there are between it and truth.

Paul says this is the belt of truth. Therefore, this first and vital piece of the armor for the Christian in spiritual warfare is truth. To stand strong in this battle, we must know the truth, and live by the truth.

Only in this way will **the rest of our armour stay on**, and only in this way will we be **protected in this battle**. This is because the belt of the truth keeps the breastplate tight, it keeps the tunic up and out of your way so you don't get tripped up or slowed down. It provides you with a place to keep your sword.

Without truth, we are easily tripped up by Satan's lies. Lies, no matter how big or how small, are the things that destroy lives and relationships and futures. One little lie was what Satan used in the garden of Eden to destroy the future of all mankind.

So how do we do this? How can we put on the belt? Paul does say several times, after all, in the previous verses to put on the armour of God. So how do we as Christians, put on this first piece of the armour—the belt of truth? **We put on the belt of truth by putting on the Word of God.**

So, in Paul's picture here, putting on the belt is surrounding yourself with the Bible. This is done by reading the Bible. Listening to sermons from pastors and teachers who teach the Bible. Regularly and faithfully attending a church where the Bible is taught. Attending a Bible study. Memorizing passages from the Bible.

Putting on the belt of truth is putting on the truth of the Bible. Getting it close by. Understanding what it says. Knowing what it teaches. Then, and only then, when you have put it on, will you be able to use it like a sword in battle.

Do you remember when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness for 40 days? What did he use to defend himself? Satan came and told him to make bread from the stones because Jesus was hungry, told him to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple, told him to bow down to Satan, and Satan would give the world to him to rule.

And Jesus, what did He say? "Hmm. Those are really good offers. Do you think it would be God's will? Hmmm...maybe I'll pray about it."

No, what did Jesus do? He used the Word, he used Scripture. Three times for three temptations, he quotes passages out of the book of Deuteronomy. And He obviously could only quote those passages which he had memorized and which he knew.

Putting on the belt is putting on the Word of God. Wrapping it around us. Cinching it tight. Getting it close. Tying things down. Getting our life under control so nothing is flapping loose.

"The reason many Christians today are ineffective in their Christian life and in spiritual warfare is because they have not committed themselves fully to the Word of God, which alone is sufficient to prepare them for every situation in life."

Until next week. God bless you.