

clever sayings but I know what the sign meant. It meant that we should live the truth of the Gospel at all times: being His witnesses in every way and doing His will in all the performing areas of life. And in that regard, I suppose, we should be equipped with the armor of God at all times as well. In the Ephesians text the practicality of the armor is convincing. It consists of the simple offensive devices used for conducting battle with a minimum of the devices used to protect oneself. The witnessing warfare is an offensive struggle, that is the point, and we prepare ourselves for it by taking the armor of God. The pieces noted have counterparts in the armor of the Roman soldier but I cannot write much about that at this time. A good commentary on Ephesians will put it in order. I will stress in this talk the spiritual nature of the equipment and how we are given an advantage with it in all phases of the battle.

II. Discussion:

- A. First of all: Stand prepared (vv 1-15) Dress practically. One will wear truth and demonstrate righteousness. One will be prepared with the Gospel both in declaring it and in the living of it. The feet will carry the good news, the conduct or righteousness will protect the testimony and the factor of truth will give us mobility and freedom from what Hebrews calls "the sin that does so easily beset us." Please note that we are to put on the armor and then assess how we stand. And we must remember that the foe is no ordinary human opponent but the sort spoken of in v. 112.
- B. Second, take the tools: have the right accessories. vv16-17. The shield is our trust in God and the assurance of His delivering power. The helmet is the representation of our salvation and deliverance from sin by the grace of God. The sword is the Word of God...made useful to us by the Holy Spirit in every conflict. Hebrews 4:12 helps us to see how it operates. In this situation we are prepared for our work both in our equipment and our dress.
- C. Third, pray in the Spirit. vv 18-19. To move prayerfully is the right approach to the conflict. We pray for ourselves and we pray for others involved in the campaign as Paul mentions in his own behalf. Note that he does not pray for safety but for boldness that he may share the mystery of the Gospel.