

29. The Belt of Truth

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As you can tell, I am not into the newest fashion. I am not a fashion savvy person. I pretty much stick with what I am familiar with. There is one fashion that I will never adopt in a billion years – “sagger”. But for many young people, this is it. They walk around with their pant belts around their mid-thigh area below their rear ends.

A couple of weeks ago, I was at a traffic light in Tucson. I saw a young man who was walking across right in front of my truck. He was showing his boxer shorts completely because his pants were sagging so low. He had to hold his belt so that the pants would not drop any further down. I was really tempted to rev my truck engine really loud to see how fast he could run with his sagging pants.

Whether you are an ancient Spartan warrior, or a Roman Pretorium Guard, or a modern American military soldier, there is one piece of the uniform that hasn't changed a whole lot. It is a belt that holds the soldier's pants in the right position so that he can move swiftly. I've never seen any right minded soldier who walks around with a pair of sagging pants. I don't think that his drill sergeant would let him go on another day like that.

In his description of the Whole Armor of God in Ephesians 6, Paul doesn't start with the high-profile objects like the sword or the shield. Instead, he begins his list by telling us to put on “the Belt of Truth.” Let's hear from the Lord on what He wants us to know about this Belt of Truth.

A. ABLE TO WITHSTAND

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

From v10 to v18, you find the word 'stand' repeated several times. The Greek word for 'stand' is “histemi” and its definition is more than just standing in one position without a care in the world. Rather, it is “to stand, be kept intact (of family, a kingdom), continue safe and sound, stand unharmed” by doing guard duty.

Guard duty in military is not bird watching or sightseeing. It is to look for any possible enemy attack against you and your fellow soldiers. It is the same spiritually. We don't take up the whole armor of God and think that nothing is going to happen to us so we can just kick back and relax. We must be aware of what is going on in our spiritual life.

Many Christians have the wrong idea about spiritual warfare. They picture the Christian army as assaulting the kingdom of hell against spiritual enemies. Much of this is based on a misunderstanding of Matthew 16:18:

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The problem is that this understanding is completely inconsistent with the rest of the Scriptures. Nowhere do we read of the church assaulting or conquering Hell in this way.

Instead, we should understand what is meant by the phrase “the gates of Hades.” In the ancient world, the city council, judges, and city leadership gathered together at

the gates of the city. It was the place where the city life was judged, organized, strategized. It's in this sense that Jesus speaks of the gates of hades. He means that no satanic strategy will ultimately succeed against the church.

Think about it, folks, Jesus didn't go around, looking for demons to conquer. That would almost be allowing demons to set the agenda for His ministry. Instead, Jesus knew what God the Father wanted Him to do, He set about doing it. When satanic opposition raised itself, Jesus stood against it and defeated it.

The Lord gives us a glorious standing to maintain by faith and spiritual warfare:

- We stand in grace. – Romans 5:2
- We stand in the Gospel. – 1 Corinthians 15:1
- We stand in courage and strength. – 1 Corinthians 16:13
- We stand in faith. – 2 Corinthians 1:24
- We stand in Christian liberty. – Galatians 5:1
- We stand in Christian unity. – Philippians 1:27
- We stand in the Lord. – Philippians 4:1
- We should stand perfect and complete in the will of God. – Colossians 4:12

All in all, there is a lot bound up in that little word, "stand". It means that we are going to be attacked, but we must not be frightened; it also means that we must not droop or slouch, being uncertain or half-hearted in the fight, but we are at our position and alert and not give even a thought to retreat.

B. GIRD YOUR WAIST WITH TRUTH

Ephesians 6:14a Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth

What was Paul speaking of? We need to think "Roman soldier" here for a moment. The Romans didn't wear pants like we do today. They wore robes or togas – generally short togas on the battlefield. Having the belt tightened simply meant that he would pull up his toga and tighten his belt a couple of notches, which gave him the freedom of movement he needed.

Obviously the belt is not a dramatic piece of armor, but it was essential to everything else. The breastplate was attached to the belt, as well as the sheath for the sword. For a long distance march, the soldier could even hook his shield on his belt as well.

So, if your belt fell off, your breastplate, sword, and shield would fall off, and your robe would come loose. You may have the sharpest sword on the block, but you're destined to trip over your own sword and look quite foolish in the process. So, the belt was important. That is why Paul put it at the top of the list.

Again, it goes the same for the spiritual side. What do we have in Christianity if we don't have the truth? If that is the case, our righteousness, Gospel of Jesus, salvation, faith in God and the Word of God are all based on nothing but a fancy fairy tale of a nice Jewish carpenter who once claimed to be the Son of God and God Himself.

I like the way C.S. Lewis said about that in his profound book "Mere Christianity": "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He

would either be a lunatic – on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

There are three things we must understand about the Belt of Truth:

1) What is truth?

John 18:37-38a Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” 38 Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews

I don't believe that Pilate was a dummy, but he sure acted like one when he asked a question “What is truth?” to Jesus, but he didn't want to find out the truth like the majority of people in the 21st Century. Even many born-again Christians are seeking God's truth as long as His truth does not infringe on their lifestyle and carnal ways.

Listen, truth has nothing to do with our opinions or preferences. Actually, it often goes against our opinions and what we want the truth to be. You can embrace the truth or ignore it and face the consequences.

According to the Barna Research Group's report in March, 2009, only 34% of all adults believe that moral truth is absolute and unaffected by the circumstances. Only 46% of the born-again adults believe in absolute moral truth. In other words, more than a half of the born-again Christians do not even believe absolute truth.

Ladies and gentlemen, some of you might have the same problem as Pilate. You have been seeking the truth. Pilate was staring at the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ, as you have the truth on your laps right now. Everything that is recorded in the Bible is the truth, the absolute truth. What are you going to do with it? Walk away from it like Pilate, or step into the truth of God? Believe what the Bible says. We are going to learn more about the Word of God when we study the Sword of the Spirit in a few weeks.

Apostle Paul tells us that we must have a firm conviction in our heart about truth, especially the truth of God through the Bible. No uncertainties, no doubts, no lack of clarity. Satan, “the father of lies,” will try to confuse us. We need to know what is true. We need to know what God has really said to us in the Bible.

Do you ever wonder why our faith is weak and our minds are so often filled with doubts? Could it be because we are listening to the wrong voices of this world? When we don't give sufficient time to the truth of the Scriptures each day, we don't know fact from fiction.

2) Being ready for the coming of Christ

Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Without an announcement or warning, any time, any day, and any moment, Jesus would head back to earth to get His believers out of this vile world before He starts the seven year Tribulation. This is NOT the second coming of Jesus. This is what we call the Rapture and it is a part of God's truth.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Many Christian believers think that there is a prophecy or two that must be fulfilled before the rapture happens. No, there is none. It can happen anytime. When that happens, I am going up. If you believe in the Post or Mid-Tribulation theology, you, too, will go up with us. I promise that I won't tell you, "I told you so," but I will give you that look.

But if you are not a born-again Christian, you will be left behind and will go through the horrible seven year Great Tribulation period. Actually, you may not even survive. Wouldn't it be better for you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord now so that you may escape the Great Tribulation in future? I will give you an opportunity in a short time.

3) Live by the truth everyday

Another facet of "girding up the belt of truth," as we put on our spiritual armor, is to live the truth. In other words, live truthfully before God. Put on the belt of truthfulness! Be truthful with ourselves and truthful with other people and mostly truthful with God.

You might come to church wearing your Christian face, impressing all your friends with your worship, your spiritual cliches, and the way you mark your Bible. Meanwhile, you have another face in your home, or out there in the world. You are a hypocrite if you live that way. You are lying to God and you are lying to yourself. But God sees right through it.

Never forget that Jesus saved His most severe words for the religious hypocrites of the day, the Pharisees. He called their bluff. It is interesting that the word, "hypocrite" which comes to us from the Greek language, means "an actor" or "one with two faces." Hypocrisy in the church is far worse than profanity on the street.

It is absolutely essential for us to be honest with God. We can never pull the wool over God's eyes. We can never fool Him, and never deceive Him. It's as futile as Adam hiding in the garden, acting as if the Lord did not know where he was. It's so foolish when we hide behind our lame excuses, or busyness, or anything else. God sees everything; He knows everything. The only way to approach God is truthfully. Be honest with the Lord.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) Always be on guard against constant deceptions and temptations from satan.

2) Hypocrisy in the church is far worse than profanity on the street.

3) It is absolutely essential for us to be honest with God. Because God sees right through our facades.

4) Are you ready to be raptured out of this world any moment? Be ready and be watchful.