

## Practice Makes Perfect

Opening: a word about the title - 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of JFK assassination -16<sup>th</sup> of my mother on that very day -- a phrase she used often - a phrase I hated and she would wield it like a sword -

**Ephesians 6:10-20** The opportunity to Peer into the invisible Spiritual world

Be strong in **the Lord** and in **His** mighty **power**

- Who's armor? Designed  
for strategic defense against who?
- A wrestling match (battle) that can't be fought with natural weapons  
Add to this that these are not foot soldiers but High ranking hostile spiritual forces

**Rebellion in Heaven** *Jesus* words **Luke 10:18** "I saw Satan fall ... Ezekiel 28 Isaiah 14

Put on **each piece** of God's armor Paul using *metaphor*  
Stand your ground

### I. Put on: **Belt of truth** ....

We're able to recognize the voice of truth – God's voice – distinguish from – clever enemy jamming How  
can you distinguish which voice is God's? By the Content of the message is extremely different!

Lies can sound like truth – convincing – reasonable



**But The voice of truth does not ask you to look the other way it asks you to go the extra mile!**

### II. Put on **Body Armor – Righteousness**

chest protection against body blows What you are covering here? Your heart

**Proverbs 4:23** "*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*"

The seat of your emotions – yourself worth - Where your trust in God trust in others begins

### III. Put on **Shoes of Peace**

Peace that comes from sharing the Good News- with others – the joy in serving, ministering to others for God

The Enemy will whisper to you ... it's not working – it's no use

Look around you it's a losing cause give it up its impossible

But God peace gives you confidence it's never hopeless! "*with God nothing is impossible*" **Mark 10:27**



Yesterday some our women packed boxes for Operation Christmas Child, this church has worked and produced 174 boxes –goal/200 almost there! (Thanks Maryann)

A report from Samaritan Purse international – **10 million children** will receive Christmas shoe boxes this Christmas! Care packages to the Philippines – not too late to get involved

God's people are making a difference ...

Share the good news this Christmas season      something as simple as writing an encouraging word greeting card messages can lift a spirit

### **III. Put on Shield of Faith**

The attack will be diverse, using different strategies to keep you off balance

Insults –setbacks, discouragements - anger or hurt feelings to turn you a fellow believer a friend to cannibalize- divide and conquer

To separate you from the very people you have been praying for

The *shield of faith* stops those fiery arrows from penetrating and destroying relationships and personal progress God is accomplishing in you

### **IV. Put on Helmet of Salvation**

Cover your head the brain –  
where we believe or doubt God – our salvation –

Those moments that challenge your faith – wanting you to believe that God doesn't really care about you - if cared why would he let these terrible things happen to you or the people you love?

Trusting not doubting God brings reinforcements –  
Messages from His Word - his nearness in prayer – the prayers for you from others

JoAnn Trauma – pre-emptive prayer

### **V. Put on Sword of the Spirit**

The Word of God –the only offensive weapon – but it is also defensive

Demonstration with a foil

We are given this weapon but do you know how to use it?

→ You start by listening- ... like today, but there comes a time when you have to pick it up and get a feel of it for yourself

**Practice makes perfect** – learning about God's Word – learning from God's Word – Sharing God's Word – Welding God's Word

**Matt 8: 23-28** Jesus in the boat with His disciples

When that fierce storm suddenly struck they discovered something – they didn't know who he was!

*“Who is this man that even the waves and wind obey him?”*

Something easily missed in this passage - the storm was life threatening!

Their fear wasn't misplaced – the danger of death was real ... but they weren't alone!

But Jesus was with them -

When I panic, I run

when I run, I lose.

When I lose, God waits.

When I wait, He fights.

When He fights, I learn Corry Ten Boom

This morning I awoke to the howling wind – and the voice of truth began to speak to my mind

Storms of life often come up suddenly as they did with the disciples - they don't give you time to put on your armor it has to be on already!

That's why Jesus said to the disciples “You have so little faith.” Paul used the metaphor – *armor*

Do you get it???

This armor of Ephesians 6 is not made from iron or steel, it's not chain mail mesh or Elfin mithril

It is forged from God's love and embodied through faith



It's God who goes before us – God who fights through us – God who fights for us

**Isaiah 54:17** states *“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”*

It wasn't the faith of the disciples that saved them from perishing in that squall! It was the Lord who spoke the word – that calmed the storm

It isn't the armor itself – **it the Spirit of the Lord in you** that grows our faith!

He provides the covering for our head and heart, using truth and faith and peace.

You put it on by spending time with him – relationship building – life surrendering

We need to put it on and wear it daily – we need to walk with God – *practice the presence of God* as Brother Lawrence taught

When The Battle comes stand your ground!