

GROWING IN GRACE

“...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 (NIV)

THE HELMET OF SALVATION: LIVING WITH ETERNITY IN MIND *Series: Dressing for Success: Standing Strong in an Evil Day (Part 6)*

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Ephesians 6:10-17 (NIV) 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

A. Without hope, people will languish, become unsteady, act weirdly, and easily quit what God has begun in their lives.

1. In verse 17 of this passage, Paul tells us that part of our armor is “the helmet of salvation.”
2. A parallel passage to this is found in 1 Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 5:8 (NIV) But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.

3. The idea that is emphasized for the believer is that we must have a continued understanding that God’s salvation is working His:
 - a. Preservation
 - b. Deliverance

B. Keep in focus that Paul, in the beginning of this letter that he wrote to the Ephesians, began with prayer. Now, as he is ending the letter, his focus is on change.

1. In chapter 1 we find Paul praying that these believers will be infused with hope.

Ephesians 1:18 (NIV) I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

2. As Paul is nearing the close of this letter, he reminds them to embrace the helmet of salvation by knowing that He is both delivering and preserving their lives.

I. THE HOPE OF SALVATION ALWAYS LEADS TO PURITY

1 John 3:2-3 (NIV) 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

A. Our hope in God is what causes us to reorder our values and priorities, so that what becomes foremost in our lives is what is pleasing to Him.

1. No longer are my feelings the dominant filter of how I make decisions.
2. My first filter of decision making is God's honor.

II. THE HOPE OF SALVATION DEVELOPS ENDURANCE

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV) 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

A. This letter to the Hebrews was written to people who were disillusioned, and were ready to leave anything that caused difficulty.

Hebrews 10:36 (NIV) You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

B. The message for anyone needing to toughen up and gain endurance is:

1. Establish that your hope is in God.
2. Embrace the truth of delayed gratification.

APPLICATION:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV) 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

A. If He is our reward:

1. We will regularly pursue purity.
2. We will endure momentary hardships.