

Stay Strong and Stay Standing in Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Now, this part of Paul's letter, as we have just heard, is all about how we stay strong and stay standing in Jesus. Now, you guys, boys and girls, have helped us so much already to understand the armor of God, but we still need your help. Okay, so I wonder if you can show us how strong you are. Okay, I wonder, without bashing anyone in the face, if you can show us your big strong muscles.

How are you feeling? Not feeling it today. That's okay. That's okay. Not feeling it. Well, that is why, isn't it? God gives us his armor because we don't feel strong. Maybe we feel weak. We read that bit from the Bible. It starts like this, doesn't it? Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

God wants us to be strong. But hang on, what sort of strength then is God talking about here? You know, does it come from our big strong muscles? Do we get strong like this by going to the gym and lifting weights? Well, where does this strength come from? The clue is in the Bible, isn't it?

Listen carefully again. Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. That strength that Paul's talking about comes from the Lord Jesus, knowing him. We are weak, aren't we? And so we need Jesus to stay spiritually strong. That's so important. We need Jesus to stay spiritually strong. And Jesus has given us something, hasn't he, to help us stay strong. The armor of God, the armor of God, God's armor.

He says, stay strong and put on the armor of God. Now, perhaps when you think of armor, you think of a big soldier. He may be a Roman soldier wearing big, strong, shiny metal armor. Or maybe you think of Iron Man. That's what I thought of when I read this. Iron Man suiting up in his really cool suit of armor. But do you know who Paul's thinking about when he thinks about armor?

[2 : 1 5] He's thinking about God. Do you know God in the Bible puts on armor? Did you know that? Moms and dads, grownups, God puts on armor in the Bible. Listen to this. This is from the first part of the Bible, the Old Testament. It comes from the book of Isaiah. And God saw that his people were weak.

They needed to be rescued. They needed a rescuer. So what did God do? Listen carefully, okay, to what God puts on. Isaiah says in chapter 59, he put on righteousness as his breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head. Which bits of armor did God put on? You remember? Go on, Tabitha. The helmet of salvation, didn't he? He put on his helmet of salvation. What else did he put on? The breastplate of righteousness, didn't he? You're absolutely right. God put on his armor, his breastplate of righteousness, and his helmet of salvation. So what does this tell us? Paul's talking about God's own armor that he puts on when he rescues us. God gives us his very own strength, his very own armor, so that we can put it on and be strong in him. We read that twice, didn't we? Put on the full armor of God, says Paul. God wants us to stay strong in his strength, so he's given us his own full armor so that we stay strong. But, boys and girls, God doesn't just want us to stay strong. He also wants us to stay standing, standing. Now, I was going to ask for your help again, but I'm not entirely sure we're ready for that today. So I'm just going to ask you to count on your fingers, okay? Show me your fingers. You've all got fingers. Fantastic. I'm just going to ask you to count on your fingers and listen really carefully. How many times do you hear the word stand? Okay, ready? You're listening.

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Therefore, put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then. Okay, how many times did you hear the word stand?

You all got four. Four times. Brilliant. Four times. Paul says, we put on God's armor so that we can stand. Fantastic. Because God wants us to stay strong and stay standing in Jesus. Now, boys and

girls, does that mean we should never ever sit down? Does God want us to go to sleep standing up? No, he doesn't.

That would be impossible, I think. Should we get, should we ask the deacons, okay, to get rid of all the chairs here, to tear them out, throw them in the bin, because God never ever wants us to sit down?

[5 : 31] No. No. No, we love sitting, don't we? That's really good. Because why not? Why is that okay?

How does God want us to stay standing up? God wants us to stay standing up spiritually in our hearts. Okay, if God wanted us to make us strong, okay?

Because here's a question for you guys, okay? What do you think is the most dangerous thing in the whole wide world? What's the most dangerous thing, Tabitha? Getting eaten by a lion.

Sorry, say that again. Getting eaten by a lion. Getting eaten by a lion. That is pretty dangerous, isn't it? I wouldn't want that to happen. Yeah. What else? What do you guys think? The most dangerous thing in the whole world.

Go on, Ian. A black hole. A black hole. That is pretty dangerous, isn't it? If you got sucked in a black hole, that would be awful. Okay, any other ideas? Any other thoughts? The most dangerous thing in the whole wide world.

[6 : 59] Go on, Ian. What do you think? The most dangerous thing in the whole wide world. What do you think? The black pieces.

Ah, well, I tell you, the most dangerous thing in the whole wide world is not my question, okay? As much as your face said that, that most dangerous thing is answering my question. It's not. Okay, getting eaten by a lion. Getting sucked into a black hole.

Okay, answering a difficult question. Those are not the most dangerous thing in the whole wide world. Because the most dangerous thing in the whole wide world isn't actually something that can eat us or hurt our bodies.

Okay, it's not something we can touch or see or feel. The most dangerous thing in the whole wide world is something that can hurt us spiritually. Okay, in our hearts.

Okay, listen again. You don't have to stand up this time. What's the most dangerous thing in the world? Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

[8 : 03] 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.

Okay, so our biggest enemy, the most dangerous thing in the world, it's not something we can touch or see. It's not getting eaten by a lion or getting sucked into a black hole.

The most dangerous thing in the world is the devil. The devil is our spiritual enemy. He wants to make us weak in our hearts. He wants to bring us down, to take us away from God.

That's why God gives us this armor, isn't it? So we can stay strong and stay standing in Jesus by putting on his armor. And the devil, he's really sneaky.

Okay, he is like a ninja. Okay, how does a ninja attack you? If a ninja wanted to come and get you, what would a ninja do? Okay, I'll take you in the same order.

[9 : 09] Go on. What would a ninja do? Yeah, exactly. A ninja, they could be hiding anywhere.

Hiding up on the ceiling or something and jump down suddenly. Go on, Ian. What could a ninja do? Surprise you. Surprise you. Exactly. Yeah. So a ninja might hide in the shadows, might put on a disguise so you don't know who it is.

You would never hear them. You would never see them until they're right there and they're attacking you. And they've got lots of weapons, haven't they? A ninja. And the devil is just like that. Okay, he's super sneaky.

He could hide in your pants box. He could hide in your pants box. Apparently he could do that.

Okay, we can't see him or hear him. We don't know when the devil's coming.

And because of that, we have to be ready and on guard. How much of the time? For five minutes? Not for one hour?

[10 : 06] Or one day? How long do we have to be ready and on guard? Go on, Tampapur. For the full day?

All the time. All the time, right? Absolutely. All the time. We have to be ready and on guard. And how do we get ready? Well, we put on the full armor of God.

Okay, I'm not going to get you all to sing it. Okay? We put on the full armor of God. Now, you guys have made this excellent armor, haven't you? Okay, and I'm going to pick it up and show you guys. What do we need first? If we put on the full armor of God, what comes first? You guys know this. You just told us all. Go on. Go on, Luke.

The belt of truth. The belt of truth. Fantastic. The belt of truth. Because how does the devil attack us? Well, he tells us lies, doesn't he? So we need to strap on the belt of truth so that we can defend against the devil's lies.

[11:09] Okay, and what comes next? Uh-huh. The breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate of righteousness. Fantastic. The breastplate of righteousness. Where does this go? Up here?

No. No? Down here? No. No? Where does it go? You can see. You don't have to hold up your hand. Right? Yeah. Up here, right? Up here.

It goes right here. Now, why is that? What does it cover up? It covers up my heart, doesn't it? And your tummy. And my tummy too. Absolutely.

And my tummy. But it covers up my heart. Now, I don't just mean the pumping thing, okay? My spiritual heart. The thing that makes me most me. The thing, my inner being, my soul.

And who, remember, we looked at whose breastplate of righteousness is it in the Bible? Who puts on a breastplate of righteousness? Go on, Luke. God puts on a breastplate.

[12:09] So this is God's breastplate of righteousness. And he gives it to us and he puts it over our hearts. Because do you know something? Okay. The biggest lie that the devil likes to tell, the biggest lie, is that ye are not right with God.

He says, how could God love ye? Okay. How could he? Your heart is so bad and naughty and sinful. How can you be right with God? That's what he loves to say.

And we might start thinking, well, is that right? I know that I'm a sinful sinner in my heart. We thought last time, didn't we? About how impossible it is for us to keep the Ten Commandments. Even when we try, we get it wrong, we sin, we can't do it. How can we be right with God? Well, God gives us a breastplate of righteousness. Remember, we thought about Jesus, how he did the impossible.

He kept God's law. He was righteous. The right one, he's perfect. And the Bible says that God takes that righteousness, Jesus' perfect life, and he gives it to us to cover our hearts so that when we put on the breastplate of righteousness, we can say, I'm right with God because God has given me Jesus' righteousness to cover my heart.

[13:30] To cover up my sin. And that is amazing, isn't it? So we need the breastplate of righteousness? Absolutely. That is good news. Now, what do we do when we have good news?

Do we just keep it to ourselves? Or do we want to tell people all about it? If you have some really good news, would you want to tell someone about it?

You would definitely want to tell someone about it, wouldn't you? Which is why we need these. The gospel of peace.

Fantastic. They are, aren't they? Good news boots. You need good news boots. What do you do when you go out? Do you ever go outside without your shoes on? Do you just walk down the street with your socks on?

Sometimes. Sometimes. Sometimes you might. But, whenever we go out, we need our good news boots on. To help us to tell people the good news about Jesus.

[14:29] That's part of the armor that we put on. And what comes next? Well, Tabitha. A shield. A shield. Fantastic.

The shield of faith. The shield of faith. Now, the Bible says, Paul says, we need the shield of faith for putting out the flaming arrows of the enemy.

Okay, there's those lies again. Some flaming arrows. Now, I'm going to do something really dangerous. And I've not told anyone about it because it's so dangerous. But no one can stop me now. Okay. Okay, here's a flaming arrow.

Hopefully, it doesn't set off the fire alarms. Here is a flaming arrow. Okay, now this is just small, isn't it? But if it lit something else on fire, it could get bigger and bigger.

It could burn the whole building down, couldn't it? It's very dangerous, even though it's so small. So, what do we do? We take up the shield of faith. And it helps us to do this.

[15:34] It just puts it out just like that. Okay, faith is just trusting God. And when we trust in what God says, we trust what God says, it means we can put out what the devil says.

We don't have to listen. We don't have to believe it. And even though it's really dangerous, his lies, like a little fire, like a flaming arrow, we can just go, and it's gone like that.

Easy, isn't it? It's really good. The armor of God, what God gives us. Fantastic. And next, something to go on your head. The helmet of salvation.

It goes on your head. Why might it go on your head? Go on, Tabitha. Why might it go on your head? Well, in case someone tries to hit you on your head.

But I don't think the armor of God would help us with that, would it? Because it's a spiritual armor, right? Not a metal armor. So why might our heads need protecting?

[16:38] Maybe because the devil might try and get in our heads. Yeah. Well, the devil might try and get in our heads, mightn't he?

And we might forget. We might forget. Is that what you were going to say, Ian? We might forget, mightn't we, what God has done for us, how he's rescued us, how he's made us whole in Jesus, how he's given us righteousness to cover up our hearts.

We might forget about all of that. So we need protection for our heads. And last, but very much not least, what comes next?

The sword. The sword. Absolutely. Let me give you a sword. Is that a sword?

No. No? It's not a sword? Is this a sword? Yes. Yeah? But which would you rather have? Not sure.

[17:35] I'll give you a sword because you answered the question really nicely. But this is a sword, isn't it? Because Paul says the sword of the Spirit is the word of God.

The word of God. That's amazing, isn't it? God gives us the Bible and says it is a sword. Okay, did you know, boys and girls, when you read your Bible or when someone reads the Bible to you at home, that they are giving you a secret weapon?

A secret weapon. Maybe when someone reads the Bible to you, you think, oh man, I've got so much to do today. Maybe I shouldn't really have to listen to the Bible.

Well, God is giving you a secret weapon. Take it with you. Listen to it. Read it. Remember it. Put it in your heart so that when the devil comes, you can get it out and fight back.

Okay, this is the weapon that God gives you to stay strong and stay standing in Jesus. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God. The Bible.

[18:38] Fantastic. So that is the armor of God that you guys taught us all about. So what do you do with it?

You can put that on every day, can't you? Okay, not just your crafts. Like these, you have done beautiful work, haven't you? You've done great things. I hope, okay, that we get a place to put this up downstairs so that we can keep seeing it for years and years because it is fantastic.

But these things are not going to keep you safe, are they? They're made out of cardboard. If someone tries to hit you on your head, it might not keep you safe. But what will keep you safe is putting on God's armor every day.

We can do that every day. When you get ready for your day, what do you do? You wake up. You have some breakfast. You clean your teeth, maybe. You put some clothes on.

Well, says Paul, put on God's armor when you get ready for the day. Okay, when you go out, you might go to school. You might just look like an ordinary kid going to school.

[19:45] But underneath, you have God's armor on. And that is the best protection of all. When you get ready in the morning, maybe you're cleaning your teeth. Maybe you're getting dressed.

Okay, you can say, thank you, Lord Jesus, for your armor that you've given me. And I'm putting on, I'm putting on the belt of truth. And I'm putting on the breastplate of righteousness.

And I'm putting my good news boots on. And I'm picking out the shield of faith. And I'm putting the helmet of salvation on my head. And I'm taking the sword of the Spirit with me.

We can do that every day. Okay, however little or big we are. However young or old. If we trust in Jesus, God gives us his armor to put on every day.

So that we all can stay strong and stay standing in Jesus. Because we all know, don't we? We all know how difficult it is.

[20:43] Maybe to feel a wee bit different from other people. Because we love Jesus. Maybe you guys, maybe you feel a wee bit different from people in your school. Or in your clubs.

Because you're a Christian. Because you follow Jesus. That can be really hard. Okay, that's the same for all of us here. Okay, grown-ups as well. Sometimes it feels different.

Sometimes it feels difficult. But the good news, the great news, is that God gives us his armor. So that even when it's really hard, we stay strong and we stay standing in Jesus.

Okay, very good. And the way we put it on is to pray. And you guys sung to us about a prayer that Paul prayed. And so we're going to pray now together.

Is that okay? As we finish. Fantastic. Let's pray all together. Okay. Pray in the Spirit on all occasions.

[21 : 42] With all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying. For all the Lord's people. God, our Father, how we thank you for Jesus.

How we thank you that he covers us with his own righteousness. How we thank you that you've given us truth in your word. How we thank you that you have given us your very own armor.

Your strength. Your power to put on at the start of each day. Father, help us, we pray, never to forget that we have an enemy.

And we pray that you would equip us each day to stand against him and his lies. Father, we thank you for these boys and girls. We thank you so much for their work, their understanding.

We pray, Lord, that you help them grow in love for you. We pray, Father, that you'd help them to keep learning about you. And we pray, Father, that you would help them to put on your full armor.

[22 : 49] Lord, today and every day. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.