

Radical Protection - PART 1

Contending with cosmic forces

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Ephesians 6:10,12
Subject:	Why we need radical protection
Complement:	because we wrestle with supernatural forces opposed to God.
Exegetical idea:	We need radical protection because we wrestle against supernatural forces opposed to God.
Preaching idea:	In this great battle between good and evil, you will find your strength and your victory in the Lord.
Purpose:	To help my hearers to see that they are in the midst of a great battle between good and evil and to encourage them to find their strength and victory in the Lord.

I will never forget the events of that evening—August 27, 1994. Our quiet Saturday evening get-together with some friends was interrupted by a phone call from our neighbor. He sounded agitated. “Derek, we’re having some trouble here at my house. Could you come over and pray with us?” Apparently, some students from the university had gathered at Steve and Laura’s home for an evening of fellowship. During a time of prayer, one of those students became very agitated and began to thrash around on the floor.

I paused to pray for spiritual protection for myself and also for my family. Those who remained at my house continued earnestly in prayer. Then I drove the half-mile to my neighbor’s house. When I entered Steve’s home, I sensed a spirit of confusion. Several people were gathered around a young lady who was lying on the family room carpet. She was tossing and turning. When I knelt at her feet to pray for her in Jesus’ name, she sat up and snarled at me, as if she wanted to rip my head off of my shoulders. Then a voice spoke in deep, raspy tones: “She opened her life to me!” I can still remember the goose bumps that instantly formed on my skin. I realized instantly that I was contending with cosmic forces, in the midst of an intense

spiritual battle.

Jesus was well acquainted with this kind of intense cosmic conflict. On one occasion when He was teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum, a man stood up and another voice spoke in deep raspy tones. The story is recorded in Mark 1:24. “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” Yes, Jesus was very aware during His ministry that He was contending with cosmic forces, He was in the midst of an intense spiritual battle.

At the very beginning of His ministry, an angel had appeared to Jesus while He was fasting and praying in the wilderness. Was this a holy angel sent from the courts of heaven or a fallen angel in rebellion against God? The words of this angel revealed his true identity. Matthew 4:3 “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” And again in Matthew 4:6, “If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down.” And finally in Matthew 4:9, having shown Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, “All these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me.”

An angel from the courts of heaven would have bowed down and worshipped Jesus, the Son of God, Immanuel, God with us. But this angel in the wilderness said “Bow down and worship me!” Now the battle lines were clearly drawn. This was not an angel from the courts of heaven. This was a fallen angel who was living in open rebellion against God. Jesus boldly responded, “Away with you, Satan!” Yes, Jesus knew that He was contending with cosmic forces who were opposed to God.

Satan’s rebellion did not begin during the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus. The book of Job also gives us some insight into this great cosmic battle between good and evil. Most Bible

scholars believe that the book of Job is the earliest book of the Hebrew Scriptures. Job lived in the land of Uz, perhaps around 2000 years before the earthly ministry of Jesus. A remarkable conversation is recorded at the beginning of the book of Job. Job 1:6. “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” Satan was not this heavenly being’s original name. Satan, Satanas in Hebrew, means “Opposer.” This angel lived in opposition to God. He opposed all that was good. Job 1:7 “And the LORD said to Satan, “From where do you come?” This was not a question that the LORD needed to ask. The LORD of heaven and earth knows all things. He declared through the prophet Isaiah, “Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done” (Isaiah 46:9-10) So when Satan appeared before the presence of LORD, his true identity and his rebellious activity were not hidden from the LORD. Rather, the LORD gave Satan an opportunity to identify himself to those present at this celestial gathering. If this had been angel loyal to God, he might have replied, “I come from the hand of my loving Creator.” But Satan answered the LORD and said, Job 1:7, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.” If Satan had been honest, rather than a liar and a deceiver, he would have said, “From going to and fro on the earth, causing pain and heartache and destruction.”

How did this rebellious angel, now called Satan, the Opposer, end up on planet earth? That question is answered in the book of Revelation. The mystery of the great cosmic conflict is revealed in vision to the apostle John. Revelation 12:7-8 “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon: and the dragon and his angels fought, but they

did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.” Who is this dragon? That question is answered in Revelation 12:9. “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

How many of the heavenly angels joined with Satan in his open rebellion against God? We don't have an exact number, but Scripture records in Revelation 12:4 that the dragon's tail “drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.” Daniel speaks of ten thousand times ten thousand standing before the throne of God, literally a myriad of myriads, and one third of that number joined Satan in his open rebellion against God. Why would they do that? How was Satan able to convince one third of the angelic host to join him in rebellion against God? Perhaps we find part of the answer to that question in the writings of the prophet Isaiah. Satan was not always a blatant rebel. He was originally called Lucifer, light bearer. He stood in the presence of the LORD, in a position of great honor among the angelic host. But the seeds of rebellion began to spring up in his heart. Listen to this inspired testimony recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground. You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; (remember that he would take a third of those stars and cast them to the earth); I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.”

The prophet Ezekiel tells us that this covering cherub, this honored angel Lucifer, was perfect in all his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel

28:14-15). This is the same rebellious angel who would lead a third of the heavenly host in open rebellion against God, the same rebellious angel who will be cast to the earth, and his angels cast down with him, the same rebellious angel who will call Jesus in the wilderness to “bow down and worship me!”

You might ask, “What has all of this ancient history got to do with me?” That’s a good question, and the answer is vitally important. The great cosmic battle that began millennia ago still rages on planet earth. Satan and the angels that joined him in his open rebellion against God are still roaming to and fro on the earth. We live in the midst of that intense cosmic conflict, contending with cosmic forces, with spiritual hosts of wickedness, and that is why we must take the time to discover how we can find radical protection. In the next 4 presentations in this series on Radical Protection, we will be carefully examining a key passage of inspired Scripture—the last portion of the apostle Paul’s letter to Christians in Ephesus, Ephesians 6:10-20. We will discover the importance of choosing radical protection, we will learn about putting on defensive weapons and taking up a powerful sword; we will learn to pray in the Spirit at all times as we live in the midst of this intense cosmic conflict and contend with cosmic forces.

I want to begin our study of this key passage of Scripture by examining Ephesians 6:10 and 12. We have provided a scroll for you that records this key inspired teaching. I invite you to bring it with you for this entire series on Radical Protection. Let’s begin with verse 12. Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

The apostle Paul clearly teaches that this intense cosmic battle affects all of us, every

single human being on planet earth. We will all have to contend with cosmic forces. We will all have to wrestle against spiritual hosts of wickedness. The Greek noun *παλη*, translated “wrestle” in the NKJV, “struggle” in the NIV, is only found one time in the entire New Testament—right here. What is the meaning of this Greek noun *παλη*? We can’t look at any other NT references because there aren’t any, so we have to go to classical Greek. The Greek noun *παλη* is used in classical Greek for wrestling contests but also for battle, hand-to-hand combat. This is not playful sports activity. This is intense hand-to-hand warfare. Whether we like it or not, we are in the midst of an intense cosmic conflict. We will have to contend with cosmic forces that are opposed to God.

Paul tells us that we will have to wrestle against principalities, that is a term that Jesus uses in reference to Satan, the principality or ruler of this world (John 14:30), we wrestle against powers, literally authorities, we wrestle against rulers of darkness of this age, literally world rulers of darkness, rulers with global dominion, and we wrestle against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, literally spiritual forces whose very essence is wickedness who operate in a super-terrestrial realm. It is clear that these forces in opposition to God are organized and superhuman.

The young lady who was lying on the carpet at my neighbor’s house felt the full intensity of that cosmic conflict. When a deep raspy voice used her vocal cords to utter “She opened her life to me,” that young lady cried out in her heart, “Oh God, I never thought it would come to this!” Two weeks earlier, she had become angry with God. Now I want to tell you something important today: God can handle your anger. He wants to hold you close to His heart of love even when you have a temper tantrum. But this young woman made a foolish mistake. In her

anger, she said to God, “Just leave me alone. Just get out of my life and leave me alone.” That was a foolish and dangerous demand. “Just get out of my life and leave me alone!” Now here she was, two weeks later, lying on the carpet, snarling like a wild animal, listening to a deep raspy voice declare, “She opened her life to me.”

Have you felt the intensity of this cosmic battle in your own life? Have you found yourself contending with cosmic forces, in hand-to-hand combat with spiritual hosts of wickedness? I have. I remember when I was about 8 years old. I came under an intense spiritual attack. I was lying in my bed, trying to sleep, when suddenly I felt the oppressive presence of evil. My grandmother had been involved in occult practices, and now I realize that Satan was trying to make a claim on my life. The weight on my chest was so heavy that I had trouble catching my next breath. Have you been there? Have you found yourself contending with cosmic forces who are opposed to God? What should we do at a moment like that? Give up and die? No. Yield to Satan’s power? No. Then what should we do when we come under intense spiritual attack? The answer is found at the beginning of our inspired testimony, Ephesians 6:10. “Finally, my brethren, my sisters, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

The battle is real. The cosmic conflict is intense. You will have to contend with cosmic forces opposed to God but you will find your strength, your victory, in the Lord. God “has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col 1:13). Hallelujah! **In this great battle between good and evil, you will find your strength and your victory in the Lord.**

I thank God that I had been taught that important truth as a child. I thank God for

Christian parents, and Christian Bible teachers, and a wonderful Christian primary school teacher. I might have lost hope that night. I might have given up that night. But instead, I remembered that my strength, my victory is in the Lord. I cried out to Jesus that night. I claimed the promise given 3000 years before I was born, “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” And almost 50 years later, here I am glorifying His name. Bless the LORD O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. I boldly testify today that in this great battle between good and evil, you can find your strength, your victory, in the Lord!

The apostle Paul, who wrote this important message about Radical Protection, had experienced in his own life that his strength, his victory was in the Lord. While preaching on the island of Cyprus, Paul was opposed by a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus. This sorcerer tried to hinder the work of God through Paul’s life and testimony. But Paul knew that his strength, his victory was in the Lord. And so Paul confronted the sorcerer with these words: “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time” (Acts 13:10-11). Immediately, a dark mist fell upon this agent of Satan and he groped around in the darkness, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Paul knew what it was like to contend with cosmic forces and he had experienced first-hand that his strength and victory was in the Lord.

On another occasion, having survived a shipwreck off the coast of Malta by the direct intervention of God, Paul experienced another attack from the evil one. A viper fastened to his hand when he was collecting some sticks on the beach to make a fire. I was fascinated to

discover that there are no poisonous snakes on the island of Malta. So perhaps this viper had been washed ashore with the wreckage from the ship, or perhaps this was none other than that old serpent the Devil. Either way, this was clearly a Satanic attack on Paul's life. But Paul had learned that his strength, his victory was in the Lord, and so with a holy boldness he shook the viper off into the fire. That is where Satan, the Opposer, and all of his fallen angels will end up—in the fire. The book of Revelation describes a lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. They will all end up in the fire, just like that viper on the island of Malta—not because God hates them, not because God is mean and vindictive, that is the lie that Satan tried to spread throughout the universe. No, Satan and his rebellious companions will end up in the fire because they refuse a relationship with the Author of life. Their rebellion has been exposed in all of its rawness and ugliness. They refuse to accept that they could find their strength, their victory in the Lord.

And so the cosmic conflict rages on planet earth. We are contending with cosmic forces, caught in the midst of an intense spiritual battle. This spiritual battle will intensify as we approach the time of Christ's return in glory because Satan knows that he has a short time (Revelation 12:12). Satan has gone out to make war with the remnant of God's people in the last days who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17). That is why this series on Radical Protection is so relevant for each one of us. We will discover the importance of choosing radical protection, we will learn to put on defensive weapons, we will learn how to take up the sword of the Spirit, we will learn how to pray in the Spirit. But right now you have the truth right that will set you free from Satan's vice grip. Your strength, your victory is in the Lord. For Jesus, Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:21, is "far above all

principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” The battle is real. The conflict is intense, but do not give up in dismay. Do not be overwhelmed. Do not lose heart. **In this great battle between good and evil, you will find your strength and your victory in the Lord.**

Radical Protection - PART 2

Choosing radical protection

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Ephesians 6:11,13
Subject: Why we should choose radical protection
Complement: that we may be able to stand against the strategies of the devil.
Exegetical idea: We should choose radical protection so that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
Preaching idea: **Choose to receive the radical protection that God alone can provide.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers to receive the radical protection that God wants to provide in the great cosmic battle between good and evil.

I can still remember that deep raspy voice: “She opened her life to me!” Who was speaking to me? It certainly wasn’t the university student who was lying there on the floor of Steve and Laura’s family room. Who or what was controlling her? One thing was certain: I was in the midst of an intense cosmic conflict. This young lady needed deliverance and we all needed radical protection.

Immediately a passage of Scripture flashed into my mind. I’m so thankful that I have been blessed with a wonderful Christian wife who encourages me to hide God’s Word in my heart. Now the Holy Spirit was bringing that Word to my remembrance. The passage of Scripture that flashed into my mind is recorded on this scroll: Ephesians 6, beginning with verse 10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 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.”

In part 1 of this series on Radical Protection, we came to the realization that we are all in the midst of an intense cosmic battle between good and evil. We are involved in close quarters combat with principalities and authorities, world rulers of darkness, and spiritual forces of wickedness. Today, we will discover that God wants to provide protection for us but we have to choose to receive it.

Let’s look again at Ephesians 6:11. Having encouraged us to be strong or to be strengthened in the Lord and in the power of His might, Paul admonishes us in Ephesians 6:11, “Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles, the schemes, of the devil.” That great dragon of Revelation 12, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, wants to destroy us. The wiles or schemes of the devil are carefully designed to drag us away from God and to lead us to certain and eternal death. This same word “wiles” or “schemes” is used just one other time in the NT in Ephesians 4:14 speaking of “the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.” We are contending with cosmic forces intent on our destruction. Therefore, Paul urges us to “put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand.”

This term “whole armor” is just one word in Greek: panoplia, from which we get the English word panoply. A panoply is a covering, and Paul tells us that we need the panoply of God. The Greek word panoplia is made up of two words: the plural of hoplon, hopla, which means weapons, and pan which means all. Panoplia—all of the weapons.

And this panoply, this covering, is not of our own making. This is the panoply of God, the protection that finds its source in God. Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are

not carnal but might in God for pulling down strongholds.” Our panoply is the armor of God and when we are covered with the whole armor of God we are protected against the all of the wiles of the devil.

But I want you to notice a very important point at the beginning of Ephesians 6:11. This protection is not automatic. We must choose to receive this protection. Notice the verb: “Put on.” Literally, clothe yourself. Dress yourself. This armor is not simply to be looked at, thought about, admired. We need to put on the whole armor of God. This is the same verb that is used in the parable of the prodigal son where the father says in Luke 15:22 where the father says, “Bring out the best robe and put it on him.” (This same very is use in a figurative sense in Galatians 3:27 where Paul says “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”)

This verb translated “put on” is used 3 times in connection with radical protection. Here in Ephesians 6:11, where we are admonished to put on the whole armor of God, in Romans 13:12 where we are encouraged to put on the armor of light, and in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 where we are exhorted to put on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

In each of these references, we have a choice to make. Radical protection is offered to us by our great and awesome God. We must choose to receive that protection. Look again at Ephesians 6:11, “Put on the whole armor, the panoply, of God.” This verb is in the imperative: a command or earnest appeal. Put on! Clothe yourself! You may remember from a previous study that the imperative can be a present imperative with the idea of continued action, keep on doing something, or an aorist imperative which can convey the idea of a new action, to do something that you have not yet done. An example of an aorist imperative is found in John 11:44 where Lazarus is raised from the dead, still wrapped in grave clothes and Jesus says,

“Loose him and let him go.” Start an action that has not yet been performed.

I believe that it is significant to note that in Ephesians 6:11, when Paul admonishes us to put on the whole armor of God, he is using an aorist imperative. You are not yet covered, you are not yet clothed with the panoply of God so put it on, clothe yourself, accept the gift of the radical protection that God offers to you. If we are involved in a great cosmic battle, contending with cosmic forces in opposition to God, why would we not put on the panoply of God? There are several possible reasons. We might not even know about the armor of God? We might not even know about the radical protection that God longs to provide. That why we’re doing this study, not just for your benefit, but for the blessing of those that you know and love. You need to share with them about the radical protection that God longs to provide for them too.

There is a second reason why we might not put on the panoply of God? We might have become careless, preoccupied with the concerns of this life. We might just assume that everything will turn out OK in the end. But that is dangerous thinking. Paul has made it very clear that we are involved in hand to hand combat with principalities, powers, world rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual forces of wickedness that operate on a super-terrestrial level. We cannot afford to be careless. We must choose the radical protection that God longs to provide, not only for ourselves but for those that we love.

The importance of making a choice to receive radical protection from the Lord is emphasized again in 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.” Here another verb is used: “Take up”. This is the common verb used when a soldier takes up his weapons. Take up. Arm yourself. Take up is also an aorist imperative. There is something that you need to start doing—

take up the panoply of God. We are not called to make it or mend it, to borrow it or to buy it.

The armor is from God and it is a gift of God. We are simply called to take it up.

As I knelt there on the family room carpet, in the midst of an intense cosmic battle, those deep raspy tones still ringing in my ears—“She opened her life to me!”, I began to pray that God would cover this young lady with the armor of God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness. We’ll study each part of this armor in part 3 of our series. Each part of the armor is important. And as I prayed the armor of God to cover this young student, something supernatural occurred. She later testified that as she chose to receive each piece of the armor, new strength came to her. Hallelujah. Though the battle was still raging, she was finding her place under the shelter of the Almighty. Finally, she cried out to Jesus and she was set free.

She immediately gathered with some of her friends and began to give thanks and praise to God. While they were praying, she felt that evil presence come right up to her again. At first she was tempted to be afraid, but then she began to praise the name of the Lord because she realized that the evil presence could not enter her. She was clothed with the armor of God, she was covered with the panoply of God. She had chosen to receive radical protection, and the enemy could not penetrate God’s protective panoply.

Friends, I cannot overemphasize the importance of choosing to receive the radical protection that God want to provide. The battle is real. The cosmic conflict is intense. We will all have to contend with cosmic forces that are in opposition to God. We need to put on the whole armor of God. We need to take up the panoply of God. We need to choose to receive the protection that God alone can provide.

Someone might ask, “Do you have to take anything off before you put on the whole

armor of God? Do you have to put anything down before you take up the whole armor of God?” Those are important questions. What is the answer? Let’s listen to the Word of God. Paul doesn’t answer these questions in our passage in Ephesians 6. He simply says, “Put on the whole armor of God....Take up the whole armor.” But listen to Paul’s exhortation to Christians in Rome, recorded in Romans 13:11-13. “.....” So what is the answer to our question? Do we have to take anything off before we put on the armor of God? Yes. We have to put off the works of darkness. Does that mean that we have to be perfect? No. But we need to be perfectly surrendered to God. Completely yielded to Him as Lord of our lives.

This passage of Scripture in Paul’s letter to the Romans also gives us a clue as to what it looks like in the spiritual realm when a person is clothed with the armor of God. If we could see spiritual reality, we would see those who have chosen to receive the radical protection that only God can provide. They would be clothed in a robe of light, and armor of light. In our battle against the kingdom of darkness, we are not powerless. We do not need to grovel in fear. We certainly do not need to give up and yield to the enemy. We can receive radical protection from God and we can stand against the wiles, the schemes of the devil.

On a recent visit to Australia, two sisters, Norma and Marilyn, gave me this book—Broken Stick. It is the story of their family, the Ferris family, who served as missionaries in the Solomon Islands. On one occasion, their father, Norman Ferris, was asked by a chief to visit his village on the east coast of Guadalcanal, one of the Solomon Islands. Norman was happy to respond to this chief’s requests. He travelled with the chief to his village and began to teach the villages Christian songs. He also hung a picture roll on the tree and began to tell stories about Jesus.

I have no doubt that angels in heaven were rejoicing as they witnessed the scene. Men and women were receiving the truth about Jesus with joy. But Satan was angry. He had ruled this island and he wasn't going to yield his territory without a fight. Satan came to Nghata, the devil priest of that region, and gave him these instructions: "Nghata, today a White man came to Koilotumria. He is dangerous! He will bring disharmony to our people. You must take your sword. Go soon and kill him." You might be thinking, "How do you know that Satan gave those instructions to the Devil Priest?" That's a good question. This isn't a fairy tale. I'm not making it up. That Devil Priest later became a follower of Jesus and gave his testimony. But that is another part of the story!

The instructions from Satan were clear: Take your sword. Go soon and kill him. No one saw Nghata, the Devil Priest enter the village that evening. People were gathered together, learning songs about Jesus. As they sang "Jesus loves me", Nghata's heart was filled with hate and fury. With a mighty yell, Nghata grasped his sword and rushed toward the Christian missionary.

Norman Ferris didn't have time for a long prayer. He didn't have time to quote all of Ephesians 6—the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness. Norman just had a few seconds to receive the gift of radical protection. This is what he prayed: "Dear God, send your mighty arm of power." What was Norman doing? He was choosing radical protection. He was putting on the panoply. He was taking up the armor of God. That devil priest became a follower of Jesus, he was baptized, and he became a mighty worker for God. God used this former devil priest to raise up two Christian churches in his region. Today there are 16 thriving churches with more than 2000 members.

The attacks of Satan aren't always that dramatic but they are just as real. Just a few days ago I had lunch with a member of our Forest Lake Church family. He had just been offered a job making more money than he had ever made in his whole life. It sounded too good to be true. But as this church member met with the management of this company, he sensed that there were spiritual forces of wickedness at work. This was not a place where the Spirit of God was invited and welcome. Perhaps you are thinking to yourself, "Well that's an easy decision. Just turn down the job, no matter how much money is involved." And that is exactly what the member of our church family did. But then he came under intense spiritual attack. In fact, he feared that he might die. He cried out to God with tears for God to save him, to cover him, to protect him from the wiles of the devil. And God heard his cry. Two days later he was able to give his testimony of praise and thanks to God. He had experienced in his own life that God longs to provide radical protection against the attacks of the devil, but we have to choose to receive that protection.

Is there anyone here today who is experienced intense spiritual attack? Don't be careless. Don't be complacent. Choose to receive the radical protection that God alone can provide.

Prayer

(Invite anyone who needs special prayer to come forward at the close of the service)

“Nghata, today a White man came to Koilotumria. He is dangerous! He will bring disharmony to our people. You must take your sword. Go soon and kill him.”

“Dear God, send your mighty arm of power.”

“Nghata, you failed to kill the White man. But he left a boy to teach the people. Take your sword and kill him, and do not fail this time.”

“Nghata, do not touch the one whom Jesus has appointed.”

“Strong Power, help me to forsake my evil ways. I long to learn of this mighty Warrior, Jesus.”

Radical Protection - PART 3
Putting on Defensive Weapons
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Ephesians 6:14-17a
Subject: Why we should put on the defensive weapons of the armor of God
Complement: that we may be able to stand against the strategies of the devil.
Exegetical idea: We should put on the defensive weapons of the armor of God that we might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
Preaching idea: **Jesus, your Savior and Lord, is also your Protector and your Deliverer.**
Purpose: To challenge my hearers to surrender completely to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, and to accept His protection.

When was the last time that you felt the need for radical protection? After Part 2 of this series, a man came up to me and told me that he was under intense spiritual attack at work. You can come under attack at any time, in a variety of settings. We are all contending the cosmic forces in opposition to God.

I remember the morning of Monday, October 29, 1997. Shortly after 2:00 AM, my wife and I were jarred from our sleep by the phone ringing in our bedroom. “Hello!” I tried to pretend that I was awake. It was Robert Quitanna. Apparently, one of the students in the boys’ dorm, a young man named Michael, was under attack. He had sliced his arm with razor blade from his elbow to his wrist and he seemed to be in great distress.

I encouraged Robert to notify the boys’ dean and the chaplain. Before leaving my house, I paused to pray with my wife, choosing the radical protection that God alone can provide. When I walked into the boys’ dorm, a dean was there to meet me. He escorted me to a stairwell where a group of young men had gathered to pray. We joined together, praying for the distressed student, Michael, and also for ourselves. After a few minutes of prayer, I walked into

Michael's room with one of my students by my side. Michael was sitting on his couch, slumped over, with blood on his arm. The atmosphere was heavy, dark. I reached out my hand and touched his shoulder. He spoke almost immediately in a low monotone voice: "Don't touch me." The darkness in his voice reminded me that we needed radical protection.

So far in our series on Radical Protection we have discovered that we are all in the midst of an intense cosmic battle between good and evil. We are involved in close quarters hand-to-hand combat with cosmic forces opposed to God. We have also learned that God wants to protect us but we must choose the protection that He alone can provide. We need to put on, to take up the whole armor of God.

Today, in Part 3 of this series on Radical Protection, we will examine the defensive weapons of that whole armor of God in greater detail and then in Part 4 of this series we will examine a most important part of the armor of God—the sword of the Spirit. I invite you to take your scroll and read with me from Ephesians 6:14-17a. "....."

Let's examine these defensive weapons more closely.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth. Some say that this belt of truth with which we must gird ourselves is our truthfulness, but I would respectfully disagree. Jesus said, "I am the Truth." It is His Truth, His Truthfulness that surrounds us. When we are girded with His truth, we will walk in the truth. Truthfulness will be manifested in our lives. But it is His truth that protects us. The Psalmist declared, "Do not withhold your tender mercies from me, O Lord; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me" (Psalm 40:11). (May Your love and Your truth always protect me - NIV)

Having put on the breastplate of righteousness. I've also read that it is our righteousness

that protects us—our right doing that protects us from evil, but the Word of God says that He is “the LORD our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6), and that God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). Again, the psalmist declared, “In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness” (Psalm 31:1).

“Having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.” We are called to put on this armor of God because we have a mission. What is our mission? Not just to survive the battle, but to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. It is certainly not our Gospel that we bring, but His Gospel, and He is the Prince of Peace. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you...Let not your heart be troubled neither let is be afraid (John 14:27).

“Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.” Is this shield of faith our faith? Doesn’t the Word of God tell us “this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4)? Yes, but the next verse tells us “Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5) It is through the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed—this shield of faith can extinguish how many of the fiery darts of the wicked one?—because His compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is YOUR faithfulness. The LORD is my portion says my soul, therefore I hope in Him. (Lamentations 3:22-24)

“And take the helmet of salvation.” We know that this is not our own work. For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” John

the Baptist boldly proclaimed the words of the prophet Isaiah: “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6) That salvation has come to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul declares, “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it!” And I pray that you would not only hear the salvation of God, but receive the salvation of God and be covered by the salvation of God.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul encourages believers to put on “as a helmet the hope of salvation.” This does not contradict Paul’s teaching to the Ephesians. For the Christian, hope is not just wishful thinking. Our hope is sure because our hope is found in Jesus. He is our Hope. (1 Timothy 1:1)

There is a danger in examining each component of the armor that we might come to the faulty conclusion that we can choose to select one piece of the whole armor of God. For example, a person might say, “I really need the helmet of salvation but I don’t want to gird myself with the belt of truth. But that is not an option. This is the panoply, the whole armor, of God, and we either clothe ourselves with the whole armor or nothing at all.

Did you notice that this whole armor of God is all about Jesus? That is why in Romans 13:12 when the apostle Paul exhorts us to put on the panoplia of light, he also says in v.14, “Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.” That is exactly the same verb found in Ephesians 6:11. Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 6:11 to Clothe yourself with the panoply of God, whole armor of God. And in Romans 13:14 he exhorts us to Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ. Clothing yourself with the whole armor of God involves a total surrender to the Lordship of Christ, a total dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, a total resting in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you do that, you are covered with a panoply of light which protects you against the

kingdom of darkness.

James, the brother of our Lord, reaffirmed that our radical protection from evil is found in the context of a relationship with God. Listen to his inspired testimony, recorded in James 4:7-8: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” That sounds like the admonition of the apostle Paul to stand firm. Don’t run in fear. Don’t yield ground. Stand firm. Resist. But then notice the next verse. James 4:8 “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” At the beginning of James 4:7 we read, “Therefore submit to God.” Radical protection comes through a complete surrender to God, a complete surrender to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

When I walked into Michael’s dorm room, with my student Andrew by my side, we had made a choice to receive the protection that God alone can provide. We had made a choice to draw near to God, to be totally surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ, totally dependent in the Lord Jesus Christ. Radical Protection is not found apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you remember what Michael said to me when I laid my hand on his shoulder? “Don’t touch me.” I found out later why he said that. I removed my hand and squatted by his side as he sat slumped over on a couch, blood all over his arm. He looked restless, troubled. He spoke again in a low monotone voice: “You make me feel uncomfortable.” I found out later why he said that too. I asked him if he wanted me to leave. No response. I said, “Michael, we want you to know that we care about you and we want you to have peace.” “That’s not possible,” he replied. “Everything is possible to those who have faith,” I said. “Faith in what?” was his reply. “Faith in Jesus. Everything is possible to those who have faith in Jesus Christ.” He remained silent.

At that moment a word of Scripture flashed into my mind. It was taken from the story of

the healing of the blind man Bartimaeus. Jesus said to blind Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” So I asked Michael, “Michael, what do you want God to do for you?” He thought for a moment. “Help me to forget.” Here was the open door. He was willing for God to work, to bring healing to his mind. “Help me to forget.” I thought to myself, “God can do that. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

As Andrew and I knelt down to pray, Michael slip off the couch and onto the floor. He curled up in a ball. He was groaning. We prayed a blessing over his life in Jesus’ name and asked that God would help him to forget. Finally Michael seemed to be at peace. He looked up at me and said, “Can I have a hug?” I was a little hesitant. I took his hand and he grasped my hand. “You would like a hug?” I asked. He nodded. “I just felt so alone.” As I reached down and hugged Michael, he whispered in my ear, “Will he come back?” “Will who come back, Michael?” “The dark man. Will the dark man come back?” “No,” I said. “The dark man will not come back. We will pray right now that God will send the dark man wherever God wants him to go and ask that the dark man will never be able to trouble you again.”

After we prayed, I asked Michael, who seemed totally relaxed and peaceful, “How long has the dark man been troubling you?” “Since I was 6 years old,” he replied. When he was 6 years old, his father had committed adultery and abandoned his mother and abandoned him. That father who should have been praying protection for his family opened a door to the enemy and the dark man seized his son and harassed him for 15 years. But now Michael was free by the power of Jesus’ name. Hallelujah.

I met with Michael a few days after this night meeting and he shared several things with me that I will never forget. Michael shared with me that after he had been set free by the power

of Jesus' name, the dark man showed up at his girlfriend's apartment. I'm telling you, my friends, the battle is real. We are involved in close quarters hand-to-hand combat with principalities and powers, world rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual forces of wickedness in super-terrestrial realms. That is why we all need the protection that God alone can provide. And we need to ask God to provide that protection for our loved ones too. I am convinced that unless they willfully reject that protection, it will be given to them because we have asked in Jesus' name.

There is something else that Michael shared with me with I met with him a few days after our night meeting. Do you remember what he said to me when I walked into the room and laid my hand on his shoulder? "Don't touch me." Then he said, "You make me feel uncomfortable." Well, Michael told me when I met with him several days later, "When you came into my room that night I wanted to hurt you. That's was sobering thought. He was a big, burly young man. "When you came into my room that night I wanted to hurt you, but I could not because you were clothed with fire. Andrew was also clothed with fire. There were others in the room who were not clothed with fire but I did not want to hurt them."

By the grace of God, we had chosen to receive the protection that God alone could provide. We were clothed with fire. I am here today, by the grace of God, to testify that the battle is real. We must all contend with cosmic forces opposed to God, but our strength, our victory is in the Lord. God wants to protect us, and we must choose the protection that God alone can provide. We must consciously, daily, clothe ourselves with the whole armor of God, which involves a complete surrender to Jesus not only as Savior but also as Lord.

I invite you to make that complete surrender to Jesus as Savior and Lord today and every

day and to put on the whole armor of God.

Someone might be saying, “But Derek, you don’t know all of the bad things that I’ve done in my life. I don’t deserve that kind of mercy from God.” You’re right. You don’t, and neither do I. Salvation and radical protection both come to the undeserving who are willing to receive God’s gifts with a humble and contrite heart.

I met a young lady this past weekend who knows that the cosmic battle is real. She had been one of my students at SAU. I still remember the day that she came into my office. According to her own testimony, she was dragged into my office by a friend. Some days earlier she had said to God, “I’m done with You, God.” She was tired of all of the guilt. She had been trying to live two lives and it wasn’t working. Not long after that, she was looking in a mirror and she said something very foolish: “Satan, I guess it’s just you and me now, so you might as well come in.”

When a friend “dragged her” to my office, I could sense the presence of evil. Anger oozed out of every pore of her body. I asked her, “Rebecca, can I pray with you?” “No!” “Can I pray for you?” “If you want to, but not in my presence.”

For the next month or so, she was totally out of control. In her own words, her life was “hell”. She felt the presence of overwhelming anger, overwhelming evil. Her room-mate was scared for her life and was making plans to move out. Finally Rebecca realized that she had a choice to make. She could either allow herself to be totally consumed by evil or she needed to cry out to God. I am so thankful to report that Rebecca chose Plan B. She cried out to God. This was her prayer: “God, I’m absolutely miserable. I have nothing to give You but I need Your help.” Actually, she was wrong. She did have something to give to God—herself. Her

broken, damaged self, just as she was. Rebecca cried out to God and He delivered her from all her fears, all the oppression, all of the harassment, all of the darkness. For the first time in a long while, Rebecca felt an inner calm. She experienced a peace that the world cannot give—a peace that the devil and all of his hosts cannot take away. Rebecca was covered with the panoply of God.

Rebecca has devoted her life to helping people find freedom from the chains that bind them. She would be the first to admit that she is still growing in her walk with God, a work in progress. Without the grace and mercy of God, she is totally lost. Without the protection that God alone can provide, she is totally defenseless against the enemy. But by the grace of God she is more than a conqueror through Him who loved her and gave Himself for her.

And we are also more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. We don't have to be terrorized by the enemy, and we certainly don't have to give up in despair and yield our lives to Satan. You can choose to completely surrender your life to Jesus as our Savior and Lord. You can choose to clothe yourself with the whole armor of God.

Remember: Jesus, your Savior and Lord, is also your Protector and your Deliverer.

Are you willing today to totally surrender your life to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? Then I invite you to slip to your knees and make that commitment right now. For some of you, it may be for the very first time. For others, it may be a reaffirmation that you totally surrender your life to Jesus as your Savior and Lord. And while you're on your knees, if you haven't done so yet today, thank Him for covering you and your loved ones with the whole armor of God. Rejoice that **Jesus, your Savior and Lord, is also your Protector and your Deliverer.**

Radical Protection - PART 4
Taking up the Taser
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Ephesians 6:17b
Subject: What offensive weapon we should take up as part of the whole armor of God
Complement: the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.
Exegetical idea: As part of the whole armor of God Christians should take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
Preaching idea: **The Word of God is your powerful defense against the enemy.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers to take up the Word of God as a powerful defense against the enemy.

In this series on Radical Protection, we have been studying Paul’s counsel to Christians in Ephesus, recorded in Ephesians 6, beginning with verse 10. We have noticed that we are all involved in a cosmic battle and God wants to protect us with the covering that He alone can provide. Let’s read again from our scroll, beginning with Eph 6:14 and read down through the end of verse 17. “.....”

In part 3 of this series, we studied about the defensive weapons: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the readiness of the Gospel of Peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation. Now Paul introduces another piece of the whole armor: The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Paul did not choose a long decorative ceremonial sword, but a makaira, a short fighting sword (pick up the makaira). This was the type of sword that Peter used in the Garden of Gethsemane when he cut off the ear of the High Priest’s servant. The makaira is designed for close-quarters combat. In the cosmic conflict against spiritual forces opposed to God, Paul chose this short fighting sword as a symbol of the powerful word of God.

“Take up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.”

If Paul was alive today, writing to Christians in the 21st century AD, perhaps he would choose something else as a symbol of the powerful word of God—not a short fighting sword that is designed to wound and kill, but rather a weapon that is designed to neutralize, to incapacitate the enemy.

Have you ever seen one of these? It’s a C2 Taser. This Taser fires two small dart-like electrodes, which stay connected to the main unit by conductive wire. These two small dart-like electrodes are propelled up to 15 feet by a small compressed nitrogen charge similar to the operation of a paintball gun. The electrodes are pointed to penetrate clothing and barbed to prevent removal once in place. This Taser uses EMD technology. It delivers a powerful electrical charge that results in neuromuscular incapacitation, interrupting the ability of the brain to control the muscles in the body. In simple language, if you are struck by a Taser, you collapse. Most people who have been Tasered once want to avoid being Tasered a second time. I can understand why. That would be a shocking experience!

Perhaps Paul would choose this Taser to complete the whole armor of God, and he would refer to it as the Taser of the Spirit. Human-made Tasers can incapacitate people but they can’t incapacitate principalities and powers, world rulers of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness in super-terrestrial realms. We need a supernatural Taser, the Taser of the Spirit. The Taser that God provides has supernatural power.

Paul uses a very specific language when describing this weapon. The Taser of the Spirit is the “word of God.” Paul doesn’t use the Greek noun Logos, which is often used in the NT and is translated “word”, but rather the Greek noun rhema, the rhema of God, which means a specific

saying of God. Your defense against the enemy is not the Bible as a book to strike him over the head, but rather specific sayings from the word of God.

Jesus modeled this use of Scripture when He was attacked by Satan. When tempted by the enemy to turn stones into bread, Jesus tasered Satan with “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone but by every rhema, every saying, every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” In fact, in response to each of the temptations recorded in Matthew 4, Jesus always used the Taser of the Spirit, He always gave a specific rhema of God, a specific saying from Scripture.

Having been Tasered 3 times, Satan was neutralized and incapacitated. Matthew records that “the devil left Him” Matthew 4:11. Luke records that the devil “departed from Him until an opportune time” Luke 3:13.

How did Jesus know which specific sayings of God to use as a means of incapacitating the enemy? Surely He wasn’t just guessing, just firing randomly. Jesus didn’t just randomly fire sayings from Scripture like “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” or “You shall not steal” hoping that some saying fired at the enemy would incapacitate him.

So how did Jesus know what specific sayings of God to use in His battle there in the wilderness? I believe that Jesus gives us an answer to that question in 2 passages of Scripture. The context of the first passage is a time when we will be called to give our testimony. And Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:19-20, “.....”

How does the Spirit of our Father in heaven speak through us? Does the Spirit take control of our vocal cords? No. Listen to these words of Jesus, recorded in John 14:26. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all the things I have said to you.”

How did Jesus know what specific sayings of God to fire at the enemy in the wilderness? The Holy Spirit brought those sayings to His remembrance. Now bringing specific sayings to our remembrance presupposes something very important. What is that? It presupposes that those specific sayings have first been stored in our memory.

Listen to me very carefully. In this great cosmic battle between good and evil, it is essential that we store the sayings of God in our memories. To use the language of the Psalmist, we must hide God's Word in our hearts. Then when the kingdom of darkness comes in like a flood, the Holy Spirit will bring the specific sayings from the Word of God to our remembrance in order to incapacitate the enemy.

So here is a vitally important question: How can we fill our memories with the specific sayings of God's Word? Let me suggest three ways. I've tried them all and they all work. One might work better for you than another, but I would encourage you to try them all. This is not optional entertainment. This is intentional preparation in the cosmic battle between good and evil.

Strategy #1: Saturate your mind with the Word of God. In the past, that was accomplished in one of two ways: read, or have someone read to you. Most early Christians memorized the Scriptures by having someone read to them out loud. That is why the Book of Revelation includes a blessing both for the one who reads and those who hear (Rev 1:3). Today we have many ways to saturate our minds with the Word of God. We can listen to the Bible on CD, we can watch the Bible on DVD, we can listen on our iPod or MP3 player.

Not long ago, I have the privilege of interviewing Barry Black, Chaplain of the US Senate. He has a long commute to the Capital each day. Instead of wasting time or being

stressed out by rush hour traffic in Washington, DC, Barry Black saturates his mind with the Word of God by listening to the Bible on CD. Simply playing the Word of God on CD during his commute to work and home again, he can listen to the entire Bible four times every year. What a great example of our first strategy of filling your memory with the rhema of God—saturation.

You can load Scripture onto your MP3 player, or your iPod. You can watch word for word DVDs of the Gospels. You can even use the old-fashioned approach and read your Bible, or have someone read to you. Set aside all of the distractions, all of the noise, and saturate your mind with the Word of God.

Strategy #2: Rote memorization. There is a second strategy that can help you to fill your mind with the sayings of God—rote memorization. This has worked for generations and there are simple steps that can help you with this process. Most people write out the saying that they want to hide in their hearts. I have a little box of memory cards. Some packs are whole books of the Bible. Others are specific verses. In order to help those sayings to stick in your memory, you need to repeat them frequently throughout the first day and then periodically in the weeks and months ahead. Otherwise, you'll be like the little girl who was asked, "What is memory?" "Oh," she replied, "that is what I forget with."

I have developed a simple Bible memorization plan, with some practical guidelines and a 14-week curriculum for hiding the rhema of God in your heart. If you would like a copy of that plan, you can write to me at dmorris@radicalprotection.com.

Some years ago, I met a young pastor named Robert Banks. He used this second strategy of rote memorization to fill his heart with the rhema of God. Robert was not always a Christian.

When he came to the conviction that the Bible was more than just human words about God but was indeed God's Word to the human family, Robert decided to take the Bible very seriously. In fact, he decided to fill his mind with the rhema of God. When I first met him, Robert had memorized over 380 chapters of the Bible. The last time I checked with Robert, just a few weeks ago, he had memorized more than 600 chapters of the Bible. If you're interested in learning from Robert's experience, write to me at dmorris@radicalprotection.com and I'll give you his e-mail address. He is living proof that it is possible to fill your mind with the rhema of God through rote memorization.

Strategy #3: Scripture Songs. There's a third strategy for filling your mind with the rhema of God that I would like to recommend to you: singing Scripture songs. In my opinion, there is no easier way to fill your heart with the rhema of God than through Scripture Songs. Even secular advertisers realize that messages become more sticky when they are attached to a tune.

I learned my first Scripture song just a few months after I had made a total surrender of my life to Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Perhaps you know this song too: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." I loved that Scripture song, and I still remember that rhema of God to this day. It was such a refreshing change from the secular rock songs that had filled my mind in the previous years.

Unfortunately, I didn't find many songs like it. For some reason, a lot of songs were written about life but not many songs were written using the specific sayings from the Word of God. All of that changed after I married my wife Bodil and we had our two little boys.

When our boys were little, my wife noticed that she could still remember all of the

nursery rhymes that she had learned as a child—songs like ‘Mary had a little lamb’ and ‘Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.’ She had learned those songs 20 years earlier and all of the words were safely stored in her memory, connected to a tune. That’s when she had an idea, what she refers to as an inspiration from God. What if she would choose precious sayings from the Word of God, put them to music and hide them in the hearts of our children. Would those words be safely stored to be remembered in a time of need? Our experience as a family has answered that question with a resounding YES.

A specific saying from the Word of God that motivated us is found in Colossians 3:16. “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Scripture songs are a wonderful way for the rhema of God to dwell in you, to find a home in your hearts.

When our youngest son Jonathan was about 10 years old, he developed an interest in mountain biking. He became the happy owner of a beautiful white Trek 830 mountain bike. And he wanted his daddy to ride with him, so I purchased a bright green Trek 8000 mountain bike with a front shock because I was older and not able to bounce quite as easily as my 10 year old. Do you know what I discovered when we started mountain biking together? How many dogs there are in the world! And it seems that dogs like to chase bicycles, especially my bicycle. I’d had some negative encounters with dogs when I was younger and so when a dog chases me, I assume that it intends to bite me!

One day, Jonathan and I decided to take a bike ride near our home. I took the lead on my bright green Trek 8000 and Jonathan was close behind me on his white Trek 830. We were both

wearing our helmets and we were ready for action. Or so I thought. About a mile from a house, we were riding along the side of the road when I saw a dark mass in my peripheral vision. It was moving rapidly in my direction. When I turned my head, I caught sight of a large black dog. It looked like a cross between a Rottweiler and a Pit Bull and it was running right towards my bike. I panicked. I began to peddle at a furious rate. I was hyperventilating. My heart was pounding in my chest. To my dismay, the black dog was gaining ground. With one last burst of energy, I surged forward. I was safe! A feeling of euphoria settled over me, and then I remembered something very important—I was a parent! Jonathan was riding right behind me, at least the last time I checked. I stopped by bike and turned around. Jonathan was calmly peddling his bike and the big black dog was just sitting there on the side of the road, watching him go by. The dog didn't even bark!

When Jonathan caught up with me, I said, “Jonathan, did you see that huge black dog?” “Yes, daddy,” he replied. The first song that I sang was “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear Him and delivereth them.” Then I sang, “Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” The enemy sent fiery darts of fear and anxiety, but they were extinguished by the shield of faith. And then Jonathan used his Taser, the Taser of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

I learned an important lesson that day. It's never too early to start filling the minds of your children with the rhema of God, the sayings from the Word of God. I also learned the truth of the Word of God that there are times when a little child shall lead them.

In our battle against the kingdom of darkness, God has provided a weapon that can deliver an incapacitating power charge against the enemy—the Taser of the Spirit. So fill your mind, fill your heart, with the sayings of God. Use saturation, use rote memorization, sing Scripture songs. When you clothe yourself with the defensive weapons of the armor of God, don't forget to take up the Taser of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And when the enemy shoots a fiery dart of fear at you, hold up your shield of faith and fire back with “This is what the LORD says: Be strong and of good courage, do not fear not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” Deut 31:6. When the enemy shoots a fiery dart of despair, reminding you that you have failed again so you might as well give up, curse God and die, you hold up the shield of faith and fire back with “This is what the Lord says, “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” 1 John 1:The Word 9. When the enemy shoots a fiery dart of hopelessness, hold up the shield of faith and fire back with “Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore I hope in Him” Lamentations 3:22-24

Put on the whole armor of God, and don't forget to take up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God. The Word of God is your powerful defense against the enemy.

Radical Protection - PART 5
Praying in the Spirit
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Ephesians 6:18-20
Subject: What Christians should do once they have clothed themselves with the whole armor of God in this cosmic battle against forces opposed to God
Complement: pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers
Exegetical idea: Christians who have clothed themselves with the whole armor of God in this cosmic battle against forces opposed to God should pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.
Preaching idea: **Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers who have clothed themselves with the whole armor of God to pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.

Are you thankful today for the radical protection that God alone can provide? Protection to stand against the schemes of the devil. Protection to extinguish all of his fiery darts and to stand firm in the faith.

In this series on Radical Protection, we have carefully examined Paul's counsel to Christians in his letter to the church in Ephesus. We have learned that we are all involved in a cosmic battle with forces opposed to God. God longs to protect us but we need to choose to receive the protection that He alone can provide. We need to clothe ourselves with the panoplia, the whole armor of God. Let's read Paul's counsel, recorded in Ephesians 6:10-17. I invite you to take your scroll and read out loud with me. "....."

We have studied about putting on the defensive weapons and taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God. By the end of Ephesians 6:17, Paul has completed his description of the panoplia, the whole armor of God but he has not completed his discussion of radical protection. Did you hear what I just said? By the end of Ephesians 6:17 Paul has

completed his description of the whole armor of God but he has not completed his discussion of radical protection. What Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:18-20 is also vitally important for those who long for radical protection for themselves and for their families.

So I invite you to read with me the last portion of your scroll, Ephesians 6, beginning with verse 18. “.....”

We have moved beyond a description of the armor. Now Paul urges us to pray. Praying is something that you do while you are putting on the armor of God. Praying is something that you do when you are taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God. And praying is something that you do moment by moment throughout the day.

Notice what Paul tells us in Eph 6:18. Praying always. The NIV translates this verse “Praying on all occasions.” Literally, “Praying at all times.” Not just a 30 second prayer before you leave the house in the morning. Not just a 10 second “thank you for this food” prayer. Not just a 15 second “Now I lay me down to sleep” prayer at the end of the day. Those who have taken up the whole armor of God, including the Taser of the Spirit, and admonished to pray always, on all occasions, at all times. That reminds me of Paul’s admonition in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 “pray without ceasing.”

And please note that this is a special type of praying. It is praying “in the Spirit”. Notice, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” The NIV translates this way, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? A similar expression is found in the small epistle of Jude verse 20: “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal

life.”

What does it mean to pray in the Spirit, to pray in the Holy Spirit? That an important question to ask, because those who clothe themselves with the armor of God, taking up the Taser of the Spirit are called to pray in the Spirit always, on all occasions, at all times. To pray in the Spirit does not mean to pray a certain type of prayer, or a certain style of prayer. To pray in the Spirit means to pray guided by the Spirit, to pray in harmony with the Spirit, to pray enabled by the Spirit, to pray empowered by the Spirit.

Listen to Paul’s encouraging words in Romans 8:26. “Likewise the spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Just as the Holy Spirit brings the rhema of God to your remembrance in your battle against the forces of evil, so the Holy Spirit helps you to pray always, on all occasions, at all times. The Holy Spirit prays with you, through you, for you.

Have you ever wanted to cry out to God and you just didn’t know what to say? Don’t be anxious. Don’t be afraid. The Holy Spirit will help you with your prayers. One of the ways that the Holy Spirit helps you with your prayers is by bringing the rhema of God to your remembrance. Then you can pray the rhema of God back to Him. That is one way that we pray in the Spirit.

It happened in our family when our oldest son was 10 years old. My wife was driving home in our Volvo sedan. Our two boys were in the car, along with Bodil’s friend Lynda and her two boys. As my wife was pulling into our garage, she turned off the car and let it coast the last few feet. You can do that with a manual transmission. As soon as Christopher heard the

engine stop, he opened the rear right passenger door and started to get out—but the car was still moving. The rear right tire rolled right up onto his foot. A Volvo sedan weighs about 3500 pounds, and one of the 4 tires was resting firmly on his foot. He cried out, “Mommy, you’re on my foot!” At that moment, my wife panicked. She is usually cool, calm, and collected, but she had just driven over her son! So she started the car, but instead of putting the transmission into reverse, she accidentally put it into first gear, and drove up onto Christopher’s leg. “Wrong way, Mommy!” Now Bodil’s heart was really pounding. She put the car into reverse, drove off Christopher’s leg, stopped the car, and ran around to the right rear door of the car. There were tire marks across Christophers ankle and up his leg. Bodil quickly ran and got an icepack, asked her friend Lynda to watch the other 3 boys and headed to the doctor’s office. The doctor told her that he was concerned there might be damage at the growth plate and encouraged her to go directly to a pediatric orthopedic surgeon. As she was driving through town, her heart pounding, she heard a little voice singing in the back seat. Christopher was singing a Scripture song that he had learned as a child. It was an ancient prayer of the Psalmist David.

Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.

From the end of the earth I will cry to You,

When my heart is overwhelmed

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Christopher was praying in the Spirit. He didn’t know what to pray. He had never been run over by a car before, and you can be sure that the enemy was hurling fiery darts at him, darts of fear, darts of anger, darts of despair. But the Holy Spirit came to his aid. The Holy Spirit brought to Christopher’s remembrance the rhema of God.

Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
I will abide in Your tabernacle (forever)
I will trust in the shelter of your wings.

Praying in the Spirit. When my wife and my son arrived at the hospital, the pediatric orthopedic surgeon examined Christopher and said, “There appears to be no damage.” Now how to you explain that? I’ll tell you how. Christopher was praying in the Spirit. He was praying in agreement with the Spirit, in harmony with the Spirit, enabled by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not only bring the rhema of God to your remembrance; the Holy Spirit will also enable you to pray, and will pray with you and on your behalf.

Pray always, on all occasions, at all times with all kinds of prayers and supplications. That combination of the “prayer and supplication” occurs frequently in Paul’s writings. To Christians in Philippi, Paul says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” That’s exactly what the first followers of Jesus were doing in the Upper Room after His ascension to heaven. Dr. Luke records in Acts 1:14, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with

the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.” They were following the example of Jesus. The author of the book of Hebrews testifies that Jesus “offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear” Hebrews 5:7.

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to of friend. There are all kinds of prayers. Prayers of praise in the midst of this conflict with the kingdom of darkness, that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all. Prayers of thanksgiving that God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. Prayers of confession, both of our sin and of our acceptance of Jesus as our Savior, Lord, Protector and Deliverer.

Pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers and supplications. Supplications are specific requests to God. God wants to come to Him with specific requests. Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you.” Matthew 7:7 And how do we know what specific supplications to make? How do we know what is appropriate and what is inappropriate? Again, the Holy Spirit is our Helper. When we pray in the Spirit, we are fully open and receptive to His leading. And we can always pray as Jesus prayed after a specific supplication, “Father, not my will, but Yours be done.”

In this great cosmic battle with forces opposed to God, clothe yourself with the armor of God, taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God, receive the radical protection that God alone can provide, and pray in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers and supplications.

And don’t just pray for yourself. Notice what Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:18, “.....” Pray for all the saints. That word “supplication” implies a specific request. Don’t

just pray “for the whole world”. Pray for specific people, by name. You say, “Derek, How do I know who to pray for?” What’s the answer? The Holy Spirit will guide you. When you pray in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit will lead you. He will bring the names of people to your remembrance. He will bring groups of people to your remembrance who need protection, who need strength, who need wisdom. When that happens, don’t argue with the Spirit. Don’t put off praying for another time and another place. Just pray right then. You may only have time for a few seconds prayer, but just pray.

I’ve been impressed by the Spirit to pray for a very specific group of people. Some months ago, our programming from the Forest Lake Church began to be aired on DIRECTV 368. DIRECTV is in 19 million households in the US, with a potential viewing audience of 40-50 million people. Some of us have been praying that the Spirit will lead people to Hope TV on channel 368. Is that an appropriate prayer to pray? Absolutely. Why? Because Jesus said that the Holy Spirit has the specific mission of leading people into truth. So we’ve been praying in the Spirit, we’ve been offering up that specific supplication to God.

Would you like to hear some of the answers to those prayers? (read letters)

Here is a note from John in Michigan:

Thank you for your devotion to teaching the Word of God. When we signed up for DIRECTV, we had never heard of the Hope Channel. We simply discovered it one day when surfing for quality programming. I just happened to catch a part of Hope Sabbath School on Channel 368 approximately 4 weeks ago. I now have my DVR set to record every episode of the Hope Sabbath School. As a fellow believer in Christ as our only hope of

salvation, I find find inspiration and encouragement in each program. I'm a member of a local Church of God. Keep up the good work!

Helen writes from Texas:

Thank you for the Hope Channel on DIRECTV 368. I was searching the channels for something to give me HOPE and found the word HOPE on the Hope Sabbath School and tuned in! I have been watching to Hope Sabbath Sunday School ever since and I have learned more about the Bible just in the few months since I have found the Hope Channel than in a lifetime. I am now 61 years old. Oh how wonderful it would have been to have been taught years ago the things you are teaching now. God bless you for getting my life going in the right direction and for giving me hope.

Maureen writes from Kentucky:

I was just surfing the Christian Channels on DIRECTV and I saw Hope Sabbath School on Channel 368. What I really like about Hope Sabbath School is how you all study topically. The questions you ask the class make me think and the answers are based on what God says and not man's opinions. I am a Christian and I am currently connected to Southeast Christian Church and attend regularly.

Deanna writes from Massachusetts:

Greetings in Jesus' name. I have been so blessed by your DAILY HOPE Bible studies. I watch in DIRECTV 368 every time you are on and I am home. 75% of my television

viewing in the Hope Channel, Channel 368. I am not an Adventist yet, but my brother is, and he has been talking to me. I share all that I learn with a special friend who does not have DIRECTV. I have been revived by your Bible teachings and I thank God for you all. The class interaction on Hope Sabbath School is great. I participate as if I am there. May God continue to bless you!

Maureen called me from California. She had tried everything and her life was going nowhere. Then she discovered Hope Sabbath School on DIRECTV channel 368 and now she is attending a local church and she is finding peace and joy in the Lord. She has even started Bible studies.

And just this past Thursday I got a phone call from Gloria in Texas. She and her husband Craig are in a full-time Christian ministry that cares for the homeless, alcoholics and drug addicts. Just a few months ago, Gloria came under strong conviction that God wanted her to honor all of His commandments, including the 4th commandment. So she started remembering the Sabbath day to keep in holy from sundown on Friday evening to sundown on Saturday evening. It was about that time that she just happened to discover the Hope Channel on DIRECTV 368. She started watching It Is Written and Hope Sabbath School. She and her husband have completed the Discover Bible Studies and they now have a group of 11 people meeting every Sabbath at their mission. Yesterday I sent Gloria a copy of The Radical Teachings of Jesus which includes what Jesus taught about the Sabbath.

These are just a few of the life-changing miracles that God is working through our programming on DIRECTV channel 368. We continue to pray in the Spirit a specific

supplication that God will lead people by His Spirit to the precious truths of His Word and to a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Perhaps some of you will be led by the Spirit to join us in praying for DIRECTV families across North America that God would lead them to find Hope on channel 368. The Holy Spirit may have some other special intercession in mind for you. Be open to the Spirit's leading, and then do what the Spirit asks you to do. Pray in the Spirit at all times, on all occasions, with all kinds of prayers.

Paul concludes his teaching on radical protection by asking Christians to pray for him too. Christian leaders need our prayers because they are a special target of the enemy. If Satan can bring a Christian leader down, he can cause severe damage to the cause of Christ. We all need radical protection in this battle against principalities and power opposed to God, and that is especially true for Christian leaders. So Paul says, Please pray in the Spirit for me. Make specific supplications on my behalf. And I would ask the same of you, and I believe that every leader here on our team would cherish the same prayers on their behalf. Would you pray also for us?

Satan will try to distract you from praying in the Spirit always, on all occasions, at all times. That is why you need to be watchful, diligent, intentional. This is not a picnic. It's a battle. The forces of darkness are hurling fiery darts that have the potential to wound and destroy. We need radical protection, and the good news is that God longs to provide that radical protection for each one of us. The One who has saved us by His mercy and grace is also our Protector and our Deliverer.

Take up the whole armor of God, including the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God, and pray always in the Spirit, on all occasions, at all times, with all kinds of prayers and

supplications. Pray guided by the Spirit, pray in harmony with the Spirit, pray enabled by the Spirit, and pray empowered by the Spirit. Pray not only for yourself, but for all the saints, pray specifically by name for those that the Holy Spirit brings to your remembrance, and pray for your Christian leaders too.

If you would like to share this series of messages with someone else, we are going to make this series available on DVD. I believe that there are many who need to hear this vital teaching from the Word of God. You can also watch this series online at www.radicalprotection.com.

Go forward now in the name of the Lord, clothed with the armor of God, taking up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God, and praying in the Spirit at all times with all kinds of prayers.