

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 9:10:2007

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-20

## THE WELL DRESSED CHRISTIAN

### 3. THE BELT OF TRUTHFULNESS

The famed English cricketer C.T. Studd who deserted the playing field for the battle field of world evangelism used to stir Christians about being what he called “chocolate soldiers.” In his “*Quaint Rhymes*,” he had this one,

*Get up, get up for Jesus ye soldiers of the Cross  
A lazy Sunday morning surely means harm and loss  
The Church of God is calling in duty be not slack  
You cannot fight the good fight, while lying on your back*

We have embarked on this series of studies that we have entitled “*The Well Dressed Christian*,” and we are looking at the Armour of God, and this evening we begin to look at the first piece of that armour “*The Belt of Truthfulness*.” In 1586 a British soldier, Sir Philip Sidney was fighting in the Netherlands. He saw one of his friends fighting in the battle without his leg armour on, so he took his off. It was not that long before he was hit in the leg and died as a result. The enemy was able to find one small spot that was left unprotected, and he attacked in that area. Often believers fall into the trap of thinking that they don't need a certain piece of armour. However, if we leave

any piece out we are exercising pride. We are in effect saying, “*Well, Lord, I don't need that part of the armour. I have got that area of my life under control.*” Have you ever noticed that when the great men and women of the Bible fell and sinned, they always did do in the areas where we would have considered them to be strongest? For example, Abraham's greatest strength was his faith. Yet that is where he failed for he lied about his wife. ( Gen 12:10 ) What was Moses' greatest strength? Well, he was the meekest man on the earth, yet he lost his temper, smote the rock, instead of speaking to it, and as a consequence he missed a trip to the Holy Land. ( Num 20:7 ) Do you remember Elijah? The man who championed the cause of God in a day of apostasy. What was his greatest strength? Was it not his boldness? Yet see him as he flees for his life, under the threat of a woman. Do you remember Peter? He failed in his greatest area of strength, his courage.

For he denied the Lord Jesus no less than three times. ( Matt 26:69 ) What was David's greatest strength? His integrity. He was a man after God's own heart, and yet this is where he failed. He moved into duplicity, lying and leading a double life. ( 2 Sam 11:27 ) *You see, when we begin to think and believe that we have conquered a certain area of our lives, and don't need the protection of God for it, that is the very place where Satan will attack us.* For the Devil works effectively and powerfully against the child of God. “*We wrestle not against flesh and blood,*” and we need to remember that “*we wrestle.*” Roman soldiers did not fight their enemies from bunkers two hundred yards apart. They fought in hand to hand

combat. They did didn't want anything entangling them. My .... we must remember that our conflict is not with people but with Satan who uses people, and while Satan is not omnipotent, nor omniscient, nor omnipresent, he does not know everything and he cannot be everywhere at the same time, yet he has a huge army of demonic forces at his control that he can operate in many places at one time. With the help of these demonic forces Satan can accomplish his will. You see, we are wrestling against an organised demonic conspiracy, principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. ( 6:12 ) If we are not completely prepared and protected for the battle Satan will destroy us. For there is,

### **(1) AN ATTACK WE SHOULD EXPECT**

Whenever, the Devil finds a believer who is appropriating his wealth and practising his walk, he will attack that Christian. How does he do it ? Well, we learn much about Satan's tactic's by examining the different pieces of the armour. God has designed each piece of the armour to protect us from the enemy's many methods of warfare. Now if we recognise Satan's tactics and use the appropriate pieces of armour this will enable us to successfully defend ourselves in the battle. How, then does Satan attack us ? Warren Wiersbe in his little book, "*What to Wear to the War,*" is very helpful, on this point. The first tactic that Satan successfully uses against is,

#### **(a) DIVISION:**

The Devil knows that if he can divide our loyalties so that we are not concentrating on the battle then he can defeat us. One of Satan's greatest weapons is duplicity. That's why the Lord Jesus warned us strongly about leading a double life. Do you recall what he said, "*No man can serve two masters ....ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" ( Matt 6:24 ) We cannot be looking two directions at the same time. Moreover, we cannot have our hearts and minds in heaven and on earth at the same time, for "*a double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*" ( James 1:8 ) Now what is our weapon against Satan's divisiveness ? It's the girdle of truth, and this speaks of integrity, it speaks of a soldier who is completely devoted to winning the battle. Geoffrey Wilson once said, "*the finest armour is wasted on the soldier who has no will to fight.*" My .... have you a heart for the battle ? Are you committed to see the battle to its conclusion ? If not, the rest of this armour will do you no good, for your life must be pulled together by truth.

#### **(b) DENUNCIATION:**

From time to time Satan has access to the throne of God and there he reminds the Lord of the sins of the saints. Is it not here that he accuses the brethren ? ( Zech 3:1 Rev 12:10 ) Is it not there that he loves to stand and accuse the children of God ? Does the Devil not also work in our consciences, constantly reminding us of our past sins and mistakes ? I don't know about you, but this has been my experience. Sometimes when I am sitting in the pulpit, the Devil reminds me of a past sin. It's almost as if he is saying, "*who are you to preach from this*

*pulpit.*” Do you know the experience ? Maybe you’re trying to concentrate as you approach the Lord’s Table and all of a sudden the Devil reminds you of a past sin. That’s why we need the breastplate of righteousness to ward off these accusations. For if we do not remember that we have been justified and made righteous in Christ, we will not have an answer to Satan’s accusations. We will begin to dwell on our past mistakes, instead of living for Christ today, and Satan will have got the victory. So when Satan attempts to divide our loyalties we have the girdle of truth, when Satan accuses us, we have the breastplate of righteousness, but there’s another tactic he uses, and its

**(c) DESTRUCTION:**

For Satan is the destroyer. He wants to move in and bring war and if we are going to stand, we must have the right shoes. Interestingly enough, these are the shoes of peace. Can you imagine a soldier wearing shoes of peace ? You see, as Christian soldiers we are not armoured for battle against good, but against Satan and evil. And the only way to combat evil is by doing good, and the only antidote for war is peace. Because we are standing in peace and resting in the finished work of Christ Satan cannot destroy us. My .... are you beginning to see the tactic’s that the enemy uses against us ? The Devil also uses,

**(d) DOUBT:**

As a means of defeating us. He wants you to doubt God. Do you recall that this is exactly what he did in the

Garden of Eden ? ( Gen 3:1 ) He then impugned God’s motives by saying that God didn’t want Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of good and evil because He didn’t want them to be like him. *Satan tried to ascribe to God a selfish, ulterior motive.* Do you know what Satan wants you do ? To doubt God’s Word and to doubt God’s power. And quite often we do. We’re tempted to worry and lose control in a difficult situation because we don’t really believe God can solve our problems. We question His power. Sometimes we doubt God’s grace and forgiveness. We sin and become burdened by feelings of anxiety and guilt. Do we not sometimes doubt His love ? We think that God does not really love us when bad things happen, and Satan pushes us to doubt the love of God. What can we do when we are being attacked by doubts ? We need to use the “ *shield of faith,*” to ward off these darts ?

Martin Luther used to say “ *I cannot stop the birds from flying around my head, but I can stop them from making a nest in my hair.*” While we cannot stop the fiery darts of doubt being thrown at us, we can protect ourselves with the shield of faith. Faith in what ? Faith in the Word of God and in the God of the Word. The Lord said to Abraham, “ *Fear not, Abram, I am Thy shield.*” ( Gen 15:1 ) When we have faith in the power of God, He will shield us from Satan’s attacks and gave us victory. Satan also uses the tactic of,

**(e) DISCOURAGEMENT:**

Do you ever feel that you are so assailed with setbacks

and frustrations that you are ready to quit ? You see, Satan knows that when a soldier loses hope, he has lost the battle. What can we do to fight this feeling of discouragement and hopelessness ? Well, we need to take the helmet of salvation. ( 6:17 ) Paul describes the helmets power over discouragement in ( 1 Thes 5:8 ) when he says, “ *But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and for an helmet the hope of salvation.*” You see, when we have experienced God’s salvation we have hope to keep us going in the midst of discouragement. We know that the Lord is coming and that one day He will deliver us. How can we disheartened as long as we are thinking about the blessed hope of Christ’s return. The final tactic that Satan uses is,

**(f) DENIAL:**

Satan denies the faith. He denies the resurrection. Satan denies everything the Word of God teaches us. And we can only combat the denials of Satan by using the “ *sword of the Spirit,*” which is the Word of God. ( 6:17 ) Do you remember that when the Saviour was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness how He used the sword ? In each of the three temptations the Lord Jesus responded with the words “ *It is written.*” ( Matt 4:4,7,10 ) Christ quoted passages from the book of Deuteronomy and Satan was defenceless against this weapon. Do you know what Satan is doing to day ? He is confusing believers with false teachers who sow all kinds of wrong doctrine. Many believers are “ *tossed to and fro and carried about with wind of doctrine.*” ( Eph 4:14 ) Many are deceived by false teachers who come in “ *sheep’s clothing, but*

*inwardly they are ravening wolves.*” ( Matt 7:15 ) There are problems in the church today because Satan is confusing the church. That’s why we need more than ever to wield “ *the sword of the Spirit,*” which is the Word of God. Now let me ask you, has Satan attacked you in any of these ways recently ? Did you realise that the attack was from Satan ? How did you defend yourself ? Was your defence successful ? (1)

**(2) AN ARTICLE WE SHOULD INSPECT**

Look if you will at ( 6:14 ) Now remember that Paul is employing figurative language here. At the time of writing this letter Paul was imprisoned. He was being guarded by at least one Roman foot soldier. ( Acts 28:16-20 3:1 4:1 6:20 ) Ephesians is one of the prison epistles. Now being in such close proximity to a Roman soldier, Paul’s mind must have often turned, from the soldier of Rome, to the soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Here he traces the analogy between the Roman armour and that of the believer who is waging war with the forces of darkness.* He begins with the girdle or belt of truth. Now this should not be thought of as a mere belt. It was more like a leather apron and it was absolutely vital because every other part of the soldiers body armour depended on the girdle for security and usefulness.

You see, what happened was this. The Roman soldier put his armour on and then over the top of the armour he buckled this apron. This belt held all the armour together and in place. On this belt also hung his sword, and possibly a dagger, his chief implements of war. In the

Bible a girdle had the function of pulling things together. In the culture of that day, both men and women, including soldiers wore flowing robes. When they wanted to move quickly, they would gather up their robes and tuck the ends in their girdles so that their legs would be free. Now did you notice what Paul calls this “*girdle*?” He calls it, “*the girdle of truth.*” Now “*truth,*” here can be seen in at least two senses. Truth can be seen,

***(a) IN ITS OBJECTIVE SENSE:***

The Greek word *aletheia* can be translated “*truth as content,*” “*truth as opposed to falsehood,*” “*or truth as the Word of God.*” Paul says that our whole Christian life is to be held together with the solid, objective truth of God’s Word. Now turn back to ( 1:13 ) Another Translation puts it, “*After listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation.*” Now the phrase “*the word of truth,*” may be understood in two ways. Dr. Rendall states,

1. That the word or message may have the truth of God for its content, or it may mean
2. That the word or message has truth for its characteristic, that is, it is the truthful and therefore dependable word or message.

Now whatever way we take these words it’s clear that Paul has something objective in mind. Something objective was preached to these Ephesians and heard accepted by these people. My .... do we not in these days

of compromise and apostasy need to be braced, encircled, and girded with the eternal truths of God’s Word? Who is the enemy? Well, we discovered that Satan is a liar. The Lord Jesus said, “*he is a liar and the father of it.*” ( Jn 8:44 ) Satan is a deceiver ( Rev 20:3 ) He never comes openly and says, “*I am the Devil, Satan by name, come follow me.*” No, he is far too subtle for that and there is no length to which he will not go to get us to doubt and deny the Word of God. We live in an age when we need more and more than ever to hold tenaciously to “*the faith which was once delivered to the saints.*” ( Jude 3 ) And we can only do that by being “*girded with truth,*” and we can only do that by spending time in the Word. So this word “*truth,*” can be seen (a) But we may also look at it,

***(b) IN ITS SUBJECTIVE SENSE:***

For it can also be described as an attitude of truthfulness, sincerity, honesty, integrity, or commitment. Look at ( 4:25 ) Now Paul’s words were so relevant to his ancient culture for lying was endemic to the Greeks as well as Israel’s Semitic neighbours, and some who recently had become believers had brought the practice right into the church. Paul writing to the Colossians believers, “*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*” ( Col 3:9 ) This shows that Paul regarded lying as a characteristic of the old life. His message left no equivocation, there is no place for lying in the church. My .... is Paul’s message any less needed today? We are immersed in a culture which oozes deception and falsehood. For instance, take the case of the baker who suspected that the farmer who was supplying his butter

was giving him short weight. His suspicions were confirmed when he carefully checked the weight of the butter for several days. Incensed, he had the farmer arrested. ***But the judge threw the case out, when the farmer explained that he had no scales, so he used a one pound loaf of bread purchased from the baker as his counterbalance.*** My .... whether on Main Street, or Wall Street, our culture is an ethical crisis. For the believer, however, there must be no exaggeration, no half truths, no minimizing, no deception, nothing at all that belongs to the kingdom of darkness, whose king is the prince of lies, the arch deceiver. Now do you see what Paul is saying ? ***He's saying that the message of truth demands a corresponding life of truth on our part, a life characterised by conformity to the Word of God.*** Now look for a moment at the Christian soldier, with the girdle of truth, the girdle of integrity on. Now remember this girdle was no mere ornament. When this belt was worn it bound the loose pieces together and made the soldier feel that he had everything in hand.

You see, Roman soldiers also wore a toga or robe which was made from a large square piece of material with openings for the head and arms. The robe hung low and loose over the body. The toga could hinder soldiers going into the battle as it would flap in the breeze. A loose garment would impede the soldier's movement and fighting ability and could trip him up. To avoid this happening the soldier took the four corners of his tunic and pulled them up through the apron-like girdle. This gave the warrior the flexibility that he needed to fight effectively. This belt gave him a sense of firmness,

compactness and unity. Now what will this belt of truth or integrity do for us ? I believe it will have effect us,

### 1. EMOTIONALLY:

**Our Feeling.** Are you lacking consistency in how you live day by day ? Are you moody, irritable, lazy, careless, and changeable ? Do you fly off the handle ? Do you suffer from an erratic temperament ? Do you need to tighten the belt of truth and integrity around the loins of your mind ? ( 1 Pet 1:13 ) 1.

### 2. MENTALLY:

**Our Thinking.** As Dr. Rendall says, “ *we suffer from all kinds of loose thinking. There are thoughts that are selfish, sensual, and sexual. There are thoughts that are bitter and poisoned with hatred, and these straying thoughts can be brought under control, by the belt of truth and integrity.* Do you recall words to the believers at Philippi ? ( 4:8 ) That is to say, let the belt of truth which includes the ideas of honesty, justice, purity, loveliness and attractiveness be that which keeps your thoughts under control. 1.2.

### 3. VOCALLY:

**Our Speaking.** You see, speech is formed in the mind before it is communicated by the mouth. Now if our mind is governed by the belt of truth, we will find it easier to govern our lips. Those half truths, that careless speech, those questionable jokes, are simply revealing a mind that is undisciplined and uncontrolled. My .... do you see how

relevant this belt is ? It will affect you emotionally, mentally, and vocally. Your feeling, your thinking, your speaking. (1) (2)

### (3) AN ATTITUDE WE SHOULD REFLECT

Look if you will again at ( 6:14 ) Now as I have said the Greek word here *aletheia* can be described as an attitude of truthfulness, sincerity, integrity or readiness. Look at,

#### (a) THE IMAGERY:

As I have said in Paul's day the Roman soldier wore a tunic or toga. This large square piece of material hung low and loose over the body. But if you were going into battle, you would not want this tunic in the way. A soldier never started on a journey with a loose tunic. So he took the corners of this tunic and pulled them through the apron like girdle. You see, although the girdle is mentioned first, it is the last piece of armour to put on. When the soldier put the girdle on he was saying that he was now ready.

#### 1. Look at Exodus 12:11

Here they were about to leave for the Promised Land, and they needed to have lions girded. That was a common phrase for someone taking a journey.

#### 2. Look at Luke 12:35

The Lord was talking here about his Second Advent when He said, "*let your loins be girded about, and your lights*

*burning.*" Girding the loins meant gathering up the loose material of the toga when getting ready to leave. It refers to readiness or preparedness. When the Roman soldier put on his girdle he was saying, "*I am ready to fight.*" What about you ? Have you this attitude of readiness and commitment ? Have you a heart for the battle ? Or are you just going through the motions ? My .... Satan wants us to be content with indifference and lethargy ? You can come to church week after week, go home and nothing changes. Your attitudes remain the same, your reactions are the same, and your home stays the same. Nothing ever changes. Do you know why ? Because your commitment never changes. My .... we must be committed to the fight. That's the message behind the imagery. But notice not only the imagery, notice,

#### (b) THE INTEGRITY:

For remember this word "*truth,*" can be described as an attitude of integrity. David described this kind of integrity in ( Ps 51:6 ) when he said, "*Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*" I like the contrast that Warren Wiersbe makes in highlighting the integrity of Abraham against the duplicity of Lot. The spirituality of David contrasted against the carnality of Saul. Do you remember Lot ? He was afflicted with double vision. He had one eye on the heavenly city and another eye on Sodom. The Bible says "*And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere.*" ( Gen 13:10 ) Lot had taken off the girdle of truth and had lost his integrity. Why ? Because he had a double minded approach to life. He had his eyes on the land and how rich

he could become, instead of having his eyes on the Lord. He drifted off into wicked Sodom. And when the people in Sodom were taken captive, Lot could do nothing about it. He did not have any armour to protect him. As a result, he lost ground. He was forced to depend on Abraham, a man with integrity to deliver him. We see Abraham's integrity when the King of Sodom came out to meet him. The King said to Abraham, "*take all the wealth, the spoils of battle, that you want.*" ( Gen 14:21 ) But do you recall Abraham's reply? In effect he said, "*I made up my mind before this battle ever started that I would not take so much as a shoelace from you.*" ( Gen 14:22-23 ) My .... that's integrity. Abraham did not go to battle thinking, "***I wonder what I am going to get out of this.***" His only thoughts were about rescuing his nephew Lot. Abraham was a winner, while Lot was a loser.

**Have you ever thought why God choose David to replace Saul ?** Well look, at ( Psalm 78:70-72 ) My .... the Lord chose David because "*of the integrity of his heart.*" David went from victory to victory because he was a man of integrity. As he prepared to face Goliath, Saul wanted him to wear his armour, but David replied, "*I haven't proved it.*" ( 1 Sam 17:38-39 ) Rather than trust in human protection and resources, David put on the "*girdle of truth,*" and was able to defeat the enemy in battle after battle. Why was David victorious ? Because he had integrity and trusted in the Lord rather than his own abilities. How different Saul was. While David sought God's will, Saul was scheming and plotting. When David sinned he confessed it, but Saul made excuses. Because Saul tried to live a double life, God rejected him as King.

Do you know what Satan loves ? Duplicity. He knows that "*a house divided against itself shall not stand.*" ( Matt 12:25 ) Do you know what God loves ? Integrity. This singleness of purpose, this resolve, that once and for all, we are going to be completely yielded to Him. Paul speaking to the young soldier of Christ, Timothy says this, "*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*" ( 2 Tim 2:3-4 ) A good soldier of Christ concentrates only on pleasing His Commander. Oh, no matter what others may say or do we may we stand firmly on God's side and say, "***as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.***" ( Jos 24:15 )