

TITLE AND NUMBER: 2. The Armour of God



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): 1 Thessalonians 5 vs 1-11

“But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (vs 8-11).

What does this Bible passage tell us?

Paul reminds all of us who are Christians that we belong to the day. This reminds me of the start of John’s Gospel where John tells us that the true light that gives light to every man – Jesus – was coming into the world. The only light we need is to receive Jesus into our hearts.

Yet I talk to many prisoners who tell me that night can be a hard time, when they are most likely to feel anxiety, whether that is about their own situation, their family, uncertainty for the future or guilt over the past. If it is true that “we do not belong to the night” (v.5), why can the night sometimes seem hard? In this passage, Paul tells us to “be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet”. Great sounding words, but how?

Be self-controlled: this simply means making it a habit to put on God’s protective armour, not just first thing in the morning but last thing at night too.

Put on: these verses tell us to put on pieces of spiritual armour that protect our heart – the centre of our emotions and the organ vital to life – and our head, centre of our thinking. What is this armour and how do we put it on?

Romans 10 v 17 tells us that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ”. One way to build our faith is by applying promises from the Bible as prayers.

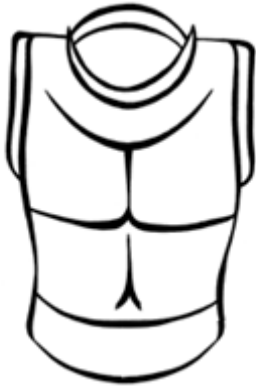
If you are afraid, you might reflect that “Perfect love” – that is, Jesus’s love for us – “casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). If you feel guilty, take the verse from today’s reading “For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”(v.9).

Reflections:

- What other Bible verses/promises are special to you? Why not write one or two of them on the pictures of the breastplate on this sheet and use them as reminders?
- Who has encouraged you most in your Christian faith? Say a prayer thanking God for them.
- Who might you encourage this week?

Prayer: Thank you Jesus that you came to bring light into the hearts and minds of all who give their lives to you. May I know your light today and may I encourage someone else to know it too. Amen.

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



What have you seen God do in response to your prayers this week?

