

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

◆**Intro:** In the musical *The Man of LaMancha*, Don Quixote acquaints himself with a woman of the streets named Aldonza. She is wild, and wanton, but Quixote is attracted to her. The Man of LaMancha stops short, looks intently at Aldonza, and announces that she is his “lady” and that he shall call her Dulcinea. In mocking laughter she sneers, “I’m hardly a lady.” But Don Quixote will not give up. At one point in the play he insists that she is his lady. Angry, wild, hair flying over nearly exposed breasts, she screams that she is only a kitchen maid, a nothing, Aldonza, not Dulcinea. She runs from the stage while the Man of LaMancha whispers again to himself that she is his lady. At the close of the story, Quixote is dying. To his side comes Aldonza, now lovely, with a new gentleness. He is confused and does not recognize her until she tells him that she is his Dulcinea. Don Quixote has given her a gift, a gift of worth that has changed her whole life.

◆**Reminder:** Our task is fighting sin, evil, wrong, lies and ugliness that suck from us the joy and peace and blessing of God in this world. Ephesians 6 reminds us that we are in a spiritual war that requires spiritual weapons. For Christians, our salvation and destiny is not in question. We are inseparable from God’s love because of Christ. But we can be saved for eternity and lose the daily victory, and fail to lay up treasure in heaven. We can give the devil a foothold in our families, and often we do, but God invites you to fight all that and win. But you cannot do that unarmed.

◆**1.What is the Helmet of Salvation:** Today we look at the Helmet of Salvation. It appears in the Bible in several contexts.

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

◆“He saw that there was no-one, he was appalled that there was no-one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.”
Isaiah 59:16, 17, NIV.

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

◆Friends, much of the spiritual life and the spiritual battle is fought on the battle ground of the mind. This is one of the key ideas in the image of the helmet; it protects the head, the mind.

◆William Glasser said, “All psychological problems from slight neurosis to deepest psychosis, are merely symptoms of the frustration of the fundamental need for a sense of personal worth. Self-esteem is the basic element in the health of any human personality.”

◆Marcus Aurelius said, “Your life is an expression of all your thoughts.”

◆God has said, “*As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.*” Prov.23:7

◆A. So the way we think is terribly important to our spiritual thriving. In Isaiah 59 God dons the helmet of salvation to bring justice and truth where men cannot. In 1Thessalonians Paul makes it even clearer that it is our hope, our assurance of inevitable victory in God that protects our minds in this daily, often discouraging existence. This is the helmet of salvation.

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

Our confidence in our final destiny, though we are experiencing now daily warfare. So the helmet of salvation is our confident assurance, as believers in Jesus, of inevitable and final victory through Christ. Were it not for our assurance of salvation by the grace of Christ, we would surely grow weary, give up, turn away, raise our shields to the wind, drown our sorrows, run for the hills, or give up the fight in our trials and persecutions. But... the Christian can endure much for the Christian knows that God will finish what he started. In this the helmet is closely similar to the shield of faith: both look forward to an outcome in confidence. While the shield may be seen as our belief in particular circumstances, the helmet pertains, I think, more to our identity, that is how we think about ourselves in Christ.

◆ *“being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6, NIV.*

◆ B. Lydia sat in a counselor's office. “I’m evil. I’m no good. People tell me I’m evil and all I do is bring trouble.” Lydia is not alone. On the pages of her identity are written the words oft’ repeated to her “You are worth nothing you miserable... YOU are the problem here.” Mouths that speak like this you can be sure are not of God and are part of the problem. Lydia had given up. Now her face was blank, emotionless, resigned to the belief that she was the problem. Neil Anderson wrote “There is nothing more foundational to freedom from bondage to Satan than understanding and affirming what God has done for you in Christ, and who you are as a result. For we live in accordance with our perceived identity. Your attitudes,

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

actions, responses, reactions to life are all determined by you conscious and subconscious self-perception.”

◆ This is why family members who are constantly pointing out other family members flaws are creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. In their blaming of the other person, they are helping to form that person into exactly what they so vehemently complain about. If you keep telling your child (spouse) he's worthless and will amount to nothing, you shouldn't be surprised when he seems worthless and amounts to nothing. You've helped program him. The devil does the same thing. It's one of his favorite attacks. If he can get us to see ourselves as helpless victims, we will live like helpless victims even though we have at our disposal spiritual weapons that can destroy evil all around us! But the converse is also true: if we learn to see ourselves as dearly loved and accepted children of a good good father (God), then we will also live like children of no one less than God. Don Quixote's gift to Aldonza was to help her see herself as a Dulcinea.

◆ C. Here's an important questions, “How do you see yourself?” God is powerfully realistic and honest with us in his word. Romans 7 shows us clearly that there is a battle of truth versus lies that goes on inside the human person.

◆ “I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience shows that I agree that the law is good. But I can't help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things. I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to,

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it." Romans 7:15-20, NLT.

◆What do you see here? Several things, right? First, sin is a reality in us, even in us who *want* to obey God! But second, sin is not the *only* reality in us who follow God. Our true self wants to do his righteousness. So sin is not the whole truth about me!

◆v17 & 20 recognize another player in the game: sin, a real live force!

◆v18 "*nothing good lives in my sinful nature*": This does not mean "I'm no good." It means there is a presence of in me that is no good. I am born with it. But it is not the me God intended. You see friends, evil in you and in me is like a splinter. I recall one of our sons coming to me as a youngster wincing in pain and saying, "My finger is hurting me. See, right there!" I couldn't see anything. Out came the magnifying glass and sure enough, smaller than the tip of a needle, there was a splinter. It was present. You couldn't see it. And it was not him! It was something afflicting him. Remember this, because the devil wants you to think you are a loser. He wants you to think you will not win. He wants you to think God isn't there because of the evil you see in the people around you. He wants you to think, "Boy, you will never win." But it is not true, not if you side with Christ. Not if you give your life and days to him!

◆"It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.” Romans 7:21-23, NLT.

◆ Did you notice the phrase “at war with my mind”? The spiritual battle is in the mind! This is where the helmet of salvation comes in. Paul puts on the helmet of salvation a few verses later. In his lament, and frustration he remembers and speaks his hope.

◆ “Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin. So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” Romans 7:24-8:1, NLT.

◆ Listen folks. You and I do things wrong because sin comes and bites onto our legs and keeps us from running the good race. But instead of taking a deep breath and repenting of sin (which would be beating the dog, or taking out the splinter) we beat our legs. “Bad legs. I have such bad legs. I can never speak of these legs to another. They might see the dog hanging on there (or the splinter in there) and not like me. I can never show my face in church if people see a dog hanging on my leg.” I see it all the time. It comes out that the dog of sin has latched onto someones leg in the church. The Church family says to that individual, “Lets get rid of that dog. We’ll help you.” And the individual say, “You people make me feel bad about myself. I’m gonna drag my leg and the dog on it somewhere else.”

◆ A man and his wife once came to me (not from around here) and the husband said he was conflicted. He met a woman on

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

the internet and he wanted to go meet her and sleep with her to see if he ought to be with her instead of his wife. The wife was not in favor of this. I told him not to do it. I told him he would not find what he was looking for. I told him God would not be in favor either. I told him he'd be back telling me it didn't work. He did it. It didn't work. He came back. I told him he needed to repent, and get rid of the dog on his leg. He left the church for our sister church down the street. Far as I know he's still dragging that dog around with him.

◆The helmet of salvation is our confident assurance, as believers in Jesus, of inevitable and final victory through Christ.

Think differently about who you are in Christ! If you have bowed your heart to Jesus, you are a child of God! You are saved and will live forever! You are forgiven, and loved even though you still do wrong!

◆**2. Putting on the helmet is**

◆A. Renewing your mind in Christ: Again, Satan is called the Accuser in Scripture. That's because it's one of his favorite tactics. He'll drop terrible thoughts into your head, thoughts you don't want, and then suggest to you that you are a horrible person for having such thoughts.

◆Now, you may have a part in this. What you watch on TV, what you listen to on the radio, what you read about –all these can open or shut doors to evil's activity in your mind. If we play with dirt we shouldn't be surprised when we wind up dirty. But we renew our mind by affirming God's truth, and renouncing lies.

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

◆ *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1, 2, NIV.*

◆ We need to test, approve the holy, reject the unholy. We do this in a prime way in worship services and studies of the Word. But make it a habit in day to day existence too. Our current social fear of appearing judgmental has caused so many of us to fear making any judgment at all. All words are fine, all films are legit, all stories are fair game, all songs can be played, all emotions are real and therefore good for us... This is not true.

◆ *“Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21, 22, NIV.*

◆ You want to defeat sin and evil in yourself? Protect your mind. Put good into it as often as possible.

◆ B. Rehearsing your identity in Christ

◆ This is what the great songs of faith do, isn’t it? Like How Firm a Foundation...

- ◆ Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
- ◆ For I am your God, and will still give you aid;
- ◆ I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
- ◆ Upheld by My gracious, omnipotent hand.
- ◆ “When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
- ◆ My grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply;

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

- ◆ The flame shall not harm you; I only design
- ◆ Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.
- ◆ “The soul that on Jesus does lean for repose,
- ◆ I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
- ◆ That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
- ◆ I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”

◆ This song is rehearsing who we are to God! Or take a modern one:
Remember...

- ◆ Down in the valley When waters rise Im still believing hope is alive
- ◆ All through the struggle And darkest day I’ll remember the empty grave

◆ This song is also rehearsing our identity in Christ. If you are a Christian, you need to learn to do this. You need to learn to say the biblical truth about yourself, what God has declared about you. Repeat after me...

- ◆ I renounce the lie that I am unlovable... God’s Word says I am very loved.
- ◆ I renounce the lie that I am unacceptable...God’s Word says I am accepted.
- ◆ I renounce the lie that I am unworthy...God’s Word says I am worthy.
- ◆ I renounce the lie that I am a failure...God’s Word says I am victorious in Christ.
- ◆ I renounce the lie that I am anxious...God’s Word says I am content.
- ◆ I renounce the lie that I am weak...God’s Word says I am strong in Christ.

◆ **Conclusion:** Putting on the Helmet of Salvation is protecting your mind against evil suggestions by the assurance of the gift of salvation God has given you. It is the armor for the discouraged heart. The overwhelmed soul. Aldonza learned to see herself as Don Quixote saw her; as Dulcinea. We need to learn to see ourselves as God sees us: his precious kids. If you have chosen in your heart to follow Christ, you have a good good father! You are loved. In the very next chapter of Romans, after Paul has

HELMET OF SALVATION, ROM.7

Spiritual Warfare #5

described this inner battle in his soul between doing good or evil, he rests in this truth...

◆ *“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God’s very own children, adopted into his family--calling him “Father, dear Father.” For his Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we will share his treasures--for everything God gives to his Son, Christ, is ours, too. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are.”*
Romans 8:14-19, NLT.

◆