

The Helmet of Salvation

*God's grace in our lives gives us
a present-tense assurance and a future-tense hope,
simply because we are His children.*

I. UNDERSTANDING WHO WE WERE

The Bible is clear; all of us—no matter how righteous we might seem apart from Christ—have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom. 3.23).

Without Christ we have no hope; we all face a bleak eternity.

That's why salvation (a.k.a. "getting saved") is so important.

Our goal is to help you appreciate and live out the blessings of salvation.
A better understanding of these truths will help you stand in victory.

When we realize how lost we really were, we can best appreciate what God has done for us.

Do We Take or Receive the Helmet of Salvation?

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***"He (God) put on righteousness
like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation
on His Head." - Isaiah 59:17***

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“Take the helmet of salvation...” - Ephesians 6:17

In the first passage, God is wearing the helmet of salvation. In the second, believers wear the helmet. Paul most assuredly was thinking of the first verse when he wrote the second.

What did he mean when he told us to “take” the helmet of salvation?

The word translated “take” in Ephesians 6:17 can also be understood as “accept” or “receive.” We take the helmet of salvation by receiving it from God. He is both the “source and perfecter of our faith” - (Hebrews 12:2).

We Were Blinded by the Enemy

Nonbelievers are blinded by the Enemy...

We must remember that we too were once blinded.

“Regarding (_____): the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” - (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The Enemy once ruled over us, and he had successfully clouded our minds to keep us from believing the gospel.

We are all sinners by nature (Rom. 5:12, 19) and by our actions (Rom. 3:23; Col. 1:21).

***We were alienated from God and hostile toward Him.
In the end, we served the Enemy when we were nonbelievers.***

In the book *Out of Their Faces and in Their Shoes*, John Kramp writes about **“lostology”** or the study of being lost...

***...in order for us to be good Christian witnesses,
we need to understand
the spiritually lost people around us.***

(Example, most lost people don't mind being lost; in fact, they like it.)

**One way we can understand lost people
is to recall that we, too, were once lost and blinded by the Enemy.**

We Were in the “Domain of Darkness”

In Colossians 1:9-14, Paul expressed a powerful prayer for the believers in Colosse. This prayer is a good one to memorize.

Read Paul's prayer in your Bible...

Compare that (**Col. 1:9-14**) to Jesus' words to Paul when He called him to be a missionary:

*I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles,
to whom I now send you,
to open their eyes
that they may turn from darkness to light
and from the power of Satan to God
(Acts 26:17-18)*

Read the following Scriptures as well:

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“This, then, is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. For everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed.” - John 3:19-20

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“You were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.” - Ephesians 5:8

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“You are a ‘chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises’ of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” - 1 Peter 2:9

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You were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously walked according to this worldly age, according to the ruler of the atmospheric domain, the spirit now working in the disobedient. - Ephesians 2:1-3

***The one who rules the air
also works in the lives of the disobedient.***

The Enemy fights to keep individuals in darkness.

Satan makes sin look inviting.

The Enemy dangles temptation in front of us, while
covering up the consequences.

Sadly, we tend to take the Enemy's bait...
over and over and over again.

Satan also gives non-Christians lies to believe.

(i.e. "I'm good enough.")

"There must be more than one way to God." "There is no God.")

The Enemy's strategy is simple...

He invites nonbelievers to enjoy their sin
while also holding on to lies that
soothe their consciences.

***Consider how separated from God you were
prior to salvation—even if you didn't realize it.***

***Now, humbly thank God for allowing you
to receive the helmet of salvation.***

II. UNDERSTANDING WHAT GOD DID

God's Word Shows Us That He Has a Plan

Several of the Scriptures that show the state of nonbelievers
also give hope for those who do believe.

READ

1. **John 1:5**—*“The light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it...”*
2. **Acts 26:18a**—*“to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God...”*
3. **Ephesians 2:1**—*“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...”*
4. **Colossians 1:13**—*“He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves...”*

COMPLETE

- John 1:12**- _____

- Acts 26:18b**- _____

- Ephesians 2:4-5**- _____

- Colossians 1:14**- _____

The rest of the story is the best part. Though others reject the light of Christ, God gives believers the privilege of being called His children.

We were dead in our trespasses, but He loved us and made us alive through His Son. The Enemy works hard to keep nonbelievers in darkness, but he is no match for the God who has a plan to overcome him.

God's Plan Required Death

*As early as Genesis 3, God's Word shows that
He had a plan to destroy the Enemy.*

*"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed
and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel"*
(Genesis 3:15)

***Through His death on the cross,
Jesus destroyed the power of the serpent***
(Colossians 2:15)

Jesus paid the death penalty/price for our sin. **(Gen. 2:15-17)**

Jesus bore our sins & paid our price on the cross. **(Isa. 53:6, 12)**

Thus, we can be declared righteous through Jesus' death. **(Rom. 5:9-11)**

Paul described this transaction:

***He made the One who knew no sin
to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become
the righteousness of God in Him***

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

Jesus took upon Himself God's wrath for our sin.

Several Scriptures refer to Jesus' death as a "propitiation" for sins
(Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10).

Propitiation means "a sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the end and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor."

Don't ever forget: God put on His own Son the anger that we so deserve.

Christ became a curse for us so that we would not be cursed anymore (Galatians 3:13).

The Enemy and his tempting offers are no match for that kind of love!

We're all guilty of hurrying through life and neglecting the cross.

Appreciating the helmet of salvation means that we must slow down and look at the cross.

God's Plan Demands Our Response

Remember: wearing the full armor of God is about *how we live.*

Faith is an action word we will act on if we truly believe.

Wearing the helmet of salvation must affect the way we live.

We will:

- Love Him with our actions and our words;
- Reject the Enemy's offers because God's offer of love and forgiveness means more than anything he offers; that is, we will wear the breastplate of righteousness;
- Want to read God's Word because we want to hear from Him.
- We will want to know His truth in order to wear the belt of truth;
- Look forward to times of prayer;
- We will want to trust God for eternity, in Him and His promises we take up the shield of faith.

Consider the other blessed & beneficial images describing Christ's death:

- ***A redemption from bondage*** (Mark 10:45)
- ***A reconciliation*** (2 Cor. 5:18-19)
- ***A sacrifice for sins*** (Heb. 9L26)
- ***A substitution*** (1 Pet. 2:24)

Describe your thoughts and/or feelings as you consider the helmet of salvation we receive from God.

Thank God for the people He has given to you & your church.

Evaluate your Christian growth, looking for areas in which you are not growing as you should.

III. UNDERSTANDING WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST

FALSE MESSAGES YOU MAY HAVE HEARD

- “God will never love you again.”
- “God won’t forgive you.”
- “You will never change.”
- “You will never be worth anything.”
- “You can never overcome your past.”
- “Nobody will ever love you.”

Rate your personal confidence (1-10) on each of the following:

- _____ 1. I am a child of God.
- _____ 2. I am a new creation.
- _____ 3. I am created in God’s image.
- _____ 4. I am a coheir with Christ.
- _____ 5. God has prepared good works for me to do.

If you’re a Christian, you should have at least agreed with each one...

(see John 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gen. 1:27; Rom. 8:16-17; Eph. 2:8-10).

The Enemy doesn’t want us to know these truths.

Instead he capitalizes on false messages that we’ve heard so we don’t experience the joy in serving God.

*When we understand who we are in Jesus,
we best seize the helmet of salvation
and prepare to enter the spiritual battle.*

First a Caution...

When we study who we are in Christ, we will face the inherent danger of having spiritual arrogance. Somehow, our focus shifts from God's graciousness to our goodness. The Enemy wins when that shift takes place.

Only God's loving-kindness has rescued us from the Enemy's clutches.

*We would not be in Christ
had God not first loved us, while we were active sinners
(Romans 5:8)*

In Christ, We Are Loved

Jesus loves the unlovable!

Think about the Scriptures that tell of those whom Jesus loved. Unlike the Pharisees, He loved sinners and tax collectors (Mark 2:15-17; Luke 19:1-9), a demoniac (Mark 5:1-20), a diseased woman (Mark 5:25-34), untouchable lepers (Luke 17:11-17), a Samaritan adulteress (John 4:1-30), and a doubting disciple (John 20:24-29). He even used a formerly demon-possessed woman to tell the disciples about His resurrection (Luke 8:2; John 20:1-2).

Jesus loved those no one else would have readily loved.

Read some of their stories listed here:

- **Mark 5:1-20**
- **Luke 19:1-9**
- **John 4:1-30**
- **John 20:24-29**

What was your reaction to Jesus' love when YOU first met Him?

What is your reaction to His love TODAY?

In Christ, We Are Forgiven and Changed

What God Does with Our Sins

- **He removes them from us as far as the east is from the west** (Ps. 103:12).
- **He remembers them NO MORE** (Isa. 43:25).
- **He sweeps them away like a cloud** (Isa. 44:22).
- **He casts them into the depth of the sea** (Mic. 7:19).
- **Ultimately He forgives us and cleanses us of all unrighteousness** (1 John 1:9).

When Jesus saved Paul, He forgave him & changed his entire life.

Paul had been:

- **Spiritually lost... but Jesus found him and saved him;**
- **Furiously fighting against the church... but now he was one of the Church**
- **A murderer... but now a preacher & teacher of life eternal**
- **Zealous in his Judaism... but now he became zealous for Christ**
- **NOTE: now he was now willing to die for the cause of Christ.**

Paul's story ought to give us ALL hope.

Loved. Forgiven. Changed.

These words define who we are in Christ.

Wearing the helmet of salvation means believing this truth.

*Nothing Satan says to us can halt our advance
when we know who we are in Christ.*

IV. WEARING THE HELMET DAILY

Some day-to-day steps that seem basic are actually critical
for our survival.

*We make daily choices that determine the effectiveness
of our Christian living.*

Wearing the helmet of salvation means that we choose every day to walk in the joy of our salvation.

(The Enemy works everyday to rob us of that same joy.)

We Are to Take Up Our Cross Daily

When Jesus gave instructions and requirements for following Him, they were clear. (Read Luke 9:23)

**Jesus laid out (3) conditions
for following Him:**

Deny

Take Up

Follow

Jesus' words were quite clear, but understanding what He meant by them is most important.

To deny self means to reject a life built around self-interest, self-fulfillment, and self-glorification.

*To deny self means to walk with Jesus
regardless of the personal cost.*

To take up our cross daily is to be willing to die for Jesus.

The disciple of Jesus willingly takes up his cross.

Such a deep commitment demands that we renew the pledge every day.

To follow Jesus means that we continually trust Him and obey His commands – no matter what!

Following Jesus means walking in His footsteps... (1 John 2:6)

Wearing the helmet of salvation includes all 3 steps:

1. Saying no to self...
2. Accepting the cost of obedience – no matter what!
3. Following Christ every day.

Think about how contrary these steps are to the ways of the world & the works & words of the Enemy.

For example:

1. **Genesis 3:4-6**—Jesus says, “Deny yourself,” but the Enemy says...
2. **Matthew 16:21-23**—Jesus says, “Take up your cross,” but the Enemy says...
3. **Luke 4:5-7**—Jesus says, “Follow me,” but the Enemy says...

As we wear the helmet of salvation daily, **we must choose to focus on God and reject the Enemy's lies.**

We keep our focus on God by walking in truth and righteousness, standing firmly in our faith, telling others about God, and trusting the promises of His Word.

We daily wear God's armor into the battle.

The Enemy Seeks to Lead Us Astray

Read Luke 22:31-34, 54-62

In this passage, Jesus warned Peter that Satan wanted to sift him like wheat (b 31)—that Satan sought to shake him violently.

This shifting would result in Peter's temporary fall.

First, Peter was overconfident in his faith (v 33).

Peter denied Jesus three times before dawn the next morning.

Peter denied Jesus by his actions and his words. He at least temporarily blended in with the crowd & directly denied knowing Him (vv. 56-60).

*His overconfidence led to letting his guard down,
resulting in his mingling with enemies
of Jesus and denying Christ.*

At least briefly, the Enemy shook Peter so violently that he denied the Savior who had given him the helmet of salvation.

In each of the following, indicate how often you give in to the Enemy's tactics.

	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. I blend in with the crowd.	_____	_____	_____
2. I get overconfident in my faith.	_____	_____	_____
3. I deny Jesus by my actions.	_____	_____	_____
4. I mingle too long with people who drag me down.	_____	_____	_____
5. I fail to proclaim my commitment to Jesus when an opportunity arises.	_____	_____	_____
6. I let my guard down.	_____	_____	_____
7. My words or actions deny that I'm clothed with the helmet of salvation.	_____	_____	_____

Repentance Breaks the Enemy's Hold

Immediately after Peter denied Jesus, the Lord looked straight at him. Guilty and broken, he wept uncontrollably. Just weeks later, however, he preached on the day of Pentecost when thousands became believers (Acts2).

Take note of this process...

because it's so similar to the course that we follow.

We sin, denying the Lord by our actions and word, but the Lord doesn't take His eyes off us.

God graciously brings us to brokenness & repentance, restores the joy of our salvation, and uses us to teach others about the dangers of rebellion... as well as the joy of return

(read Psalm 51:12-13)

Have you lost your joy?

(Is there sin in your life from which you need to repent?)

Repentance is a non-negotiable component of this process.

How repentance works:

God graciously leads us to **make a U-turn away from our sin and back to Him.**

The Enemy loses when we've made that turn!

Wearing the helmet of salvation means experiencing the joy of turning to Christ daily, following Him, and returning to Him in repentance when we fail.

***The Enemy wants to rob us of our hope
because he knows that discouraged Christians
are defeated Christians.***

In **1 Thessalonians 5:8** Paul used the image of a helmet to describe the “hope” of salvation.”

Wearing the helmet of salvation gives us hope when discouragement sets in.

Discouragement Happens to God’s People Too...

When I first became a believer, I thought the Christian life would be filled with complete joy and excitement.

I learned later that the Bible is filled with stories of godly people who faced times of discouragement. (Review some of them.)

- **Elijah (1 Kings 19:9-14)**
- **Job (Job 3:1-7)**
- **Jeremiah (Jer. 20:7-10)**
- **Disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)**

Faith didn’t automatically eliminate discouragement for these followers of God.

Sometimes discouragement occurred while they were walking obediently with God.

***Being faithful today...
doesn't guarantee that we won't be
discouraged tomorrow.***

Most of the time,
discouragement occurs when life doesn't go
as we expected.

Have you ever felt as if you were fighting the battle alone?

Have you endured tragedies in your life?

Have you ever grown weary of teaching truth because
everyone rejected your message?

***Discouraged warriors
are seldom effective warriors
in spiritual battles.***

The Enemy rejoices when we lose our joy.

**Few soldiers win battles...
when they no longer have a will to fight.**

Consider this...

Jesus could have quickly stopped the confused thinking of the men on the road to Emmaus. All He would have had to do was to identify Himself.

Yet He chose to wait for them to realize He was the risen Christ.

Waiting on God is one of the Christian's most challenging tasks.

Conclude this...

In each case, God is preparing His warriors for battles yet to come by building their faith—their hope—on what has not been seen.

For faithful followers the result is more faith - Amen!

Ask God to give you strength to trust Him
and follow Him in spite of your
discouragement.

We Hope in the Return of Christ

In **1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11**, Paul reminded his readers of the suddenness of Jesus' return and **challenged them to BE READY** for His coming.

***The hope of a promised future event...**
radically changed the way they lived in the present.*

Our Hope Helps Us Win Today's Battles

The hope of their salvation was not an uncertain hope; rather, they were to believe with such certainty in the coming of Christ that they would always be ready and prepared to welcome Him.

They were to be on deployment when He came.

Do you hope with certainty that Jesus is going to return?
Does that confident hope change the way you live?

Wearing the helmet of salvation, we can live in victory.

Suppose you knew for certain that Christ were going to return one week from today.

If your life would change much between now & then... ask yourself: "Why?"