

# Life in the Combat Zone

## The Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:10-17

June 27, 2020

If you're old enough to remember the days of LP's, Reel-to-reel, and 8-track tapes – when there were no microwaves, child-proof medicine bottles, standardized car seats, seatbelt laws or bicycle helmets..... CONGRATULATIONS --- You survived your childhood!!!

I remember:

- Knowing it was time to take my Asthma medication – I was no older than 4 – I climbed up to the medicine cabinet, took down the bottle, opened it and took my medicine – **most, if not all the contents of the bottle** – Had to have my stomach pumped.
- Sitting on the armrest of the front seat of our car – again before the age of 4 – giving my mother directions as she drove. We didn't wear seat belts – ever – even on long cross-country trips.
- Riding my bicycle home from town and being hit by a car – I have a scar on the back of my head.

The item that has particular relevance for us this morning is the helmet:

I have a scar on the back of my head – not because I had neglectful parents, but because bicycle helmets were not commercially available until 1975 and I don't think it occurred to anyone that a helmet was a good piece of kit to have. In Scripture however, we read that God knew a long time ago that the **Helmet of Salvation** would be an essential piece of kit for the Christian to have, so He provided it for us.

**Ephesians 6:17** – Take the helmet of Salvation....

The **Helmet of Salvation** is our 5<sup>th</sup> piece of combat gear, but why is Salvation in the position of the "**Helmet**"?

### Roman Helmet



The Roman Helmet known as a "**galea**", could vary quite a bit in design, but was generally made of Iron or bronze - perhaps with a leather insert to make it more comfortable to wear. It protected the Legionnaire's head and neck against the cleaving blow of a heavy battle-axe – really any deadly blow to the head – in hand to hand combat. The cheek plates and brow ridge protected the face and eyes.

When Paul says put on **ALL** the armor of God – he means **ALL OF IT**. If you have all your other gear on; the **Belt of Truth**, the **Breastplate of Righteousness**, **Shoes of Gospel Peace** and the **Shield of Faith**, but walk out the door without your helmet, you are in deep trouble. The rest of your armor will not protect you from the blows aimed at your head – so, after you've got on all your other gear, you have to **Take the Helmet** from the person offering it to you and you have to put it on your head. As always, it does no good if it is hanging in your closet – *Thou Art Crunchy and Taste Good with Ketchup.....*

**Definition of Salvation:** preservation or deliverance from harm, ruin, or loss.

**Definition of Helmet:** A helmet is a form of protective gear worn to protect the head. More specifically, a helmet complements the skull in protecting the human brain.

For Christians, then, The **Helmet of Salvation** is our **protection** and **assurance** with regard to our deliverance from the penalty, power and presence of sin.

**Freedom from the PENALTY of sin = Past Action {has happened} = Declared Not Guilty because of Jesus.**

- **Isaiah 53** - ....<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.....<sup>11</sup> After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of *life* and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.
- **Romans 4:18-25** - ...<sup>25</sup> He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.
- **Romans 8:1-2** - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,<sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

**Freedom from the POWER of sin = Present Reality {is happening} = A Transformed Life through Jesus.**

Unless the power of sin is broken, we have no ability to live holy lives. Jesus sacrifice frees us from the power of sin and it no longer controls us. When we allow the Holy Spirit to reign in our lives, we have the ability to say **NO** to temptation and **YES** to obedience and the result is a transformed life.

- **Romans 12:2** - 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.
- **2 Corinthians 3:18** - And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
- **Titus 3:4-7** - But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,<sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,<sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,<sup>7</sup> so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

**Freedom from the PRESENCE of sin = Future Promise {will happen} = Eternity with Jesus.**

- **John 14:1-3** - Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.<sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.<sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
- **1 Corinthians 2:9** - However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"
- **Revelation 21:1-7** - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.<sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.<sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."<sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."<sup>6</sup> He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.<sup>7</sup> He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Paul summarized the 3 aspects of our salvation like this:

- **Romans 5:1-2** - Therefore, since we have been justified through faith [**past**], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand [**present**]. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God [**future**].

The **"Ironman"** is not a sprint, it is an endurance race. It doesn't simply require physical toughness; it requires mental toughness as well. You have to accept the fact – embrace the fact – that **YOU WILL** experience pain for 140.6 miles in order to achieve your goal – to hear those words, **"YOU ARE AN IRONMAN!!"**.

One of the most famous quotes from WW2 came from General Anthony McAuliffe during the Battle of the Bulge. He was the acting commander of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division tasked with defending the crossroads at Bastogne, Belgium. On December 22, 1944, General Heinrich von Lüttwitz of the German Army sent him a note:

**To the U.S.A. Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne.**

**The fortune of war is changing. This time the U.S.A. forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German armored units {and more are coming}.....**

**There is only one possibility to save the encircled U.S.A. troops from total annihilation: that is the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note.**

**If this proposal should be rejected one German Artillery Corps and six heavy A. A. Battalions are ready to annihilate the U.S.A. troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hours term.**

All the serious civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the well-known American humanity.

The German Commander.

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The official reply was typed and delivered to the German delegation. It read as follows:

To the German Commander.

**NUTS!** {in other words – do your worst we will not surrender}

The American Commander.

The Christian life is not a sprint, it is an endurance race. We were never promised a life free of trial, affliction, pain, heartache or sorrow. In order to live joyful and victorious lives, we must accept the fact – yes, even embrace the fact – that we will experience pain in this race we call life. The **Helmet of Salvation** keeps our focus where it needs to be: **THE END OF THE RACE.**

- **Matthew 25:23** – Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!
- **John 16:33** - I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.
- **2 Timothy 4:6-8** - For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
- **Hebrews 11:13-16** - All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were **foreigners and strangers** on earth. <sup>14</sup>People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup>If they had been thinking of the country they had left; they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup>**Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.** Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.
- **Hebrews 12:1** - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

When we are surrounded by the relentless attacks of Satan, the **Helmet of Salvation** protects our minds and allows us to move forward in the absolute certainty of our Salvation. For the Christian, this life **IS NOT** the end of the story!!!!

## ASSURANCE and HOPE

Paul also talks about the **Helmet of Salvation** in 1 Thessalonians:

- **1 Thessalonians 5:8-9** - But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a **helmet the hope of salvation**. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The author of Hebrews compares hope to an **anchor**, giving us the ability to weather the worst of storms (**Hebrews 6:18**).

Peter refers to this hope as a **living thing**—something that cannot decay or be defiled (**1 Peter 1:3-4**).

Unfortunately, we tend to miss out on the significance of these passages because of the way we use the word **“hope”**. The Biblical concept of hope is much more than just **“wishful thinking”**. It is a confident expectancy and the absolute assurance of the faithfulness of God.

- **Psalm 62:5-6** - Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. <sup>6</sup> He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
- **Habakkuk 3:17-19** - Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, <sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. <sup>19</sup> The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.
- **Jeremiah 29:11** - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
- **John 6:47** - I tell you the truth, he who believes **HAS** everlasting life.
- **Romans 15:4** - For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- **Romans 15:13** - Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Philippians 1:6** - 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.
- **1 John 5:13** - I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you **have** eternal life.

The **Helmet of Salvation** is the assurance that Jesus will carry our salvation to its full and complete fulfillment, which means we no longer live in fear – instead we live full and victorious lives.

- **Charles Trumbull {Victory in Christ - 87}** – As we trust Him, His victory in us is absolute.

## Wrapping Up

For the Christian, the promise of salvation – made possible by Jesus – never fades away. It represents stability in an unstable world. It provides protection in the worst of circumstances. It is an unshakeable, incorruptible, sturdy, defense against discouragement and doubt – it will deflect every blow of the enemy. Take up your helmet – wear it - focus on the living hope Jesus has provided – and stand firm.

- **Ellen White {R&H June 12, 1888}** - We should meditate upon the Scriptures, thinking soberly and candidly upon the things that pertain to our eternal salvation. The infinite mercy and love of Jesus, the sacrifice made in our behalf, call for most serious and solemn reflection. We should dwell upon the character of our dear Redeemer and Intercessor. We should seek to comprehend the meaning of the plan of salvation. We should meditate upon the mission of Him who came to save His people from their sins. By constantly contemplating heavenly themes, our faith and love will grow stronger.