



Spiritual warfare- Part 05

One thing I have noticed since this pandemic began is how often medical experts and government officials have used military language in speaking about our response to the threat of the Covid-19 virus. Several people have described this as a war.

While it is not a war against human enemy combatants, it is still a war just the same. Even though the enemy we are fighting is almost invisible and unseen, the attacks of the enemy are real. Real people are being seriously sickened and real people are dying each day.

In any war, we are using a variety of weapons or combative practices to fight this unseen enemy.

- Social distancing,
- maintaining 6 feet,
- washing hands with soap and water,
- hand sanitizer,
- wiping down and sanitizing door handles,
- eating healthy,
- appropriate medicines on hand,
- storing non-perishable foods,
- wearing a mask,
- Stay at home.

These are all indispensable practices to fighting and slowing down the spread of COVID-19 and thus “flattening the curve” of ever rising cases and outbreaks. All of these are important tools to maintain the health of the public and literally save lives.

As Christians, we too are at war.

Like the COVID-19 virus, our enemy cannot be seen but is everywhere, pervasive and insidious.

But unlike COVID-19, the stakes are much higher. For our enemy does not seek to take our life so much as our eternal soul. Paul describes the war and the enemy with which we Christians are engaged in detail in **Ephesians 6:10-17**.

Our enemy, the Tempter, seeks to undermine our faith and destroy our souls with his own weapons some of which are discouragement, depression, denial of Christ, fear, panic and hopelessness.

The Coronavirus pandemic provides the perfect opportunity for us to be susceptible to these spiritual attacks. But just as the WHO have offered us some weapons to combat the Coronavirus, Paul reminds us of the weapons and armour we Christians have at our disposal to stand up to and combat the enemy.

Let us to examine are the weapons and armour that Paul suggests so that we can be “strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”

What it means to put on the whole and complete armour of God?

I கொரிந்தியர் 16:13, விழித்திருங்கள், விசுவாசத்திலே நிலைத்திருங்கள், புருஷராயிருங்கள், திடன்கொள்ளுங்கள்

To which of the enemy’s weapons are you most susceptible?

- Discouragement,
- Depression,
- Denial of Christ,
- Fear,
- Panic,
- Hopelessness or
- something else?

Which of the pieces of armour, Paul suggests might be most helpful to you to withstand this attack?

How?

1. Truth – the Belt

எபேசியர் 6:14, சத்தியம் என்னும் கச்சையை உங்கள் அரையில் கட்டினவர்களாயும், நீதியென்னும் மார்க்கவசத்தைத் தரித்தவர்களாயும்;

Paul, begins his list of the panoply of the armour of God with the “belt of truth.”

The belt—known as the cingulum or balteus—played a crucial role in the effectiveness of a soldier’s armour. The belt that Paul’s talking about here is not meant to hold up a soldier’s pants.

A Roman soldier wore a loose and floppy shirt. It was called a “tunic.” The tunic was meant to be loose, so that when the soldier was marching, or exercising, or doing his daily work, he would not get too warm. But, if the soldier ever had to fight with someone, his loose and floppy tunic could get in the way. It could give his opponent something with which to pull him down. This is one reason why a Roman soldier wore a belt. The belt was also there to help provide protection.

The belt protected the mid- section, from the waist to the knees. Roman soldiers did not go into battle wearing leather skirts because it was fashionable. The leather and metal strips of the belt were for protection. The belt also kept the breastplate tight and secure around the soldier and kept it from banging against his chest when in battle, and the belt also held a sheath for his sword or dagger. So, if a soldier got rid of his belt, his breastplate would not be secure, his tunic would trip him up, his sword would drop to the ground. In short, he would not be much good in battle.



There is a reason Paul mentions the belt of truth first.

The belt was essential to help hold all the other pieces of armour together.

The Matthew Henry Commentary says that the belt “girds on [secures] all the other pieces of our armour.” Truth should cleave to us as a belt cleaves to our body. The belt of truth Paul mentions refers to the teaching of Scripture.

Jesus defined truth.

யோவான் 17:17, உம்முடைய சத்தியத்தினாலே அவர்களைப் பரிசுத்தமாக்கும்; உம்முடைய வசனமே சத்தியம்

As Christians we use the truth of Scripture to test all things.

*1தெசலோனிகேயர் 5:21, எல்லாவற்றையும் சோதித்துப்பார்த்து, நலமானதை ப்
பிடித்துக்கொள்ளுங்கள்.*

*நீதிமொழிகள் 3:3-4, கிருபையும் சத்தியமும் உன்னைவிட்டு விலகாதிருப்பதாக; நீ அவைகளை
உன் கழுத்திலே பூண்டு, அவைகளை உன் இருதயமாகிய பலகையில் எழுதிக்கொள். 4. அதினால்
தேவனுடைய பார்வையிலும் மனுஷருடைய பார்வையிலும் தயையும் நற்புத்தியும் பெறுவாய்.*
Therefore, we must immerse our minds in the Scriptures.

The teaching of Scripture has primacy over all the others. The truth of Scripture, embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus, is to be our guide and criterion for life.

To wrap the belt of truth around is to give Christ and his examples and teachings the final say in our lives, rather than our feelings, or our culture, or our comfort.

Jesus battled the enemy by quoting the Scriptures because Jesus is the very Word of God and the Scriptures all point to and find their meaning in him.

The belt of truth is indispensable because it's what holds all the pieces of the armour as well as the sword in place.

Prayer: Gracious God, help us to put on the belt of truth by being grounded in your Word as revealed in the Scriptures and the life and teachings of Jesus. May we learn and live in your word so that your Word might live through us in our world. In Jesus name. Amen.

Reflection:

What is it that has final say in your life?

Feelings?

Culture?

Other people?

Comfort?

Is Jesus' life and teachings the ultimate standard by which we determine what is truth in our world, in our life and in our circumstances?

What are some ways in which we can make Christ the final say in our life?

How specifically, would that change our current decision making and behaviour?

2. Righteousness – Breast plate

*எபேசியர் 6:14, சத்தியம் என்னும் கச்சையை உங்கள் அரையில் கட்டினவர்களாயும்,
நீதியென்னும் மார்க்கவசத்தைத் தரித்தவர்களாயும்;*

We are currently fighting a health battle against an unseen enemy called Covid-19.

While this enemy may be invisible to our eyes it is nonetheless real and is inflicting deadly damage to our economy, our society and most significantly to real people.

As Christians, we are also fighting an unseen enemy, the Tempter who Jesus confronted during his temptation. We too must confront this same enemy, but we must be spiritually equipped with what Paul calls “the armour of God” to be able to withstand his attacks. Each piece of this armour represents a part of God’s strength that God extends to us when we become God’s children.



The breastplate of righteousness is nothing else but Christ’s righteousness which he obtained for us through his death on the cross.

As the old gospel hymn so succinctly puts it,

“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus name”

The Scriptures clearly and consistently teach that it is God who is the source of our righteousness and not we ourselves.

எரேமியா 23:6, அவர் நாட்களில் யூதா இரட்சிக்கப்படும், இஸ்ரவேல் சுகமாய் வாசம்பண்ணும்; அவருக்கு இடும் நாமம் நமது நீதியாயிருக்கிற கர்த்தர் என்பதே.

யோபு 36:3, நான் தூரத்திலிருந்து என் ஞானத்தைக் கொண்டுவந்து, என்னை உண்டாக்கினவருடைய நீதியை விளங்கப்பண்ணுவேன்.

சங்கீதம் 5:8, கர்த்தாவே, என் சத்துருக்களினிமித்தம் என்னை உம்முடைய நீதியிலே நடத்தி, எனக்குமுன்பாக உம்முடைய வழியைச் செவ்வைப்படுத்தும்

சங்கீதம் 23:3, அவர் என் ஆத்துமாவைத் தேற்றி, தம்முடைய நாமத்தினிமித்தம் என்னை நீதியின் பாதைகளில் நடத்துகிறார்.

சங்கீதம் 24:5, அவன் கர்த்தரால் ஆசீர்வாதத்தையும், தன் இரட்சிப்பின் தேவனால் நீதியையும் பெறுவான்.

சங்கீதம் 71:16, கர்த்தராகிய ஆண்டவருடைய வல்லமையை முன்னிட்டு நடப்பேன்; உம்முடைய நீதியைப்பற்றியே மேன்மைபாராட்டுவேன்.

We are instructed to “put on” the armour of God, which implies that we do not automatically wear it all the time. Putting on the armour of God requires a conscious decision on our part. This means that we make a decision to acknowledge that there is nothing we can do apart from Christ, He is the only source for our righteousness.

யோவான் 15:6 ஒருவன் என்னில் நிலைத்திராவிட்டால், வெளியே எறியுண்ட கொடியைப்போல அவன் எறியுண்டு உலர்ந்து போவான்; அப்படிப்பட்டவைகளைச் சேர்த்து, அக்கினியிலே போடுகிறார்கள்; அவைகள் எரிந்துபோம்.

The belt of truth (teaching of scripture) holds firmly in place the breastplate of righteousness (our recognition that Jesus is our righteousness not we ourselves).

Recognizing this, prevents us from becoming a victim to pride, self-righteousness or legalism which are weapons the enemy uses to spiritually defeat and enslave us.

We need our breastplate of righteousness securely in place in order to overcome the attacks of our enemy, the Tempter.

When we “keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2), we keep our breastplate securely fastened.

Prayer: Gracious Father, we thank you for sending Jesus who is everything to us: our life, our truth, our righteousness. Help us to put on the breastplate of righteousness by consciously deciding each day to trust completely in Jesus and to focus our attention on his teachings and examples. We ask this in the name of Christ, our righteousness. Amen.

Reflection:

1. What is the breastplate of righteousness? Why is it so vital for our spiritual lives?
2. How can it protect us from pride, self-righteousness and legalism?
3. Are we daily putting on the breastplate of righteousness? How?
4. How do we secure in place the breastplate of righteousness and how can putting on the belt of truth help us do this?

3. Gospel of Peace – Shoes

எபேசியர் 6:15, சமாதானத்தின் சுவிசேஷத்திற்குரிய ஆயத்தம் என்னும் பாதரட்சையைக் கால்களிலே தொடுத்தவர்களாயும்;

The third piece Paul mentions that composes the armour of God is what he calls the [shoes] of the “readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”

We generally do not consider shoes as being a part of a soldier’s armour. But think about it. If soldiers do not have solid, comfortable shoes that will hold up on the field of battle, they will not be able to prevail.

Romans’ soldiers’ sandals were often fitted with nails or spikes to anchor securely to the ground. Similarly, to share the good news anchors us to the marching orders of our commander who commands us in the Great Commission.



மத்தேயு 28:18-20, அப்பொழுது இயேசு சமீபத்தில் வந்து, அவர்களை நோக்கி: வானத்திலும் பூமியிலும் சகல அதிகாரமும் எனக்குக் கொடுக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறது.¹⁹ ஆகையால், நீங்கள் புறப்பட்டுப்போய், சகல ஜாதிகளையும் சீஷராக்கி, பிதா குமாரன் பரிசுத்த ஆவியின் நாமத்திலே அவர்களுக்கு ஞானஸ்நானங்கொடுத்து,²⁰ நான் உங்களுக்குக் கட்டளையிட்ட யாவையும் அவர்கள் கைக்கொள்ளும்படி அவர்களுக்கு உபதேசம் பண்ணுங்கள்; இதோ, உலகத்தின் முடிவுபரியந்தம் சகல நாட்களிலும் நான் உங்களுடனேகூட இருக்கிறேன் என்றார். ஆமென்.

மாற்கு 16:15, பின்பு, அவர் அவர்களை நோக்கி: நீங்கள் உலகமெங்கும் போய், சர்வ சிருஷ்டிக்கும் சுவிசேஷத்தைப் பிரசங்கியுங்கள்

அப்போஸ்தலர் 1:8, பரிசுத்தஆவி உங்களிடத்தில் வரும்போது நீங்கள் பெலனடைந்து, எருசலேமிலும், யூதேயா முழுவதிலும், சமாரியாவிலும், பூமியின் கடைசிபரியந்தமும், எனக்குச் சாட்சிகளாயிருப்பீர்கள் என்றார்.

But what do shoes have to do with the gospel of peace?

To answer this question, we have to understand what “gospel of peace” means. The word “gospel” “*euaggellion*” means “good news.”

The word peace, “*eirene*” means not only “peace,” but also “wholeness” and “salvation.” It has a similar meaning with the Hebrew word “shalom.”

The gospel of peace is none other than the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

To put on the shoes of the gospel of peace means being ready and eager to find opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others.

I பேதுரு 3:15, கர்த்தராகிய தேவனை உங்கள் இருதயங்களில் பரிசுத்தம்பண்ணுங்கள்; உங்களிலிருக்கிற நம்பிக்கையைக்குறித்து உங்களிடத்தில் விசாரித்துக் கேட்கிற யாவருக்கும் சாந்தத்தோடும் வணக்கத்தோடும் உத்தரவுசொல்ல எப்பொழுதும் ஆயத்தமாயிருங்கள்.

As Christians, we are called to share the good news of Jesus Christ with other people. Having our shoes fitted with the gospel of peace allows us to carry out our commander's orders in sharing the good news with others. The shoes of peace then equip us to fight for Christ in the spiritual battles we have with the enemy.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, fit us with the shoes of the Gospel of Peace so that we might be effective soldiers to spread Your Gospel, the good news to all who need to hear it. Amen.

Reflection:

1. Why is the story of Jesus good news?
2. It may be easier to answer the first question by answering this question: How has the good news about Jesus been good news for your life?
3. How would you explain this "good news" to someone who knew nothing about Jesus?
4. What opportunities do you have each day to share the good news of Jesus with others by words and actions?

4. Faith – Shield

எபேசியர் 6:16, பொல்லாங்கன் எய்யும் அக்கினியாஸ்திரங்களையெல்லாம் அவித்துப்போடத்தக்கதாய், எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் மேலாக விசுவாசமென்னும் கேடகத்தைப் பிடித்துக்கொண்டவர்களாயும் நில்லுங்கள்.

Paul mentions as a part of the armour of God is the shield of faith.

In the Greek, the first words of the verse can be translated, "Above all," or "most importantly, take up the shield of faith..."

The shield of faith is different from the rest of the armour. While the soldier wears the other pieces of armour:

the belt of truth,
the breastplate of righteousness,
the shoes of the gospel of peace,
the shield of faith is not worn.
It must be taken up!

The soldier had to make a conscious decision to pick up the shield and use it. The shield was a very important part of a Roman soldier's battle equipment.

The Roman shield was called the **scutum**. It was a very large, slightly curved rectangular shield that held in its centre a large metal knob called a boss. The scutum was an impressive line of defence.



Because of its great size (some were three and a half feet tall and almost three feet wide), soldiers were provided with great protection from their enemies. The scutum had a defensive and a limited offensive function. Defensively, the slight curve of the shield deflected attacks without transferring the full force of the assault to the man holding the shield. The metal knob or boss in the centre could also be used defensively to deflect the worst blows of an opponent. But it could also be used offensively as a weapon to knock an opponent backwards.

The primary purpose of the shield was to deflect attacks. The enemy is always hurling fiery darts of fear, doubt and worry in our direction, but the only time they can hit us is when we let our shield of faith down—when we stop believing that God is in control; that God is working everything out for our good. Our God who loves us in Christ will have the ultimate victory, however little it seems to be that way. So, the shield of faith is vital in protecting us from these attacks.

From where does this shield come?

It is important to understand that the source for the shield of faith does not originate with us anymore than the other parts of the armour of God. It is God's armour.

But it is God's armour given and fitted to us. The shield is provided by God. It is a supernatural gift imparted by God's unmerited grace.

எபேசியர் 2:8-9, கிருபையினாலே விசுவாசத்தைக்கொண்டு இரட்சிக்கப்பட்டீர்கள்; இது உங்களால் உண்டானதல்ல, இது தேவனுடைய ஈவு; 9. ஒருவரும் பெருமைபாராட்டாதபடிக்கு இது கிரியைகளினால் உண்டானதல்ல;

We do not work up faith by ourselves. It is not something we can ourselves to do. It is a gift given to us by the grace of Christ. And it can be a shield to protect us from attacks of doubt, fear and worry.

All we need do is ask for it!

Like the man who had the son with an unclean spirit begged of Jesus, *“Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief!”*

The shield of faith is a gift of God.

If we would stand up against the attacks of the enemy, we must take up the shield of faith that God offers us in Christ.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to take up the shield of faith so that we might repel the fiery attacks of the enemy who flings arrows of fear, doubt and worry any chance he can get. Arm us with the shield of faith today that we may be able to extinguish his arrows and spread your Gospel to those who need to hear it. Help us in our fear and doubt to trust in your Son Jesus’ goodness, graciousness, and protection. In Jesus name. Amen.

Reflection:

1. How can trusting completely in Christ shield you from the attacks of doubt and fear?
2. What happens when we lower our shield of faith when we are facing a frightening or threatening situation?
3. Is faith something we work up mentally in our thinking or is it a gift we receive freely by God’s grace for the asking?
4. Are there times when you may have lowered or even dropped your faith shield? What happened when you did?
5. Paul tells us “to take up” or in the Greek “take in your hands” the shield of faith. What does this imply we need to do when God offers it to us?
6. Are we making a conscious decision each day to arm ourselves with complete faith and trust in Christ? If not, why not?

5. Salvation – Helmet

எபேசியர் 6:17, இரட்சணியமென்னும் தலைச்சீராவையும், தேவவசனமாகிய ஆவியின் பட்டயத்தையும் எடுத்துக்கொள்ளுங்கள்.

Helmets are vital in protecting the head from serious injuries.

I used to be a bike rider and never ride my bike without a helmet. Many people have been killed with head trauma when they meet with an accident.

Helmets are vital in protecting our head from injury. Imagine how much more they are needed in time of battle!

The Roman helmet, like helmets today, protected the head from the attacks of the enemy. The helmet of salvation protects us spiritually from a powerful attack against our mind from the enemy. Without the helmet, we leave ourselves exposed on the spiritual battlefield.



So, what is this helmet of salvation Paul tells us we are to put on?

It is none other than our hope and confidence that we are saved through Christ.

Our trust is not in ourselves or what we have done but in what Jesus has already done for us by dying for us on the cross and being raised by God in the resurrection.

This confidence protects us from doubt and other of the weapons enemies which would weaken us when we face adversity or calamity.

I தெசலோனிக் கேயர் 5:8, பகலுக்குரியவர்களாகிய நாமோ தெளிந்தவர்களாயிருந்து, விசுவாசம் அன்பு என்னும் மார்க்கவசத்தையும், இரட்சிப்பின் நம்பிக்கையென்னும் தலைச்சீராவையும் தரித்துக்கொண்டிருக்கக்கடவோம்.

It is our firm hope and confidence in what Jesus has done for us that gives us courage and boldness to face our challenges, whatever they may be unafraid.

The helmet of salvation also protects us from sinful and selfish thoughts that would draw us away from Christ. As Christians, we are not to be controlled by worldly values.

ரோமர் 12:2, நீங்கள் இந்தப் பிரபஞ்சத்திற்கு ஒத்த வேஷந்தரியாமல், தேவனுடைய நன்மையும் பிரியமும் பரிபூரணமுமான சித்தம் இன்னதென்று பகுத்தறியத்தக்கதாக, உங்கள் மனம் புதிதாகிறதினாலே மறுபுறமாகுங்கள்.

When we put on the helmet of salvation, we can avoid sinful thoughts and understand what is good and true.

When we forget to do this, we are susceptible to thoughts that are planted in us by the enemy, who seeks to harm our walk with Christ.

We are to keep our thoughts under the guidance and direction of Christ.

II கொரிந்தியர் 10:5 இதற்கு நம்மை ஆயத்தப்படுத்துகிறவர் தேவனே; ஆவியென்னும் அச்சாரத்தை நமக்குத் தந்தவரும் அவரே.

The helmet of salvation as well as the rest of the armour is “putting on Christ.”

This helmet of salvation protects us from thoughts and inclinations which would draw us away from Christ. But we must consciously put it on every day to protect our minds. We must put on the helmet of salvation in our daily lives so that we may be confident in Christ.

In order to keep it secured, we must daily, consciously submit to His ways. When God is on our side, there is no battle we cannot face in this world.

Prayer: Almighty God, salvation comes through your Son Jesus alone. Please grant us the assurance that we are your children, saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone and by nothing we have done. Help us to renew our minds. Purge any thoughts that are not holy or true and equip us for spiritual warfare. Remove any doubts that may cloud our minds and help us to keep our minds on heavenly things and values, even amidst the worries of this present pandemic. We love you Lord, and trust in you today and every day. Amen.

Reflection:

1. Why does Paul describe the helmet as the helmet of salvation? Whose salvation is being referred to here?
2. How does our faith in Jesus and his atoning work of salvation for us (the helmet of salvation) give us confidence to face trials and threats unafraid?
3. Besides strengthening our courage to face trials and threats and protecting us from fear and worry what else does the helmet of salvation protect our minds from?
4. How can daily putting on the helmet of salvation strengthen you in the midst of this pandemic threat?

6. Word of God – Sword

எபேசியர் 6:17, இரட்சணியமென்னும் தலைச்சீராவையும், தேவவசனமாகிய ஆவியின் பட்டயத்தையும் எடுத்துக்கொள்ளுங்கள்.

We come across the final piece of the armour of God that Paul says the Christian must be equipped with for spiritual warfare, the sword of the Spirit.

Unlike the other pieces of armour Paul mentions which are defensive in nature such as the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of preparation of the gospel of peace and the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit is offensive in nature.



It is not just armour.

It is a weapon with which to attack the enemy.

You might recall when Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, he fought the tempter by quoting the Word of God. The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

எபிரெயர் 4:12, தேவனுடைய வார்த்தையானது ஜீவனும் வல்லமையும் உள்ளதாயும், இருபுறமும் கருக்குள்ள எந்தப் பட்டயத்திலும் கருக்கானதாயும், ஆத்துமாவையும் ஆவியையும், கணுக்களையும் ஊனையும் பிரிக்கத்தக்கதாக உருவக் குத்துகிறதாயும், இருதயத்தின் நினைவுகளையும் யோசனைகளையும் வகையறுக்கிறதாயும் இருக்கிறது

The sword of the Spirit has the power to trample any objections to Christianity posed by the enemy.

A single text can reassure us when the enemy attacks us with heavy blows. But we must be well trained to use the sword and use it responsibly. This means when we wield the sword or utilize Scripture, we must place it within its original context so we don't misuse it by proof-texting.

II தீமோத்தேயு 2:15, நீ வெட்கப்படாத ஊழியக்காரனாயும் சத்திய வசனத்தை நிதானமாய்ப் பகுத்துப் போதிக்கிறவனாயும் உன்னை தேவனுக்கு முன்பாக உத்தமனாக நிறுத்தும்படி ஜாக்கிரதையாயிரு.

We must learn all we can about the Sword by reading the Word frequently and use commentaries to better understand its message and apply it to our daily lives.

We should ask God to reveal God's self to us through the Word. While God's Word is perfect, our understanding of it is imperfect and fallible. We need the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand and correctly interpret it. Therefore, it is called the Sword of the Spirit.

Only the Holy Spirit can teach us how to rightly understand and interpret the Sword or Word of God since the Spirit inspired the writing of Scripture and the Word and the Spirit are one with the Father.

Reflection:

1. How does the sword of the Spirit differ from the other parts of the Armor of God?
2. What is the sword of the Spirit and why is it so effective a weapon against the enemy?
3. How adept are you in using the Sword of the Spirit?
4. What are some ways in which you can train yourself in better using it? Are you using these methods daily to improve your sword wielding skills? If not, why not?

In conclusion, we need to daily put on all the armour of God to equip us for spiritual battle, the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of preparation of the gospel of peace, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit.

We consciously array ourselves in this armour through prayer. We ask through prayer to equip us with God's armour and God spiritually equips us with it when we ask in faith.

May we equip ourselves for the spiritual battles we will surely face in the days ahead!

Prayer: Lord of the Heavenly Armies, equip us with the sword of the Spirit. Make us ever ready to witness to others the hope that we have within us. Whenever the enemy attacks us with doubt or twists Scripture, teach and remind us what your Word truly says. As we study your Word, help us to understand the original context of the passage, so we will not distort the meaning through our personal biases. Through Your Spirit, reveal the meaning of your Word and how it applies to our lives this day. Most importantly, never let us forget to carry the sword of the Spirit, which is your Word. This we pray in the name of Jesus, the True Word of God. Amen.