



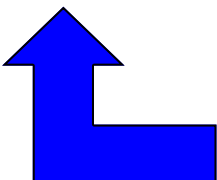
THE WORD FOR TODAY



Ephesus in the first century A.D. was a cosmopolitan city with Greeks, Romans and other nationalities mixing in an open society. There was a Temple to the Roman Goddess Diana. It was not an easy place to be a Christian, and Paul wanted to encourage the small church there and to help them live Christian lives. “The Armour of God” is an interesting passage in Paul’s Letter which has prompted much dressing up for the young people over the years!

But why are we talking about “armour” as if we were fighting a war, when God is all about peace? We cannot ignore the evil which is all around us in the world today. We need some defence against it so that we are not damaged or corrupted, and we also need something which will enable us to confront and challenge some of that evil. Paul highlights what is there for us.

Follow the words of this passage round the church, beginning on the north wall of this little building. We are using the New International Version of the Bible, which you can find on the internet under Bible Gateway, and the whole “Word for Today” is on the church website, which is www.libertonkirk.net You can also find meditations on other Bible passages in previous “Words for Today” which can be accessed through the website.



Turn immediately left to find the first verse of the Bible passage on the bench

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

1

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”



Evil forces are at work in our world, and the corruption, violence, disregard for human life and cruelty we encounter every day in the news can be depressing. We can at times find it overwhelming, because we feel powerless against it. That’s when something more than a strong cup of coffee is required!

That’s when we need to remember just how mighty God is. He is bigger and stronger than the worst evil there can be, and he is the God who cares for each of us, his children! Hold on to that!

***Lord, your creation all around us shouts out your glory.
Your son’s resurrection showed that evil and death can be overcome.
You are our God, our loving Father,
and we would draw our strength from you.***

(No. 2 is on the bench facing us at the corner of the church building)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

2



As we read on we will be reminded of everything that God provides for us to withstand and to deal with the evil in the world. It is all there for us, but we have to be willing to take it—to put this armour on. There are temptations all around us, and we need to be ready.

Putting on a suit of armour was hard work, and putting on God’s armour does involve some effort. We need to get to know our God and find out what he can mean in our lives—what a difference he can make. Then we will understand better how this can help us to cope with the world around us.

***Lord, help me to know you better.
Help me to give you the attention you deserve.
Show me what a difference knowing you can make in my life.***

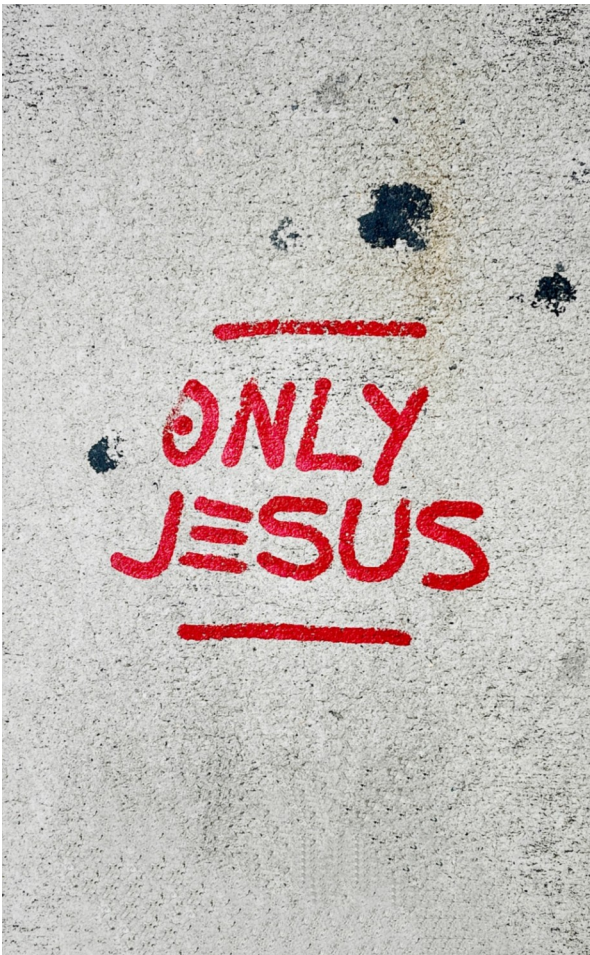
(Turn round the side of the church to find No. 3)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place . . . ”

3



Belts and breastplates (more likely to be bullet-proof vests these days) are all about security. Nobody wants their trousers to fall down, and still less do they want to be killed. How can we feel secure in what we know? What is the truth? What is the right course of action?

Jesus once said to his disciple Thomas *“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life”*. The only way we can be sure of the truth and what is right is by looking at Jesus. When you wonder what to do, ask yourself *“What would Jesus do?”* First, you need to get to know him!

***Lord Jesus, I want to feel secure—to be sure.
Help me to get to know you and your teaching.
Show me the way and the truth and the life.***

(No. 4 is further along this side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“ . . . and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”

4



We all crave for peace. Jesus said to his disciples just before his death *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you”*. For anyone who believes in him, that peace is something which is deep inside, and which no disturbance of this world can disrupt.

That is good news, which is what “gospel” means. So good that it needs to be passed on to a world longing for peace between nations, in communities and in families and daily lives.

*Lord, thank you for the peace knowing you gives me.
Help me to live out that peace in all I do and say.
Help me to encourage others to know your peace too.*

(Walk along the back of the church and turn left to find No. 5)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”

5



Having faith in God makes such a difference to life! How is that a shield against evil? It means that we're sure of God's presence with us all the time, we're sure of his love and care for us, and we're sure of his almighty power. Faith grows as we grow nearer to God through prayer and through reading and studying the Bible and talking with other Christians.

***Lord, bring me closer to you every day.
Let me know your presence.
Deepen my faith and shield me from harm.***

(No. 6 is at the other side of the church tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

6



Knowing that we are forgiven and restored as children of God is something which definitely keeps our heads in the right place. Whatever is thrown at us we can cope because we have that knowledge that we have been saved.

And what about the word of God, described in the Letter to the Hebrews in the Bible as *“sharper than any double-edged sword”*? The more we read it and study it the more we understand its power and its truth.

***Lord, I rejoice in the salvation you offer me.
Help me to know your word better day by day,
so that I can challenge with the truth those with evil intent.***

(Turn left to find No. 7 at the front of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

7



Prayer is such a powerful thing—to know you are prayed for can be such a comfort. Paul urges us to pray *“on all occasions”*, and reminds us that God’s Holy Spirit will always be there to help and guide.

Whether we pray for ourselves or for others, God will hear and respond. Be encouraged to take *“all kinds of prayers and requests”* to him—he loves to hear from his people!

***Lord, help me through your Spirit to come to you in prayer.
Surround me with your listening presence.
Let me not be afraid to voice my deepest concerns.***

(There is hand sanitiser in the Offering House by the gate if you would like to use it.)

If anything you have read has prompted questions you would like to discuss, please contact John Young on 664 3067 or jyoung@churchofscotland.org.uk



THE WORD FOR TODAY

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