

Session 4: The Armory

Keep this sheet. It is yours, and it is private.

WHAT WE FOUND

God does not send his soldiers to war in their own clothes. “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” (Ephesians 6:10) is received strength, and the armor is issued, piece by piece: truth against the fog, righteousness over the accused heart, the gospel of peace for footing, faith to quench the burning sentences, salvation guarding the mind, and one weapon only: the sword of the Spirit, the Word: in a war against lies, the only offensive weapon is truth. And verse 12 retargeted years of misdirected fire: “we are not contending against flesh and blood”: the people who hurt us were, at worst, occupied territory; the enemy is the occupier.

Then the discovery that resolved a thread we have carried since week one: Isaiah saw God himself put on the heart of this armor: “He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head” (Isaiah 59:17). We are issued our Champion’s own kit: it has never lost. And the enemy’s armor, “the armor in which he trusted” (Luke 11:22)? The study’s synthesis, drawn from Session 3’s inventory with Colossians 2:15: his trusted armor is best read as the lie, and it failed at the cross. His armor taken; ours issued. Prayer (v. 18) is the supply line that keeps it all coming.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. John Chrysostom

Homilies on Ephesians

St. John Chrysostom teaches, in substance, that Paul’s armor is campaign issue, not ceremony: each piece has its function, the whole kit is meant to be worn, and the soldier of Christ lives in constant readiness. (As this study puts it: a man armored everywhere but the head is a casualty waiting for his wound.)

A summary of his preaching on the passage; not a direct quotation.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Patrick

The Lorica (“St. Patrick’s Breastplate”)

The great battle-prayer long attributed to St. Patrick arms the Christian with a Person: “Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left.” The armor of God, worn, turns out to be Christ himself put on.

Attribution to St. Patrick is traditional rather than certain; quoted from the commonly received English text.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH St. Alphonsus Liguori

Prayer, the Great Means of Salvation and of Perfection

St. Alphonsus teaches, in substance and with famous bluntness, that prayer is the great and necessary means: in his celebrated axiom, the one who prays is certainly saved, and the one who does not pray is certainly lost, for God ordinarily grants his help through our asking. And therefore (the siege image is ours) the enemy’s first objective is to talk the garrison out of praying.

A close summary of his celebrated teaching; not a verbatim quotation.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- **Suit up daily.** Each morning, pray the armor on in your own words, thirty seconds, ending with your countersword verse: the sword goes in the hand, not the scabbard.
- **Learn the Lorica.** Pray “Christ with me, Christ before me...” once a day, slowly. Own it from memory by Sunday.
- **Fund the supply line.** Put five minutes of prayer in the hour your prayer usually dies, and intercede by name for one person who fights beside you.
- **Bring your sealed sheet next session.** The Wall opens: alone, in silence, before the Lord.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Ephesians 6:11

Before next session: Read John 20:19-23 and John 6:53-58. And bring your sealed sheet.

From the Catechism: CCC 2725; 1303; 1808.