

**Sept 12th 2010: Armour of God series: The Priceless Helmet:
Ephesians 6:10-20**

One of my grandsons is very much into pirates at present and both he and his brother have this thing about treasure and treasure chests. In fact, the other day they were staying with us and I happened to come across the youngest walking out of our room with a small decorated box containing Judy's bracelets and necklaces and other things. When I asked him what he was carrying he said, with the biggest smile on his face, I've found a treasure chest!

That desire to someday find treasure is, I believe, inherent in most of us. Whether that treasure is something really valuable that we discover by chance in an op shop or garage sale; or winning the lotto; or buying one day that item you always dreamed of owning; or digging up a fortune in your own back yard—most of us recognize the day dream of finding treasure.

Jesus knew that the people around Him also at times dreamed of finding treasure, and he told a parable about finding treasure in order to illustrate the priceless-ness of salvation. Turn with me to Matt 13:44(The Message)

"God's kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field for years and then accidentally found by a trespasser. The finder is ecstatic—what a find!—and proceeds to sell everything he owns to raise money and buy that field."

To gain God's kingdom is to gain the inheritance that belongs to those whom God adopts as His children. It is just a part of the amazing gift of salvation. It is just a little of that great hope or assurance that everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus has for keeps. Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:3-5

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

There is no treasure that the world can ever offer, that can match this treasure that we have received through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Yet unfortunately, we allow ourselves at times to forget how priceless our

salvation is, and how thrilled the evil one must be when he sees that happening. For when professing Christians devalue their salvation the cause of Jesus on earth begins to suffer immensely.

The enthusiasm for Christ and the things of Christ wanes first. Then other things—earthly things that fade and fail—take priority over the things of God. And especially the desire that was once so strong → to worship, to meet with God's people, to grow in our knowledge of Him and our expression of His love to others, → becomes a duty that we do. Criticism replaces praise, and apathy replaces service.

We all know such a tendency lies in us. What we don't always recognize is that such a tendency is encouraged in us by the devil. If you are feeling that way then be aware that such is the impact of the fiery arrows of spiritual warfare. He attacks the way you think and also the way you feel.

Paul was most aware of this when he was listing the spiritual armour, and when he focused on the protection we need for our thinking, he made reference to the helmet of salvation. Ephesians 6:17

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

The word "helmet" carries a very descriptive meaning. In the original, it means "circle the head." And that's how the helmet functioned. It encircled the soldier's entire head (except for the face, of course) preventing injury to that vital part of the body.

In a spiritual sense that protection is not just against the savage blow that would cause terminal injury, but protection against those thoughts that might otherwise cause us to consider giving up our faith, or taking it too lightly.

So this helmet it is a very important part of the armour and when Paul says 'take the helmet' he uses a different word for take than he has used before. The word here signifies taking as a gift. Accepting something from another.

The helmet of salvation is God's gift to us. It is the treasure that we accept by faith and then hold on to, and value forever.

G.C. Findlay writes in his commentary of Ephesians way back in 1892(p 420)

"The warrior's head rising above his shield was frequently open to attack. The arrow might shoot over the shield's edge, and inflict a mortal blow. Our faith, at the best, has its deficiencies and its limits; but God's salvation reaches beyond our highest confidence in Him. His overshadowing presence is the crown of our salvation, His love its shining crest."

In other words the treasure which is our Salvation is the presence of Jesus in our lives. God has made us His own and sealed us by the Spirit that dwells within every believer. The helmet is our awareness of how precious this is. It is priceless. What we have received through accepting Jesus as Saviour is so incredible. It not only prevents us from being slaughtered by the enemy of souls but it guarantees us an inheritance that will never fade away.

We originally took that helmet of salvation when we said 'yes' to Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. That's when His joy filled our hearts and we were so thrilled with the fact that He was our Saviour, our brother, our friend.

But says Paul, there's a real need to accept that helmet anew everyday. Otherwise we will forget how glorious it is to be loved by God. Forget all we have in Him and be vulnerable to the attacks of the one whose aim is to make us happy to be less than what Jesus wants us to be. To make us doubt that what we have in Christ is worth suffering for: Is worth being different for. Is worth making a stand for. Is worth being pure, unselfish, sacrificial for. Is worth dying for.

In the Old Testament there is a great story of three Jewish men who proudly wore the helmet of Salvation. They were Jews who believed that God had chosen them as His people, and although at that time they were suffering as captives in a pagan land they still stayed true to Him. Then came the day when they were asked to devalue their faith. To walk in the way of everybody else and to worship another. If they didn't they would die in a fiery furnace.

Can you imagine the thoughts that the evil one would have bombarded them with. "Your God has forgotten you. What He gives you is not worth dying for. You can still be a believer even if you do relax your standards. Everyone else manages without being over the top with their commitment, why shouldn't you?"

The fiery darts of the evil one. But they had the helmet of salvation. They knew that having Jehovah as their God was a priceless thing. So this is how they responded to the threat of death by burning:-

Daniel 3:16-18

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

The end of the story is that they were thrown in the furnace yet were miraculously preserved. And the pagan king saw, not three men walking in the flames but four, and he described the fourth as being like a son of the gods.

They wore the helmet of Salvation in the sense that they valued God's commitment to them and their response to Him so highly, that being true to Him came first before anything else.

That's what taking the helmet of salvation should also mean for us. Valuing the treasure we have received in Christ, which is the salvation of our souls, so highly, that in all we do and say, being true to Him comes first before anything else.