

Helmet of Salvation (Wear it to Thanksgiving Dinner)

Ephesians 6:10-17

8 on the topic of “spiritual warfare” and #39 in our ongoing series from Paul’s letter to the Ephesians

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So how was Thanksgiving dinner? Did you thank God for the “bountiful harvest of this earth?” Did you enjoy friends and family?

Clip from *Talladega Nights*

Ricky: *Dear Lord Baby Jesus, or as our brothers to the south call you, Jesús, we thank you so much for this bountiful harvest of Domino’s, KFC, and the always delicious Taco Bell. I just want to take time to say thank you for my family, my two beautiful, beautiful, handsome, striking sons, Walker and Texas Ranger, or T.R. as we call him, and of course, my red-hot smoking wife, Carley who is a stone-cold fox. Also wanna thank you for my best friend and teammate, Cal Naughton Jr. who’s got my back no matter what.*

Cal: *Shake and Bake.*

Ricky: *Dear Lord Baby Jesus, we also thank you for my wife’s father, Chip. We hope that you can use your Baby Jesus powers to heal him and his horrible leg. And it smells terrible and the dogs are always bothering with it. Dear tiny, infant Jesus, we....*

Carley: *Hey, you know, sweetie, Jesus did grow up. You don’t always have to call him “baby.” It’s a bit odd and off-putting to pray to a baby.*

Ricky: *Well, I like the Christmas Jesus best and I’m saying grace. When you say grace you can say it to grownup Jesus, or teenage Jesus, or bearded Jesus or whoever you want.*

Carley: *You know what I want? I want you to do this grace good so that God will let us win tomorrow.*

Ricky: *Dear tiny Jesus, in your golden-fleece diapers, with your tiny, little, fat, balled-up fists....*

Chip: *He was a man! He had a beard!*

Ricky: *Look, I like the baby version the best, do you hear me? I win the races and I get the money.*

Carley: *Ricky, finish the damn grace.*

Cal: *I like to picture Jesus in a tuxedo T shirt, cause it says, like, “I wanna be formal, but I’m here to party, too.” Cause I like to party, so I like my Jesus to party.*

Walker: *I like to picture Jesus as a ninja fighting off evil samurai.*

Cal: *I like to think of Jesus, like, with giant eagle’s wings. And singing lead vocals for Lynyrd Skynyrd, with, like, a angel band. And I’m in the front row, and I’m hammered drunk.*

Carley: *Hey Cal, why don’t you just shut up?*

Cal: *Yes, ma’am.*

Ricky: *Okay. Dear 8 pound, 6 ounce newborn infant Jesus, don’t even know a word yet, just a little infant and so cuddly, but still omnipotent, we just thank you for all the races I’ve won and the 21.2 million dollars – woo! (the rest of the family says “woo” too) – love that money!*

Close your eyes, and keep them closed. Just picture the people at the table on Thanksgiving. (Maybe you were alone...if so, picture the people you *wanted* to be there on Thanksgiving.) Picture the people at the table on past Thanksgivings: Father, mother, brothers, sisters, husband, wife, ex-wife, enabler, abuser, black sheep.

There was a wonderful girl in my old youth group. Thanksgiving day, her father excused himself from the table and shot himself in the bathroom. My guess is that there is an awful lot of pain associated with that table. In fact, your greatest fears are associated with the people at that table. You're really not that afraid of terrorist attack or deranged mass murderers. You are afraid of what the people at that table have done or might do. And you're one of them at that table.

Why is that table so painful and so frightening?

You know, Heaven is a table. It's a great banqueting table. Do you still want to go?

Prayer

Let's pray. Lord God, I just dug up some thanksgiving, and joy, and sorrow, and pain, and fear, and we need you to save us. Preach your Word Lord God, and bring salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Message

Ephesians 6:10-17

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all (circumstances) take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil on, and take the helmet of salvation.

Today, we're talking about the helmet of salvation. A helmet protects your mind—the way you think. Salvation is *Soterion* in Greek. In Hebrew, it is actually *Yahashuwah*. It can be translated deliver, rescue, or help. In scripture, people get saved from all sorts of things: Egyptians, oppression, storms, sickness, demonic oppression...

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul talks about a guy getting saved but not from the devil, rather with the devil.

1 Corinthians 5:5

You are to deliver this man (who didn't repent) to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

As if the Lord even uses the *devil* to save!

In the gospels, the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and says, "You will bear a son and name him *Yeshua*." It means "God is salvation," in English we say Jesus. The angel says, "You will bear a son and name him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins." Notice that he didn't say, "save his people from *punishment* for their sins." And here's a problem: I rather like my sins, and maybe that's the heart of sin. Sin is refusing Love and remaining alone.

In Romans, Paul writes that God in Christ: "*Condemned sin in the flesh*." And we just read about "destruction of a man's flesh so his spirit could be saved." So, what's wrong with my flesh? Well, it's not very good at love. In other words, this body of mine only tastes its own turkey and mashed

potatoes. It only feels its own pleasure and its own pain...except of course with people I'm learning to love. So I kind of enjoy my family enjoying their turkey.

We're a bit like one body, a communion. Paul says, "*There is one body and Father of all.*" So sometimes I feel their pleasure and their pain. So it can really hurt to love and yet, refusing love is sin. Sin is like leaving the table and eating the bread and wine all alone.

Well, Jesus came to save us from our sins, and according to Paul, we're already dead in our sins. So in Romans, Paul cries out, "*Who will deliver me from this body of death?*" Well, Jesus saves us from sin, flesh, and death (that's Hades,) and one more thing: "the wrath of God." So people wonder: "Does God not love us? Do we need to be saved from God?"

So, what is the helmet of salvation? Well, in Ephesians 6, Paul is clearly quoting Isaiah 59. And now get this, when Isaiah mentions "the helmet of salvation," I don't think he's just talking about our salvation. He's talking about Someone else's salvation.

Isaiah 59:15-16

The Lord saw that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man (no iysh) and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation—Yasha.

Did you catch that? His own arm brought Him salvation.
Almost like God got saved...BY God!

and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; (literally a helmet of Yashuwah.)

God saw that there was no justice, and His own arm brought Him salvation.

Well...What could God possibly be saved from?

What could hurt God?

Well...What hurts you at Thanksgiving dinner?

...Because Heaven is a dinner, an eternal holiday—a holy day—a Jubilee!

Who has power to hurt you?

It's not terrorists or mass murderers..is it?

It's the people at Thanksgiving dinner...

They have the power because you've given them that power...

And that power is called love.

I had Thanksgiving dinner with my wife and children. I gave my wife power to hurt me by entering into a covenant, and God made a covenant with you. I gave my children that power to hurt me by choosing to create them in my own image.

You see, terrorists and mass murderers only have power to hurt my body—my flesh, but my wife and kids (the people I love) have power to break my heart and nail it to a tree. Only *they* have power to truly make me angry (That's called wrath.)

You see, if my kids committed some sin, I feel the pain of that sin...even though I didn't commit the sin. If my kids are cursed...then I'm cursed. If they need salvation...It's like I need salvation. If my bride is lost...then I feel lost because she's my body; a head needs a body.

Well, it's the people I love that have the power to hurt me. Because I love them so, I earnestly want them to love me so. In other words, I want justice and need to be saved from injustice: "*Yahweh saw there was no justice and his own arm brought him salvation.*" It's the people I love that have the power to hurt me. Only they can make me truly angry, and that's called wrath.

If a terrorist called from Afghanistan and said, "I hate you, and I wish you were dead," it wouldn't hurt, and I wouldn't even get angry. But if my son were to call from college and say, "I hate you, and I wish you were dead," well, I could not even begin to describe the sorrow and pain, the passion, the anger, the depth of emotion. It would be as if he nailed my heart to a tree.

You know, I don't think the devil has the power to nail Jesus to a tree...but you do...and you did: "*Jesus from the bosom of the Father...*" God gave you that power. He must love you a lot!

Well you see, if the people I love are not saved...I'm not saved. Even if (especially if) I'm angry at them. I cannot rest. I need salvation. I need the anger resolved in order to enter rest—Sabbath rest. In Revelation 15:1 at the seventh bowl of wrath: "*The wrath of God is finished*"—it is finished, and God rests.

And you see, maybe God *does* need to be saved.
Because you need to be saved.
Because you are His bride—you are His body.
He needs to be saved from the pain of an unfaithful bride.
He needs to be saved from Himself for He is Love.
So, as long as His children remain in sin...He suffers His passion.

Someone needs to bring *Yahweh* salvation.
He is Love

Love is Just

He is Love and He is Just.

And that's the drama of the whole Old Testament: Who's going to save *Yahweh* from Himself? (It's a bit shocking when you see it.)

He loves Adam and Eve, but He said, "*The day you eat of it, you will surely die.*"

Well, if they die, does He die? He loves them! He loves humanity but according to Genesis 6:6, it grieves His heart that He made them, so He floods the earth, but lets one get away. It's like He can't help Himself. He's addicted; He's addicted to you! And He chooses Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who becomes Israel, and it's just agony for *Yahweh*.

He just longs to be with His people, but if He's with them He's afraid He'll destroy them. He's like a VOLCANO in love with a snowflake. He longs to be with Israel but He needs all this protective gear: a tabernacle, a sanctuary, a sacrificial system, so He doesn't: "*break out against them.*"

Read Isaiah or any of the prophets and you'll see it. He's madly in love with Israel, yet He vows to destroy Israel. Yet, He vows to make her his body and bride. See? *Yahweh* needs help! He wants to kiss His children and kill His children all at once. He needs help. It's like He's fixing up a massive Thanksgiving dinner, and you're invited, and that's the problem.

He is Love, and He is justice all at once, and that just spells a whole lot of pain, and that's why you feel so ambivalent about Thanksgiving dinner. That's why you're tempted to skip Thanksgiving dinner. That's why you're tempted to skip the Great Banquet. That's why you're tempted to sin. That's why you're tempted to give up on love or justice.

You're tempted to choose between love & justice as if they were two different & opposite things.
You're tempted to tolerate or separate.

You're tempted to love without justice or tempted to be just without love.

You're tempted to love some people but give up on the idea that they'll love as they've been loved.

Or, you're tempted to judge some people and separate your heart from those people.

You're tempted to tolerate some and separate from others.

You are tempted to excuse some and condemn others...but...*forgive* none.

If you always tolerate and separate, you never forgive.

Well love without justice isn't love, and justice without love isn't justice.

In the 5th century AD, some Roman theologians began separating God's love and God's justice, as if they were opposite things and not the same thing. So justice wasn't the fulfillment of love but the very opposite of love, as if God could be love for some people and the exact opposite of love for other people.

Well, love without justice is not love, and justice without love is literally diabolical: It's legalism; it's retribution; it's all about laws and making people pay; it's the work of the accuser. When I want justice from my bride and justice from my children, I want love.

The law describes love, but it's not love.

If justice is payment, the payment is love, and God is love.

Justice is love in a place where once upon a time there was no love.

So, a place of eternal separation from love is the exact opposite of justice.

Well, like I was saying, God is love, and God is just. God is not sometimes love and other times just. God is Love and God is Just, all the time: *"Here oh Israel the Lord your God is ONE."* God is Love; He adores you; He delights in you; He loves you—a sinner. And God is Just, He hates sin.

So, Isaiah 59:16

"His own arm brings him salvation."

Juan Carlos Ortiz used to explain it this way: as a conversation between God the Father and God the Son, a conversation that God has with Himself, an eternal conversation. Imagine God the Father sitting in His living room, staring out His window at a small planet, in a small galaxy called the Milky Way. Jesus walks in and sees that His Father is beside Himself (That's actually kind of a Theological comment). God is distraught.

Jesus: *Daddy, What's wrong?*

Father God: *Oy vei! You know those people that we made?*

Jesus: *Ah...yeah. What about them?*

Father God: *They're so evil, so self-absorbed, I have to destroy them!*

Jesus: *But Daddy, I thought you did. Didn't you flood the place?*

Father God: *Well...I did, but...Well, I let one get away.*

Jesus: *Oh dear God! You didn't?*

Father God: *I did.*

Jesus: *You didn't?*

Father God: *I did.*

Jesus: *How could you?*

Father God: *Oh Jesus... I aah... love 'em so much. I wanna kiss 'em and I wanna kill 'em. Should I kiss them or should I kill 'em? Jesus, they're drivin' me insane, I don't know what to do. They get me so worked up. Oh Jesus, what to do..?*

Jesus: *Daddy, I have a plan.*

Father God: *You do?*

Jesus: *Yes I do...*

Father God: *Let's hear it.*

Jesus: *OK...Daddy, you can kill me instead.*

Father God: *Hell NO! That's outrageous! You're the perfect child.*

Jesus: *No Daddy; hear me out. I love them too (just as you...remember I AM you) so I will empty myself and become flesh, even their flesh; I will "number myself with the transgressors; I will absorb their sin into my flesh, and then you can damn sin in my flesh. I'll die for them revealing our love for them. I'll take their sin, and you can give them my righteousness. And you can give them my righteousness, and you can raise us all from the dead for the ultimate Thanksgiving dinner—an eternal party to the praise of your glory. I'll save them and thus save you; we'll save us!*

God is Love; God is Just, and "God is Salvation"—That's Jesus.

Well, I'm sure that little drama is highly inaccurate, and yet, through Isaiah, God does say: "*His own arm brings him salvation.*" And in chapter 53, He's already made it very clear that His strong arm is the "*suffering servant*" on whom the "*Lord laid the iniquity of us all*" because "*he numbered himself with the transgressors*" and made intercession.

Isaiah 59:15-18

The Lord saw that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment.

He will repay, not us but Him.

Deuteronomy 32:35

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord."

But I don't think "repay" is the best translation. The Hebrew word is *Shalawm* or *Shilame* both based on *Shalom*. In fact, in the original text before the vowels were added one thousand years later, the words *Shalawm*, *Shilame* and *Shalom* would've all been written just the same. *Shalawm* means "to make *Shalom*." God's vengeance is to make peace.

Psalm 62:12 reveals that God repays our dead works. He *Shalawms* our sin with *Hesed*—that's Grace. God repays our sin with Grace, making *Shalom*. God's vengeance is to make peace. Let's keep reading.

Isaiah 61:1-3 (This is what Jesus read in the synagogue in Luke 4 saying, “*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your midst.*”)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news (gospel) to the poor, he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, (the Lord's grace) That's Jubilee, the Sabbath or Sabbaths, the seventh day—God's rest. and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort ALL who mourn.

Jesus stopped quoting after the line about “*proclaiming the year of the Lord's grace*” but not because he wasn't also proclaiming the “*day of vengeance.*” They just couldn't understand God's vengeance. In three years, they would see God's vengeance on a cross.

Let's keep reading. In Isaiah 63, Isaiah has a vision of a Great Warrior. (On March 18, 2012 we preached an entire sermon on these verses titled: *Vengeance and the Winepress.*)

Isaiah called out: “*Who is it?*” and the Great Warrior answered:

It is I speaking in righteousness (justice) mighty to save. I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood (literally juice) spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption (That's the year of Jubilee) had come. I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me salvation...

God brings God salvation, at a winepress. In the Revelation, we find that the winepress is at the edge of the city where Jesus was crucified, and that Jesus is the One who treads this winepress, making wine that is blood and blood that is wine. Imagine a drink like that.

The grapes are the “*harvest of this earth.*” I think they are the “*fruit that befits repentance.*” They are confessed sins that Jesus bears in His body. Isaiah 53: “*It was the will of the Lord to crush Him.*” At the cross, you confess your sins and God in Christ Jesus, crushes them, transforming them to Grace: “*Where sin increased Grace abounded all the more,*” and Grace changes us: “*The one forgiven much loves much,*” said Jesus. That's justice; that's righteousness; that's the fulfillment of the entire law.

God's vengeance is to make *Shalom*. No one can fully explain it (Romans 11:33), and yet we can see that He did it, nailed to a tree, in a garden, as He lifted His head and cried, “*It is finished.*” If He said that in Hebrew, He might well have said, “*Shawlam*”—“*I have made Shawlam—Peace.*” And the curtain in the sanctuary in the temple, separating *Yahweh* from the children of Adam, ripped from top to bottom. And the Spirit of God, delivered up by Jesus, descended on the Church as tongues of fire.

Let's keep reading...the last two verses of Isaiah.

Isaiah 66:23-24

From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, ALL flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the Lord. And ALL flesh shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me (Literally “transgressed against me”). Read Isaiah and you'll discover that's all men and the arm of the Lord, who has numbered Himself with the transgressors. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to ALL flesh.

Now, there's no time to explain the undying worm that eats death and turns into a butterfly or the consuming fire that is God Himself. But if you take scripture seriously at all, this clearly means that one glorious, eternal day, everyone at your Thanksgiving table—“ALL flesh” will walk out to the edge of the New Jerusalem where the wine is made and Jesus is crucified. They will walk out in

new bodies and look down upon their old dead bodies being destroyed in the Valley of Gehenna and cry out: "Thank you Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for delivering me from that lonely old body of death into your eternal Body of perfected Love. Thank you for your justice." We will all be saved, and God will be saved, for all His children will be justified. They will love as they've been loved.

Justice is not people getting what they deserve, for people deserve nothing.

Justice is God getting what God deserves.

And God deserves you;

He deserves humanity...

Made in His own Image.

Remember when the religious people mocked saying, "*He saved others, let him save himself.*" Well, maybe He was saving Himself. I mean, God the Son was saving God the Father from the pain of a sinful creation. And God the Father was saving God the Son from death: Hebrews 5:2 "*He called to God to save Him from death,*" and He did...raising Him from death and all of us with Him. God is the death of sin, death, Hell, and even His own wrath. God saves, and when we see Him save...we are born from above: "*God is Salvation.*" You need to know that. In fact, you need to wear that like a helmet on your head. It will change the way you think and make all the difference at Thanksgiving dinner.

If I know "God is Salvation," I know "I am NOT salvation." I cannot pay, and I don't have to pay; God has paid! So I don't have to pick love or justice. I don't have to tolerate or separate. I can constantly forgive. I can love everyone and entrust judgment to God because I know His judgment is good.

If God is Salvation, you can love everyone because God loves everyone. In fact, He's in everyone, for He has "*numbered himself with the transgressors.*"

You can love everyone, and you don't have to judge anyone. And that's why Thanksgiving dinner is so painful: because you love those people; you want to fix those people—justify those people, which means, you're usually frustrated with those people, hurt by those people and angry at those people and angry at yourself. You want to kiss those people and kill those people, and you're one of those people, and so you'd rather just not go to dinner with those people—the people you love or used to love.

You see? If you think that you have to save those people, you won't love those people. If you think that you have to save those people, you won't testify to those people: "God is Salvation." Instead, with your anxiety, anger, and manipulation, you'll testify that God is not salvation; you'll do the work of the devil for him.

If I don't believe "Vengeance is God's, and He will repay," I'll believe "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay." I'll do the devil's work for Him. If I don't believe "God is Salvation," I'll believe "I am salvation." And I'll try to save myself from God when salvation is to be *with* God. Think about that: "Save *from* God" when "God *IS* salvation." Who would suggest such an idea? If I believe I am salvation: I will try to save myself from God; I'll try to save others from God, and I'll even try to save God from God.

How insanely arrogant and evil is that?

But isn't that what most religious people think: "I better save the world because either God doesn't love the world (God cannot so I better) or God isn't able to save the world: 'I better save God from God?'" Ironically, I think that's why they crucified Jesus. The religious folks were trying to save God from God. And after all...He was just acting so irresponsible. You know, He was eating with tax collectors and sinners, as if, He wasn't worried about their salvation but knew their salvation was secure.

Well, I can't save, but God is Salvation, and when I know that, when I know *Him*, *THEN* (check this out) He uses me to do some saving: I am His Body, and He is my Head (my Husband), my *kephala*; He Himself is my helmet, my *parikephalaion* in Greek (meaning about the head). When I believe "God is Salvation," I become the very body of "God is Salvation"—Jesus, the Great Warrior. And I enjoy eating with tax collectors and sinners. Maybe that's how He goes to war. He enjoys eating with tax collectors and sinners.

Hey, Why do you think that tax collectors and sinners wanted to party with Jesus? Wasn't it because He enjoyed them? Or did you think it was because He threatened them saying, "Dine with me or I'll fry you in Hell!" No, He didn't say that. But there were people that Jesus warned about outer darkness. They were the people that didn't want to come to dinner. They were the ones who thought they were their own salvation: People that did not want what was being served.

Well, how do you like to picture Jesus?

I like to picture baby Jesus, and I like to picture Him like a Ninja warrior; He is the Great Warrior (He is just). And I honestly like to picture Jesus singing lead vocals with Lynard Skynard. I know Jesus likes to party (He is love). And it kind of makes sense when I picture Jesus like this. [Peter stands behind the communion table and points to the bread and wine.]

Communion

And this is how He asked us to picture Him...sitting at a table with the twelve: with Thomas, and Peter, and Judas. And He takes the bread and breaks it and having given thanks He says, "This is my body, broken for you; take it; eat it; do this in remembrance of me; remember this. And in the same way, after supper He took the cup and having given thanks He said, "This cup is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins; drink of it, all of you; do it in remembrance of me."

God is Love; God is Justice; God is Salvation! In fact, that's what He's serving for dinner. So, come to dinner and give thanks. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction

Leading up to this, we've preached about almost all of the armor of God. So far, all of those pieces of armor are defensive pieces of equipment. In the next message, we'll talk about the last piece, and it's offensive: The Word of Truth. The Word is an incredibly big concept. We think it's weak but it is so powerful, it created all things that are, and was spoken by *Yahweh* Himself. The Word is a name, and the name in Hebrew means: God is Salvation. In the name of Jesus, believe the gospel. Amen.

Disclaimer: The following document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.