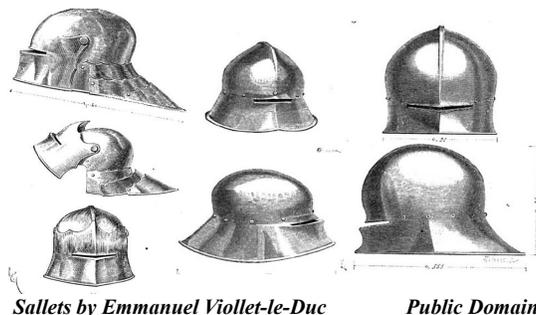




The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: The Helmet of Salvation



Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of discernment and study to become lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Presentation: The Helmet of Salvation

During our first four episodes, we began a discussion as to the six components of the Armor of God. As a reminder, St. Paul listed these components in Ephesians 6:10-18. In summary, they are:

The belt of truth
The breastplate of righteousness

The sandals of peace
The shield of faith
The helmet of salvation
The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Last week we discussed the **shield of faith**. Today, we will discuss the fifth component of the armor of God, which is **the helmet of salvation**.

As we look at the definition of **salvation** in the dictionary, we see words such as.....deliverance from the power and effects of sin, preservation from destruction or failure, and deliverance from danger or difficulty. Indeed, if we consider the path of sin, we might hope for protection from the damage and destruction which comes from it. We must also consider that when the sin is ours, it comes from our choice; therefore, it would be safe to say that we need deliverance to protect us from ourselves.

We might ask ourselves, how often do we look at a choice we make and wish that we might be able to do it over and make a different choice. This might arise from a slip of the tongue, a small accident, or something which causes emotional or physical harm to others. We might blurt out a stinging statement against a friend or loved one, but then, we are left with the lame words, "I'm sorry, I didn't really mean that." Once the words leave our mouth, they cannot be brought back.

Sometimes our apology is accepted, but our words and actions still remain. There are choices we make which simply cannot be undone in this world. As we speak and act, we may share blessings or we may cause harm. When we cause harm to one another, we also drive sorrow into the heart of God, for He created us to not only love Him, but one another as well. When we speak or act in ways offensive to God, we separate ourselves from Him.

If God holds against us our every failing, then, there is no hope for us beyond this world, for as we separate ourselves from God, all we have left is the darkness. What hope, then, do we have if we do not have the hope of **salvation** from God?

Keeping this in mind, let's turn to our panel and ask,

Opening Question: What is salvation and what protection does it offer?

According to Webster:

1a : deliverance from the power and effects of sin

b : the agent or means that effects salvation

c Christian Science : the realization of the supremacy of infinite Mind over all bringing with it the destruction of the illusion of sin, sickness, and death

2 : liberation from ignorance or illusion

3a : preservation from destruction or failure

b : deliverance from danger or difficulty

Scripture:

Old Testament:

(**Note:** In the Old Testament, we see salvation brought forth by God, but the salvation of which is often spoken is not in reference to heaven, but, in deliverance from danger and enemies. We see examples as to where that salvation may be given or withheld as the people turn to or away from Him. Below is from a song God instructed Moses to write so that the generations might know what God already knew, that the people He delivered from slavery and who He led to the land of milk and honey would turn away from Him.)

16 The LORD said to Moses, Soon you will be at rest with your ancestors, and then this people will prostitute themselves by following the foreign gods among whom they will live in the land they are about to enter. They will forsake me and break the covenant which I have made with them. 17 At that time my anger will flare up against them; I will forsake them and hide my face from them; they will become a prey to be devoured, and much evil and distress will befall them. At that time they will indeed say, "Is it not because our God is not in our midst that these evils have befallen us?" 18 Yet I will surely hide my face at that time because of all the evil they have done in turning to other gods. 19 Now, write out this song for yourselves. Teach it to the Israelites and have them recite it, so that this song may be a witness for me against the Israelites.
(Deuteronomy 31:16-18)

(A portion of the song God instructed Moses to write follows.)

*15 So Jacob ate and was satisfied,
Jeshurun [Israel] grew fat and kicked;
you became fat and gross and gorged.
They forsook the God who made them
and scorned the Rock of their salvation.
16 With strange gods they incited him,
with abominations provoked him to anger.
17 They sacrificed to demons, to "no-gods,"
to gods they had never known,
Newcomers from afar, before whom your ancestors had never trembled.
18 You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you,
you forgot the God who gave you birth.*
(Deuteronomy 32:15-18)

(**NABRE Footnote:** *Jeshurun*: a term for Israel from *yashar*, meaning "upright"; its use here is possibly ironic.)

(Question: Are there times we forget who created us? Are there times we fail to remember the blessings He gives? If we do, how do we make amends?)

1 David proclaimed the words of this song to the LORD when the LORD had rescued him from the grasp of all his enemies and from the grasp of Saul. 2 He said: O LORD, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my rock of refuge! My shield, my saving horn,

*my stronghold, my refuge, **my savior, from violence you keep me safe.** Praised be the LORD, I exclaim! I have been delivered from my enemies. (2 Samuel 22:1-4)*

David continues:

*47 The LORD lives! Blessed be my rock!
Exalted be God, the rock of my salvation.
48 O God who granted me vindication,
subdued peoples under me,
49 and helped me escape from my enemies,
Truly you have exalted me above my adversaries,
from the violent you have rescued me.
50 Thus I will proclaim you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.
51 You have given great victories to your king,
and shown kindness to your anointed,
to David and his posterity forever. (2 Samuel 22:47-51)*

(Question: In this scripture, we see David raising his prayers in thanks and praise for his **deliverance** from danger and destruction by his enemies and Saul who sought David's life. Have we faced circumstances of danger which we survived? Do we remember to give thanks to the One who looks over us?)

*2 How many are my foes, LORD!
How many rise against me!
3 How many say of me,
“There is no **salvation** for him in God.” (Psalm 3:2-3)*

*8 Arise, LORD! Save me, my God!
For you strike the cheekbone of all my foes;
you break the teeth of the wicked.
9 **Salvation is from the LORD!**
May your blessing be upon your people! Selah (Psalm 3:8-9)*

(Question: Should we expect **salvation** in the same fashion as David expected?)

New Testament

(Note: Below is the shorter ending to the book of Mark)

*[And they reported all the instructions briefly to Peter's companions. Afterwards Jesus himself, through them, sent forth from east to west the sacred and imperishable **proclamation of eternal salvation.** Amen.] (Mark 16:20)*

(Question: What kind of proclamation might this be, the proclamation of “eternal salvation,” which Jesus sent forth from east to west through His disciples? Might we

find this salvation to be a deliverance from not just the one who can kill the body, but also the soul, as we are warned in Matthew 10:28? Is this a salvation which brings us to eternal life in His kingdom?)

67 Then Zechariah his [John the Baptist's] father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:

68 “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
for he has visited and brought redemption to his people.

69 He has raised up a horn for our **salvation**
within the house of David his servant,

70 even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old:

71 **salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,**

72 to show mercy to our fathers

and to be mindful of his holy covenant

73 and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,
and to grant us that,

74 rescued from the hand of enemies,
without fear we might worship him

75 in holiness and **righteousness**
before him all our days.

76 And you, child, will be called **prophet of the Most High,**
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

77 to give his people knowledge of **salvation**
through the forgiveness of their sins,

78 because of the tender mercy of our God
by which the daybreak from on high will visit us

79 to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow,
to guide our feet into the path of **peace.**”

80 The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel. (The Canticle of Zechariah – Luke 1:67-80)

(Question: In this scripture, we hear the father of John the Baptist speak of **salvation** from enemies and all who hate us, but he also spoke of John as Prophet, to prepare the ways of the Lord and to give the people knowledge of **salvation** through the forgiveness of sins. How does forgiveness of sins offer **salvation** when the **salvation** to which people look to God is deliverance from danger or enemies? **Hint:** What is the danger of losing a relationship with God?)

8 Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. 9 The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. 10 The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 **For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.** 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was a

multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: 14 “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:8-14)

(Question: How did people of the day view a **savior**? What were their expectations of a **savior**? **Note:** The Pharisees believed in an afterlife to reward or punishment, but the Sadducees did not.)

*9 He **saved** us and called us to a holy life, **not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, 10 but now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 for which I was appointed preacher and apostle and teacher.** (2 Timothy 1:9-11)*

The Narrow Door; Salvation and Rejection. *22 He passed through towns and villages, teaching as he went and making his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked him, **“Lord, will only a few people be saved?”** He answered them, 24 **“Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough. 25 After the master of the house has arisen and locked the door, then will you stand outside knocking and saying, ‘Lord, open the door for us.’ He will say to you in reply, ‘I do not know where you are from.’ 26 And you will say, ‘We ate and drank in your company and you taught in our streets.’ 27 Then he will say to you, ‘I do not know where [you] are from. Depart from me, all you evildoers!’ 28 And there will be wailing and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out. 29 And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God. 30 For behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”***

(Luke 13:22-30)

(Question: To whom was Jesus referring when He said, “and you yourselves cast out? To whom was Jesus referring when He said, “And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God?”)

*19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Believe me, woman, **the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You people worship what you do not understand; we worship what we understand, because **salvation** is from the Jews.** 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth.” 25 The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah is coming, the one called the Anointed; when he comes, he will tell us everything.” 26 Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking with you.” (John 4:19-26)*

(Question: What did Jesus mean when He said, “Salvation is from the Jews?” **Thought:** This does not mean that Jews offer **salvation**, for salvation is offered only through God, or that only Jews are saved, rather, we might look at the word “from” in the form of conduit. Among the nations, who has the continued relationship and history with God? Jesus continues, “*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him.*” We might reflect that Jesus was a Jew, that He was born of a virgin in the line of David and that birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecy. Could this mean that while God has looked after the Jews as the “first born” nation of faith in God, that God desires a relationship with all the children of His creation? St. Augustine said, “...the New Testament is concealed in the Old, and the Old Testament is revealed by the New;” therefore, we must look at the OT to understand the new covenant expressed in the NT. The law was given to Moses by God, but so many failed to understand the fullness of its purpose. If we are to understand its purpose and the relationship which God seeks with the children of His creation, we must look to what Jesus taught us through His parables, His sermons, His healings, and by His example. If nothing else, we should seek to understand the two greatest commandments of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 22:36-40, the commandments to love God and one another. We must also remember that Jesus, born to us through a Jewish woman, is the One who died in sacrifice for our **salvation.**)

(Consider Ephesians 3:1-6)

1 Because of this, I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ [Jesus] for you Gentiles— 2 if, as I suppose, you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for your benefit, 3 [namely, that] the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly earlier. 4 When you read this you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, 6 that the Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (Ephesians 3:1-6)

(Thought: If we are to understand this, then, it means **salvation** is offered to all the children of God's creation. All are invited to His kingdom.)

Catechism:

The second part of the Catechism explains how God’s **salvation**, **accomplished once for all through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit**, is made present in the sacred actions of the Church’s liturgy (Section One), especially in the seven sacraments (Section Two). (CCC: 15)

Through the prophets, God forms his people in the hope of salvation, in the expectation of **a new and everlasting Covenant intended for all**, to be written on their hearts. The prophets proclaim a radical redemption of the People of God, purification from all their infidelities, a salvation which will include all the nations. **Above all, the poor and humble of the Lord will bear this hope.** Such holy women as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel,

Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Judith, and Esther kept alive the hope of Israel's **salvation**. The purest figure among them is Mary. (CCC: 64)

Quotes:

O Lord my God, tell me what you are to me. Say to my soul, I am your **salvation**. Say it so that I can hear it. My heart is listening, Lord; open the ears of my heart and say to my soul, I am your **salvation**. Let me run toward this voice and seize hold of you. **Do not hide your face from me:** let me die so that I may see it, **for not to see it would be death to me indeed.** (St. Augustine)

He who created us without our help will not **save** us without our consent. (St. Augustine)

Let us understand that God is a physician, and that suffering is a medicine for salvation, not a punishment for damnation. (St. Augustine)

Points for discussion:

What does salvation mean to our daily lives versus our eternal lives?

What did salvation mean prior to the coming of our Savior?

What can cause us to lose salvation?

Final Thoughts: Many expected a great king such as David who would restore the greatness of Israel. The true Messiah, though, came to us with a greater power by which we might live, the power of love. He demonstrated this power through His teaching, through His compassion, through His healing, and from upon the cross. He taught us love and that love is a choice by which we may choose to respond to the injustices of the world. He taught us the power of forgiveness; that we may turn the other cheek, but that we should also encourage one another with the blessings of love. It is through His love that we may be forgiven of our sins and cleansed of our iniquities, so that what separates us from God is no longer. It is through His sacrifice and love that we may be purified to enter into the kingdom where evil is not allowed to reside. The question, before us, though, is will we accept His love and the **salvation** He offers? Will we seek to respond to Him, as well as one another, as commanded by His greatest of commandments? Perhaps we will know this answer by how we choose to live. The choices we make will let Him know where our heart is – but when we fail Him, the sorrow and repentance within our hearts speaks to Him as well. Our salvation, then, begins with our love of the One who died for our sins. (Matthew 22:36-40)

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with “The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may share the blessings of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: The sword of the Spirit