

Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There's an interesting letter. It's a letter that has a lot of discussion about it, not because of what it says but because of what it is. A number of people don't believe that Paul actually wrote this letter. That the letter was written in the second century and not in the first, not of the time that he would have been going around. They also don't believe that it was written to the Ephesians, like it says that it is. So there's a lot of discussion and argument about it. Should we read this piece of the Bible? Should we pay attention to this Epistle? Should we listen to these letters? Because we don't know who said it. We don't know why he said it. We don't know who he was actually talking to.

And I think that says a lot about the people who are talking about it, more than the actual letter itself. Because does it matter? Does it matter if Paul wrote it, if one of his students wrote it, if anybody wrote it? So we don't know who they are, it doesn't matter that it went to the Ephesians for two thousand years. People have been reading this letter whether they were Ephesians or not. The meaning behind it hasn't changed. So why do we need to worry about who wrote it or who it's talking to?

Paul spent a lot of time walking around the Mediterranean, you know, we know that he went to Corinth. We know that he went to Thessalonica. We know that he actually went to Ephesus and he talked to all of these people and he did all these wondrous things. And it's a thing to keep Paul in mind over Labor Day weekend because as he was going around talking to all these people, whether they were Ephesians or not, he was working alongside of all of them. He wasn't going each week and just preaching in the temple or preaching on the streets and just having collecting alms and that he was out working with people. He would spend the week mending fishermen's nets, he would spend the week mending tents. He'd spend the week working in fields, harvesting grapes, harvesting olives. He was out there as a normal common person. He's just like the rest of us.

We work all week so we can share this time together. On his day off, he would go into the temples and he would talk about Jesus, you would talk about the gospel. He would share that knowledge of God's love with everybody. And it's a fantastic thing because we do that all the time, whether we realize it or not.

The idea of God's armor was put into a way that everybody could relate at that time. Everybody knew the Romans, They knew what they looked like, they knew that they stood for a symbol of power. And with this power through walking around in breastplates, they have their belts, they have their shoes, they have their helmets, They have their shields, and they have their swords. They are the utmost authority on everything that goes on in that world at that time.

So this letter that Paul wrote, he described all of these people because everybody knew what they looked like, and he described all of God's traits. So it's making these poor fishermen, these poor farmers, these poor general laborers, he's

giving them the same power that Caesar gave all the Romans. And he's showing them that it's through God.

It is important that it's a breastplate. What's important is that it's the righteousness that God has given us. It's not important that it's the shoes. It's important that it's the piece that we find through God. The only actual aggressive part that Paul said was about the sword and the sword is the Holy Spirit. It is the words and the actions that we do that share God's love through everybody. It doesn't have to be a sharp broadsword, a big sword, a little sword, a tiny sword. Any of that? It's the spirit if we did it today.

If I went to the school I know I could easily go in there at any time and say, all right kids we're going to talk. What I'm going to tell you is that your Bluey shoes symbolize peace and your Bluey skirts, our truth. And your Bluey shirts or your magic tiger shirts or your football jersey, or your cheerleading uniform that is God's love and righteousness.

It is okay. It is more than right for you to remember these things for you to remember that God loves you. It is okay for you to tell other people how much you love God. It is okay for you to stop people who are fighting and to let them know that that's not okay.

I saw a fight breakout at the playground a couple weeks ago and it had to be two little first graders, maybe second graders. I see them getting into it with the teacher has her back to them because there's a lot of kids. You can't expect them to see everything. And I stand up and I get ready to walk over there and break them up. And instead I see this little girl who's a kindergartner go running, drops her shoulder and takes one of them out. And as she turns and she helps him up. She says we don't fight. God loves us. Knock it off and she storms off.

I don't know if you can guess who this little kindergartner was, but she goes here and she wears a lot of Bluey clothes. Well, it's important because she sees all of you do these things, she sees all of you share God's love. We share it with each other here.

She came up last night. She saw us all breaking down the tent. She sees us filling the backpack program. She sees me taking it up there because all of us had the time to put it together and her friends are taking those backpacks. And she knows that it's love that we share. She knows that we live the righteous life to the work and the deeds that we do. She's only in kindergarten, and she's teaching that at the school too. I expect someday. I'll get a phone call, because she doesn't always do it the way that she should, And it might not be the words that they want to hear. But it's still the love that we all have, and that we all share. And we serve as great role models for that. Let us pray.