

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
September, 2021
Ephesians 6:10-20

In the second part of his letter to the congregation in Ephesus, Paul wrote of the effect that God's grace has on the life of believers. The new life of children of God shows itself in a life of Christian love and purity of living. In the verses before our text Paul says that this purity of life will show up as a believer shoulders the responsibilities God gives them as a husband or wife, child or parent, employer or employee. Paul closes this letter by encouraging God's people to fight for their faith against the enemies of their faith. To fight the good fight of faith, believers need the special equipment that God provides. Paul calls this special equipment: **The armor of God.**

How strong are you? That depends on what kind of strength you are talking about, doesn't it? Maybe you can lift a 50 pound ball above your head for 10 minutes. Perhaps you can handle a lot of pressure at work for 10 hours a day for 5 days straight. Perhaps you are the anchor in your family, the one everyone leans on for support. However, the most important strength we need is spiritual strength, measured in faithfulness to God, trust in our Lord Jesus, and the willingness to fight to remain faithful to the Lord! Why do we need spiritual strength? Because we are battling spiritual forces bent on doing us harm.

These spiritual forces are none other than Satan and the evil angels. We need to be strong! Our spiritual enemies seek to destroy our bodies and souls in the eternal torment in hell.

Thankfully the blood of Christ has saved us from that awful punishment!

Let's look at the Word of God to see what He has to say about that spiritual battle and the strength we need to fight it.

God wants us to be strong because we are in a spiritual battle against the powerful forces of darkness. These battles can take

many forms: sexual temptations, the loss of a loved one, hatred of others, hatred of God, pride, superstitions and addictions: alcohol, drugs, pornography.

The demons seek to tempt us so we fall into sin, then, they will seek to cause that sin to make our life worse. Being strong in the Lord is the only way to resist the devil. We are not fighting against human beings, we are fighting the angels who revolted against God and who have no chance of being saved. We are fighting against spiritual enemies and so we must fight with spiritual weapons.

I give you three examples from Scripture of human beings who thought they were spiritually tough: Samson, David, and Solomon.

- Samson was a very powerful man. He killed 1,000 men with the jawbone of a donkey and pulled down a temple with his hands.
- David loved God and sought to honor and glorify Him. Many of the Psalms were written by him.
- Solomon was the wisest human being – ever. He had awesome wealth and power.

Yet, they all fell into sin. They were no match for Satan.

- Samson was tempted to sin against the 6th Comm. Delilah hounded him into telling her the secret of his strength and Samson lost his hair.
- David fell into the temptations of lust, then adultery with Bathsheba, then the murder of Bathsheba's husband.
- Satan led Solomon to have over 1,000 wives and "live-ins" who influenced him to follow false gods.
- Are we stronger than they were?

We are fighting against spiritual enemies and we must fight with spiritual weapons. Paul writes, Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground...

We must rely on God, we can't rely on ourselves. The military items listed here were the standard equipment of an infantry-man in the Roman army.

- Stand firm with the belt of truth buckled around your waist. This armor protected the soldier's midsection and thighs.
- With the breastplate of righteousness in place. This armor protected the soldier's upper body.
- And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. This refers to wearing the best shoes or boots for the occasion.
- Take up the shield of faith to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. The shield protected the soldier from sword and spear thrusts or the arrows that would be launched at him.
- We are to take the helmet of salvation. The helmet protected the head of the soldier.
- The sword of the Spirit. This is our weapon in battle. We have the Word of God which can be used for defending ourselves against the evil angels.

Christians look to **Christ's work** as our defense. Paul refers to Jesus' redeeming work that Christians can rally to when they come under attack. Christ's work saves us. Our salvation comes only through the work of Jesus. That work is described in God's Word. Study that Word. Know the truth of that Word. Use that truth against the demons of hell. Using God's Word, the Christian can rout any of the powers of this dark world or the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We need to be faithful in the use of the Word of God and regularly turn to our Lord in prayer.

The devil should be feared. He is evil. He is powerful. He hates us. He wants to be in hell with him. But He is not as powerful as Jesus. Jesus gives us the weapons to succeed. We have faith in Jesus, our Savior. Jesus won our salvation and gave His victory to us. We have the Word of God; use it, read it, learn it! Review the teaching of the Lord's Supper and use it often.

In all temptations, look to Christ's work as your defense. You can trust the Lord Jesus. He died for you and me! He paid for our sins. He will take us to heaven. Jesus won the victory over Satan when He died on the cross. Because Jesus arose from the dead, we know that we will rise from the dead!

When Jesus returns in glory at the end of time, we won't be afraid. Jesus will come to take us home. On that day, Satan will be standing there looking at me and saying, "Jesus, that Meier guy is really bad – he is as sinful as anyone can be!" I will say, "Satan, you have been a pain in my side for a life time. Jesus died for my sins! I am going to heaven. You will go to hell." Then, together with our hero, Jesus, we will walk into the beautiful sunset of eternal glory.

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