



St. Michael's church

Charleston, SC

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Ephesians 6:10-20, Matthew 9:35-38

Preacher: The Rev. Al Zadig, Jr.

Help us lord to be so connected to you that we might become your disciples and the servants of others.

Take our lips and speak through them,
Our minds and think through them,
And take our hearts, and set them on fire.

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What were you thinking...

When news came on Thursday we had lost 13 American soldiers to a suicide bomb at the Kabul Airport? Anger? Sadness? Fear? What went through your mind?
Thursday reveals two very important realities about life.

First, evil, evil is real.

Second, it reveals that as Christians we must find a way to stand firm against evil.

Which is why our Ephesians passage, pre-assigned by the way...is so powerful!

Paul himself knows evil is a reality, for goodness sakes, he writes the letter from a Roman prison.

Paul writes: We don't wrestle just with our own flesh and blood, but against:

- Schemes of the devil

His name is Satan which means accuser.

To Paul, the universe is Satan's battle ground.

That Anglican theologian CS Lewis put it this way:

"Enemy-occupied territory — that is what this world is.

Christianity is the story of how Jesus, the rightful king,

landed in disguise, calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.

So when you go to church you are really listening-in to the secret wireless from our friends.” Satan, the leader of that enemy occupation is actually in the window above our altar, Yes, Satan himself, in a window so violent that a couple of decades ago, one of the Rectors put a curtain over it for years!
But we can’t! We have to face the reality that Satan is real, in fact one of our parishioners put it this way: There is a revival going on, but it’s Satan’s revival.
I know what you’re thinking, Yikes, this is a heavy sermon for Kick Off Sunday.
You’re right, but we have to understand the landscape in which we live.
You see, there are two errors we can make about our enemy Satan.
The first is to be so consumed by him, that we live in anxiety and fear..
Or...To completely ignore Satan thinking he doesn’t exist! He thrives off both.
But If you think he doesn’t exist, **then there is something you will never do.**
You won’t equip yourself to stand firm against him.

Paul writes from prison to say first: **Satan is real...**
And secondly to equip you and me to stand firm against evil..

We call this battle with Satan...Spiritual warfare.
But notice Paul doesn't equip us to defeat Satan. No, Paul equips us to withstand and stand firm, because the battle has already been won by Jesus Christ. Satan knows he’s already lost. Paul goes on to equip us to stand firm using a physical/spiritual suit of armor. Don’t you love how practical the Bible is?

Some of you know this armor like the back of your hand, for others, this might be new to you. Regardless, it is the job of the elders of the church, you and me, to equip the next generation with this armor.

Yes,

- Grandparents
- Godparents
- Parents
- Sunday School teachers and youth ministers..

You need to know this armor to equip the next generation with it!
And so I’ve asked Army Sergeant Taylor Daniel to model this equipping by putting the armor on the next generation.

So, the first defense against Satan is...

1. The belt of truth!

A soldier always puts on the belt first right after his pants because the belt held everything else up, it was the belt that held the sheath for the sword.
The Belt of Truth we wear is this::

- God is sovereign.
- God is in Charge, even now!
- God wins in the end!
- All who believe in Jesus will never die!

It was Jesus Christ who said: I am the way, **the truth** and the life and no one comes to god except through me!

In John 8:44, Jesus says..Satan has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

What are those lies?

- *You could never be forgiven,*
- *there is no hope for you,*
- *your family,*
- *your country,*
- *you are doomed!*

Lies! God is Sovereign, God wins!

From the **Belt**
To the Breastplate of righteousness

We know Physically a breastplate saves us from arrows to the chest.
But What is righteousness?

- Righteousness means being in right-relationship with God...
- and a right relationship with others!

Right relationship with God meaning

- Jesus is on the throne of my life, not me.
- And I've been forgiven and free!

And, Right relationship with others, meaning:

- There is no one I'm estranged from
- My earthly relationships are forgiven and reconciled through Jesus Christ!

As Paul says to the Corinthians, we forgive so Satan does not outwit us.

When we are in a broken relationship with God or others,
the arrows of Satan penetrate and can kill us!

**Which is why Solomon in Proverbs 11:4 says:
Righteousness, Right relationships delivers us from death.**

Okay moving fast here..so far..

1. Belt of truth

2. Breastplate of right-relationships

3.**Third: Shoes** prepared with the gospel of peace.”

means having a **resolve** to live out, walk out our Christian life in public!

- I think of the boss who invites his colleague to church!
- I think of Water Missions, travelling from Charleston to Haiti after the Earthquake!
- Walking out in faith enables us to stand firm

4. Fourth piece of armor is the shield of faith.

Before going into battle, roman soldiers drenched these shields with water, why?

In those days arrows would be shot that were on fire..

So these shields were watered down to extinguish the fiery arrows!

Which is why Paul calls it, the shield of FAITH...

FAITH is the water quenching the fire!

Faith defined is:

Forsaking

All

I

Trust

Him!

A radical trust above our fear that God is Sovereign helps us stand firm!

5. The fifth bit of armor is the helmet of salvation.

The helmet protects a head and neck from the enemy.

Putting on the helmet of salvation is putting on the resolve

that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose again and nothing can rob you of that!

You are His!

The helmet of salvation points to God's ultimate victory over the forces of evil.

The helmet reminds us the battle has been won!

Stand firm with the conviction you are saved.

But the sixth is the sword of the spirit - let me slow down on this one.

The Sword is the only bit of armor that is both defensive...AND...offensive.

The sword represents the Bible.

How did Jesus fight evil?

With the sword through three words:

IT

IS

WRITTEN.

Please hear me on this.

When Jesus was being tempted in the dessert..HIS SWORD WAS Three Words:

- IT
- IS
- WRITTEN!

Matthew 4: Satan said "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Jesus answered, "**IT IS WRITTEN**: Man shall not live by bread alone!"

Jesus referring to Deuteronomy..Jesus uses the IT IS WRITTEN SWORD

3 more times. AND WHAT HAPPENED? **The devil...left.**

The question is, do we know the Bible enough to say in times of Struggle and Temptation:

It IS WRITTEN?

If you say no, I have good news for you.

This is why Paul doesn't just call it the sword, he calls it:

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT...

Meaning: The word of God is from the Holy Spirit.

Meaning we need to ask the Holy Spirit to help us do two things with the Bible:

1. First, Come Holy Spirit-give me a hunger to read it!

Holy Spirit Incline my heart to desire it each day like I desire my coffee!

Holy Spirit help me want to read it!

2. Second, Come Holy Spirit help me understand it, help me know it cover to cover

So I too can say: Satan, IT IS WRITTEN.

For instance:

THOSE PERSONAL ATTACKS BY SATAN OF DISCOURAGEMENT:

You'll never be good enough:

SATAN IT IS WRITTEN..

Jeremiah 29:11

I know the plans I have for you, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

PERSONAL ATTACKS BY SATAN OF FEAR:

SATAN IT IS WRITTEN..

2 Timothy 1:7

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power, love and self-control.

PERSONAL ATTACKS BY SATAN OF ANXIETY:

SATAN IT IS WRITTEN..

John 14:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled.

ATTACKS BY SATAN ON MARRIAGE TODAY!

SATAN IT IS WRITTEN..

Genesis 2:24

A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Marriage is between a man and a woman!

Or this temptation..**ALL RELIGIONS ARE THE SAME!**

IT IS WRITTEN:

ACTS 4:12

There is no other name beside Jesus under heaven by which we can be saved!

Come Holy Spirit, give me a hunger to read and understand your Word.

My dear friends, the church in many areas of the world is dying because so many have dropped the sword! They don't know how to use it!

This is why on this Kick Off Sunday our renewed focus is on the sword of the Spirit-

On a renewed Hunger to help you read and understand the Bible.

Therefore we are beefing up Sunday School for you with some of the best Bible teachers in the diocese! Meaning Sunday School is as important for adults as for children.

Sunday School, a must for adults and children!

Yet the Bible in the church can never replace the Bible at home!

Which is why we have tools to help you read daily like:

Bible Journey and Bible in a year.

Know the Sword...IT IS WRITTEN AS A CHIEF WAY TO STAND FIRM.

So..

1. Belt
2. Breastplate
3. Shoes
4. Shield
5. Helmet
6. Sword

Turned into:

1. Truth
2. Righteousness
3. Resolve
4. Faith
5. Salvation
6. Bible

And here is the Good news.

Putting on that armor is putting on Jesus.

Romans 13:12:

Putting on the armor, is putting on Jesus Christ.

- Jesus is our **belt** of truth!
- Jesus is our **breastplate** of righteousness who through the cross put us in a **right relationship** with God!
- Jesus leads our **feet**!
- Jesus is our **helmet** of salvation
- Jesus is the **sword, the very Word of God.**

Finally, Let me get personal with you.

Some years ago I had a horrible dream that I was in that window personally fighting Satan.

I woke up, literally ran into our living room, grabbed the sword, and read this from 2nd Corinthians 12..

“You are at your strongest, when you are at your weakest, because then you know your need for me.”

As I read that, immediately and literally, the warfare stopped. It is written.

Let us Pray: Lord Jesus, we want to be clothed in you...as our armor...

1. *I take up the sword of the spirit, your mighty word, IT IS WRITTEN
Through your Holy Spirit give me a supernatural hunger to read and understand
it.*
2. *I put on the belt of truth so I will recognize the truth, speak the truth, and live the
truth.*
3. *I put on your breastplate of righteousness, may I live in right relationship with
you and others.*
4. *I put on your shoes as a resolve to live out my faith in public.*
5. *I take up your shield of faith forsaking all I trust you.*
6. *I put on your helmet of salvation, to protect my mind.*

Come Lord: Help us stand firm! Amen.