

# PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

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Old Testament Lesson; Deuteronomy 4:1-2

Deuteronomy 4:6-8

Epistle Lesson; Ephesians 6:10-20

Gospel Lesson; Mark 7:1-8

Mark 7:14-15

Mark 7:21-23

Sermon Text; Ephesians 6:10-18

The Word of God that we focus on for our sermon today is taken from the end of the book of Ephesians, looking at chapter 6, verses 10 – 18.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the

evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And pray in the the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

These are Your Words. Heavenly Father, lead us in the way of truth. Your Word is truth.

Amen

Two days ago, was Pastors' Day at Lakeside Lutheran High School. There are four times, each year, in which pastors are invited to come and see their students at the high school. This first Pastors' Day is a little bit longer than the other ones, and it allows pastors to come in and have breakfast. We get a chance to visit with each other, and a presentation is given to us. We get to go to chapel with the students. We get an opportunity to meet with our students, give them some sugar and caffeine, and send them back to their classes! 😊

There are a couple of things that I love about Pastors' Day. I love meeting with our youth for that half hour time slot. But, another thing that I love about Pastors' Day is seeking out and visiting with a pastor I don't know, to see where he is from and how he is doing. When chapel service came, I sat down next to somebody I didn't know. I introduced myself and said that I was a pastor at Holy Cross, on the east side of Madison. He said, "When I was growing up in De Forest, I had a neighbor who went to Holy Cross!"

And I asked, "What church was it that you went to?"

He said, "Well, I went to the catholic church."

I was silent for just a moment and then I said, "Here you are a pastor in the Lutheran church. How did that come about?"

He said, "I have a quick story to tell you, before chapel starts." He said, "I went to catholic grade school and high school. Then I went into the military, to serve our country. After serving my time, I

came back to the University of Wisconsin. It was during those years, that I became a nonbeliever.” After college, he was hired by the government to do intelligence. He traveled around the world, doing intelligence for our government. But he said, “There was something missing in my life, and I didn't know what it was.” Well, he had a Bible with him and he started reading the Bible. He said that when he was reading God's Word, he came to faith, to believe in Jesus as his Savior. He said, “I didn't want to do intelligence, anymore. I wanted to grow stronger in my faith in Jesus, as my Savior, but not only that. I wanted to help others to also grow in their faith in Jesus, as their Savior.”

You see, there was a time in his life when he had put his sword down. His enemies were consuming him. With the help of the Holy Spirit, when he picked up that sword, which is the Word of God, he, along with the Holy Spirit, were able to overcome his enemies.

Dear fellow redeemed, where is your sword?

### **Your sword is the Word of God.**

Do you have the Word of God in hand, and are you, with the Word of God, defeating your enemies? Or, is your sword laid down, and your enemies are consuming you?

As the Apostle Paul closes this letter to the church at Ephesus, he closes using a picture of a Roman soldier. The city of Ephesus was a very important city in the Roman Empire. The residents of that city would know what a Roman soldier looked like, because they were constantly around them, fitted with their armor, ready to defend if the enemy were to come. And so, Paul uses that imagery for us today, so that we also prepare ourselves for when our enemies attack us.

Those Roman soldiers knew who their enemies were. Do you know who your enemies are? Well, the Bible tells us who our enemies are. Sometimes we talk about them as being the Unholy Trinity - the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh.

**The devil is your enemy.** The Bible says,  
“Your enemy,  
the devil  
prowls around like a roaring lion,  
looking for someone to devour.”

When I was younger, I had a paper route. I specifically remember one morning as the sun was coming up. I had delivered just a few papers. I was rounding a corner of a house to go to another street. I saw a little sparrow that was just a couple of feet from the shrubs, next to the house. The moment I walked around the corner of that house, I was startled, because a cat had bounded out of the shrubs and had pounced on that bird. And there was just a big puffball of feathers. That bird had died, right before my eyes. It has always been a picture to me of this passage that I just shared with you.

“Your enemy, **the devil**,  
prowls around like a roaring lion,  
looking for someone  
to devour.”

That bird had let down its guard. Its enemy had come upon him and taken his life. The same thing can happen to us, if we get too close to the devil. He can pounce on us and he can overcome us.

That is exactly what happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The devil came to them and deceived them. Adam and Eve befriended the devil, no longer thinking of him as an enemy, but rather as a friend. They were deceived and they fell into sin. The same thing can happen to us, when our enemy the devil gets too close to us.

**The world is also our enemy.** In the book of Proverbs it says,  
“Sinners will entice you.”

There are people in this world who do not want you to believe in Jesus, as your Savior. Such was the case with Peter. As he wanted to be close to Jesus on Maundy Thursday evening and Good Friday

morning, he gathered with the people, to keep himself warm by the fire. Three times he was asked, *“You are with Him. You know Him.”* And, Peter succumbed to his enemy. He said, *“I am not one of them. I don't know Him.”* Peter's enemy caused him to fall. The world desires the same thing of us. To get us to deny that we know Jesus and are with him.

**It is even our own sinful flesh that is our enemy.** It is the book of James that says,

“We are tempted by our own evil desire.”

Such was the case, right after the Children of Israel entered into the Promised Land that God had given to them. They had defeated Jericho. The walls came crumbling down. They were to defeat all of the people, which they did. Then, all of the plunder, they were to give to the LORD, in the treasury, in the tabernacle. There was one man by the name of Achan, who kept some of that plunder for himself. He stole what belonged to the LORD. It was pleasing to him. He buried it in the corner of his tent.

The next time the Israelites went out into battle, they were easily defeated. They didn't understand why, until it was revealed that Achan, and his own sinful flesh, had sinned. It had not only affected himself, it not only affected his family, but it affected the entire nation.

Today's Gospel Lesson talks about the enemy of our old sinful flesh when it says in Mark 7:21-23, “For from within, out of men's hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

Our enemies are present and waiting for battle, each and every day. That is why God, through the Apostle Paul, encourages us to put on the armor of God. We have heard them listed here, this morning. Things like: “the belt of truth”, “the breastplate of righteousness”, “feet fitted with readiness”, “shield of faith”, “helmet of salvation”,

“sword of the Spirit”. Again, the Apostle Paul is using that imagery of a Roman soldier, which the people would have seen, each and every day of their lives, walking about them. Those Roman soldiers were always ready for the enemy. It was the Apostle Paul who encourages us to be ready, too, with the armor of the God.

God has given you armor.

Put it on.

The greatest thing that God has given to us is

**His Son.**

It is Jesus who said,

“In this world you will have trouble.

But, take heart,

**I have overcome the world.”**

It is Jesus, your Savior, it is Jesus, our Savior, who overcame our enemies by going to the cross for you and for me. Jesus laid down His life on the cross.

**And when He said, “It is finished,”**

**He defeated our enemies – the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh.**

Jesus has redeemed you, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won us from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil with His holy, precious blood. Jesus has made full and complete payment for all of your sin.

God has now given you weapons. He has given you armor – baptism, the Lord's Supper and His Word.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, let us stand our ground. We know that each and every morning that we wake up and put our feet on the ground our enemies are going to be waiting for us. Each and every day they are going to tempt us. May we be ready with the Word of God to defend ourselves against the devil's attacks, against the world's attacks, against our own sinful flesh's attacks against us. Let us baptize our children, so that they are filled with the Holy

Spirit. Let us receive the Lord's Supper and receive Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of sin. And, let us hear God's Word to equip ourselves for our enemies. As the Apostle Paul says,

“put on the full armor of God,  
so that when the day of evil comes,  
you may be able to stand your ground,  
and after you have done everything,  
to stand.”

This morning, let us close with prayer.

Triune God, Oh be our stay. Let us perish never. Cleanse us from our sins, we pray. And grant us life forever. Keep us from the evil one. Uphold our faith most holy. Grant us to trust You solely with humble hearts, and lowly. Let us put Your armor on with all true Christians running our Heavenly race and shunning the devil's wiles and cunning. Amen. Amen. This be done. So sing we Hallelujah. Amen