

## God Is Our Only Real Defense - Ephesians 6:10-20

This morning we are going to meditate in the Epistle of today, which was read before.

“Grace and peace to you from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who has brought us together”. Amen

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Dear Friends in Christ:

When something historic occurs, we remember it the rest of our lives.

Where were you on September 11, 2001? I remember that on that date in the morning, which was Tuesday, I was driving my wife to a job interview when we listened on the radio that two planes had hit two buildings in New York. The reports worsened during the day. After my wife interview we found ourselves glued to the television for the whole day.

Friends, to say that we live in an insecure world must surely be an understatement. The security industry has become big business. Otherwise there would be no market for burglar alarms, smoke detectors, security systems, guard dogs, and weapons designed to defend our home and family. Out of fear, we purchase these products in an attempt to somehow prevent our most valued possessions from being snatched out of our hands.

Governments spend billions of dollars on security, both in the intelligence networks they establish and in the armed forces they maintain. And one of the newest security concerns revolve around computers, especially as people use the Internet more and more. People want to shop in cyberspace or to exchange sensitive information over computer networks. But this can be very risky unless we can assure the security and privacy that prevents hackers and thieves from stealing that electronic information.

But, no matter how good a security system we develop, there is always someone who will find a way to breach that system. Alarms can be bypassed or disconnected. Armies can be defeated. Computer security can be broken. No matter how good the system, it is still vulnerable to some form of attack, and it can be defeated.

In our text today, St. Paul focuses our attention on different security concerns. He is not talking about the ways we can keep our homes secure or our computer data secure. His concern is not even national security. His concern is for our spiritual security, especially in the face of the devil's attacks upon us. And He tells us how we can be secure.

In an insecure world, Paul knows that there is the only security system that can truly keep us safe. This is the only system that cannot be breached, defeated or corrupted in any way. That is why he reminds us that the best security we can have is found in the strength and protection that God Himself provides for His people, and in the armour He gives to us.

Paul tells us **“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”** And when we do stand firm in the Lord, we find that we have the best defence for our lives, both now and for all eternity.

We all seem to have a natural desire to feel secure. Who has not, as a child, had a security blanket or toy or whatever: that one thing that we would cling to and which would help us to relax, which made us feel safe somehow. But the security of childhood sooner or later gives way to the reality of life. And the sad truth is that we do not feel very secure. Day by day we find ourselves confronted with an endless stream of things that rock the security of our lives.

One of the standard issues unions bring forth in contract negotiations today is that of job security. Give us some assurance our jobs are safe. But, as far too many people have discovered, there are no guarantees regarding job security. Or we are concerned about our health, so we eat right, we exercise; we watch our cholesterol levels. We follow safety protocols regarding Covid-19. But then we hear of the people who have done all the right things from a health point of view who have still had heart attacks, or who have cancer. It does not matter what area of life we want to have secure and safe, there is always something that can rock that security.

Friends, even in the most perfect of situations: things do go wrong, and that can leave us wondering, “Where is the security that we so want for our lives in this insecure world?”

The answer to that question is found in our text today. Paul says **“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”**

There are two very important points in these words. The first is that the real source of our feelings of insecurity revolve around the devil and his evil schemes against our lives. All

the problems of this world, all the things that give you cause for concern each day, all the disappointments of your life are related to the devil's attacks on your life.

Behind all evil at work in this world, you will find the devil. His goal is to destroy everything God has done. He seeks to mess up the beauty of God's creation. He wants to disrupt our lives with so many problems, disappointments and sorrows that we fall into despair and are easy prey for his attacks on our lives. The devil uses the power of sin and death to work against us. And he is good at what he does.

A few weeks ago in a sermon I mentioned a book written by Erma Bombeck "If Life is a Bowl of Cherries, Then What Am I doing in the Pits?" Friends, do not we all feel that way at times? Who among us has not felt overwhelmed at some point by the pain and sorrow of this life? Paul reminds us that these come as the devil works his evil schemes against us. And how we long to find the way to keep these things from getting the better of us day by day! But that is Paul's second point.

Yes, we fight against the devil, who will do anything He can to destroy us. And it is important that we recognize the real enemy of our lives, for when we do, we start looking in the right place for the answer.

The only defence we have that is going to make a difference against this enemy is found in God Himself. We cannot stand on our own against these evil assaults. It is only when we stand firm in the Lord, clothed in His armour that we are able to take our stand against the devil.

Even the secular world is beginning to take note of this. It has long been known that committed Christians suffer less stress than the general population. Now social scientists are beginning to discover that people of faith cope with, and overcome adversity, disappointment and despair better than those who have nothing in which to believe. This is not to say that being a Christian is protection against having things go wrong in our lives. If anything, the devil attacks God's faithful people most of all, because it is the people of God who are out of the devil's control and that is something the devil cannot stand. But those who are strong in the Lord and in His mighty power have the best defence, the best security against the devil's evil ways.

And so Paul tells us to put on **"the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."**

So Paul calls us on to engage the devil and fight him. And to fight not with our own strength or might, but to fight armed with the might and power of Almighty God. We fight with the full armor of God. We fight the devil with truth. Like a belt wrapped round our waist, we fight surrounded by God's truth in Christ Jesus our Lord. With the truth encircling us, we are always ready to engage the devil and fight him on God's terms and not his own. As we fight, Christ's righteousness protects us like a breastplate, strong enough to shield us from the blows of the evil one.

On our feet we wear the good news of the gospel of Christ, ready to go where we are needed and proclaim victory over the devil in Christ our Lord. When the battle is engaged we use the shield of our faith to quench the fiery arrows of the devil and his evil angels.

Friends, every act of faith—our worship, our prayer, our bible studies, our devotion and meditation on the Word of God, our pious use of the Sacraments of God—all these acts of faith and faithfulness put out the fiery arrows of the Evil One and keep us strong in the strength of the Lord. Throughout the battle we wear on our heads the helmet of our salvation in Christ. And by faithful hearing of the Word of God we wield the sword of the Spirit in our battle with Satan, and land some deadly blows of our own.

I wish I could stand here today and tell you that everything is going to be wonderful in your life. But I cannot. The devil hates us, and even though he might be fighting a losing battle, he will continue his vicious assaults on our life and happiness. But we can take our stand against the devil and not be defeated, for it is God who is our strength and victory.

We find ourselves looking for security in an insecure world, and we cannot find it—until we find it in God. But that is the best defence we can have, because, God will always win the day. The devil may do his worst, and we may find it hurtful and troubling, but know this: those who stand firm in the Lord find that God will bring victory to our lives, including the eternal victory of peace and rest in heaven. Amen.

That the Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit pour out His richest blessings to all of us and fill us with peace. Amen