

August 1 2021

Ephesians 6:10-20

Children's message: St. Paul might be the first poster child for the Boy Scout motto: Always be prepared. This what he is writing about this morning in this passage. That as Christians we should always be prepared for what might happen.

St. Paul compares the Christian and their preparedness to that of a Roman soldier. One that is dressed and ready for battle. The Roman soldier is equipped with the correct shoes, a breast plate, helmet, and sword. As Christians, we should prepare ourselves by strengthening our faith, be righteous in how we live our lives and seek the truth in what we say and do. All these things will help to defend us from the troubles and temptations we may encounter in life. Those are the things we prepare to battle. Ours is an inward battle and not something on the battlefield.

Have you noticed that all the armour we are to put on is defensive? So that we may stand our ground against troubles and temptations. There is no armour put on to protect our back. Jesus is the one who has our back. With Him protecting our back we will never have to retreat. The only weapon we have for attack is a sword. It is not really a sword as we know it. It is a spiritual sword that cuts the temptations we experience in life. That sword is prayer.

This prayer does not have to be complicated or long. Most importantly it should come from our heart. It can be very short like: Be not afraid,

only believe, or Lord have mercy, or give me strength Lord. Just short simple but powerful prayers. These prayers are to see us through our trials and temptations. To remind us that Jesus is walking with us in our difficult time. When we pray, we are talking with Jesus to help us and guide us in the situation we find ourselves. Sometimes prayer is to help and guide us, not necessarily to remove the problem.

St. Paul is saying this morning to be prepared for whatever may come at you in life. We can do this by living a good life and to pray when troubles come. Jesus is there to guide and help us. He has our back.

Adult's message: In the past few weeks, Paul has talked about church unity. That all Christians are equal in the church and make up the Body of Christ. He has also instructed us in how we are to behave and conduct ourselves when we are out in the world and in church.

This morning's passage is about the inward struggles that the Christian is faced with. The spiritual warfare that we all participate in as Christians. Paul warns us that it is not as spectacular as it might sound. Many of us conjure up images of the original Exorcist movie. There is nobody wearing red leotards with a tail and horns here. If that was true, we could all avoid him. Spiritual warfare is far more subtle and cunning. Only because the struggle is from within each and every one of us. We struggle mostly with ourselves. More specifically we struggle with our egos and its desires. That was what the Garden of Eden was about. We struggle with those desires that lead us away from God. As I have said in the past, the part of us that needs to be crucified with Christ is our egos. I think that was the Good Friday sermon this year. When our ego dies on

the cross with Christ only then can we rise with Christ and truly live for Him.

In this morning's passage, Paul describes the armour of a Roman soldier. He uses it to help describe how the Christian is best to defend themselves. We defend ourselves from the temptations which our ego's desire.

In verse 13, we are to take up the whole armour of God. James 4:7, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Verse 14 instructs us to put on the breast plate of righteousness. The breast plate protects the physical heart of the wearer. For the Christian we need to make sure that our hearts are righteous and devoted to God's ways. 1 John 3:7, "Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. The shield in verse 16 is the full Roman shield. It is four feet tall and two and a half feet wide. This shield is meant to protect most of the human body. It is not a gladiator's buckler. The helmet of salvation in verse 17 is to protect the head of the wearer. The head is where most of our five senses are located. For the Christian it is these five senses that the enemy will use to tempt us. Most of our temptations come through what we see, smell hear or eat. As Christians we prepare by being aware of how these temptations come at us. As the G.I Joe cartoon of the 90's said, "knowing is half the battle."

Some churches have taken this passage about spiritual warfare in a different direction. They have woven the implements into the fabric of the clergy. Only to remind the clergy that they are the front-line troops and to be an example for others in their struggles. I find it interesting

how we try to tell our salvation history in fabric. It is there to remind us all of our calling. Keep up the good fight and pray for rain, Pastor D