

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Ephesians 6:10 to 20 Pentecost 15,
September 9, 2012
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz**

The Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in 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 Lord's people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.



People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Life is short! People are very breakable. It's all because of sin – the fatal flaw of sin we inherited from both our parents the moment we were conceived. We were fatally flawed by sin. God's Word says – the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans **the wages of sin is death**. And so it is in the very last few days I have again been amazed at all the different ways people pass away. A guy named Randy – just 44 years old – thought it would be pretty funny to put on a “ghillie” suit. Do you know what that is – a “ghillie” suit? It's a kind of three dimensional camouflage suit. It's got like leaves that aren't just painted on – they are cut out and fastened on. Randy thought it would be pretty funny to run around – out in the wilderness – a Sasquatch sighting. A 15 year old driver hit him – a 2nd car swerved and the 3rd car ran over him. That was it. Maria was just 30 years old. She thought it would be very romantic to have her picture taken in her wedding dress – by the Dorwin Falls north of Montreal. She wanted to have her feet in the water. Her dress became saturated and pulled her under. They tried and they tried – but they couldn't save her. Anthony was just 47 years old. He was a very nice guy. His next door neighbor asked him to come over and help. He thought he smelled – *propane*. That there was maybe a leak in the water heater. Anthony came over to try to help – just a little after supper. Something went terribly wrong. There was an explosion. The whole home was reduced to splinters. The only part left standing was the chimney. Life is short. People are very breakable. We are here today and gone today – *earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust*. When you know that – you realize how important it is to live your life very carefully. Today God's Word encourages us:

Put On The Full Armor Of God

- 1. Know your enemy**
- 2. Know your Savior!**

11 times we are reading from Ephesians this Church year – 8 times in a row – this being the 8th and last time today. How many chapters in Ephesians? You remember – 6! Three chapters about all that Jesus did to wash away your sins – chapters 4,5,6 how we put the Gospel into practice in our day to day life! Today familiar words about the battle we fight every day – as the devil continues to attack our faith! God’s Word says, **¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.** Take your stand against the devil’s schemes. The devil is the father of lies! He lied to Eve and Adam and look what happened! The very first people believed his lies – doubted God’s faithful love – and plunged the world into rebellion. Now there is pain and tears and death! How bitter the consequences of lies!

¹² 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. Our battle is not against flesh and blood. This is not some football game – where the Clay Matthews guys come after you – and the worst that can happen is a concussion or a spinal injury – your knee is injured and they have to drive you off on a golf cart. If only it were that simple. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood – warrior giants like Goliath – that can be felled with a smooth stone from the creek bed. Our struggle is **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** Those who attack us – attack our faith. What is at stake is where our immortal soul will spend eternity! Words fail to express how terrible eternal destruction will be. Isaiah wrote, **“Their worm will not die!”** It’s like the worms on your driveway in the Spring – part squished – but never dead!

Life is short. People are very breakable! Liam is 35 years old. He jumped out of an air plane and his main parachute utterly and

completely failed. He fell some 17,000 feet – more than two miles. When he was just 750 feet from the ground his back up parachute opened – *kind of*. He survived. He broke his back and had to have pins put in – and will have to undergo 3 months of rehab. What does he say? *I am unbelievably lucky! I'm still alive. That's what I have to hold onto!* Really?! It is by the grace of God – that his life was spared. It was not dumb luck or blind fate. It was the grace of God that his physical life was spared. Somebody needs to tell Liam that Jesus has given him this time of grace – to hear the Gospel before it's too late! Something I think about a lot is – how do they decide how much is a fair penalty. I don't know how they figure that out. I mean how many years should you go to prison if you take one life, or two or three? How many years if you rob a bank – or rob a mini-mart and take the life of a young person who is behind the counter? How many years if you are like Bernie Madoff and do one of those Ponzi Schemes? I can't even figure out – what should be the penalty if you are driving and it's rush hour – and you are all backed up in the one person lane – and you could go really fast to the head of the line – no waiting if you had just one passenger beside yourself – and you have this really big teddy bear – so you strap the teddy bear in – and say the words, “Shot gun!” And switch lanes and get pulled over. Do you know the price of that ticket – the fine? \$260! That's a lot – isn't it? I mean – they must really not want you to do that! We know how much the penalty should be for a life-time of sin. Sin – the bad attitude – the attitude that fails to be joyful and thankful for all of God's blessings – but instead thinks – all I do is work really hard – while everybody else is having a good time! The sin – the attitude that I think I deserve some good stuff from Jesus because I don't do the terrible things I see my neighbors doing! The sin – that does the right thing – not because I love Jesus so much – but because I'm afraid he's gonna pound me if I don't! Jesus died to

pay the penalty for all my sins – the ones I think are horrible and the ones I sometimes think are inconsequential. Jesus paid for them all with his innocent blood!

¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Stand firm then...

Notice the phrase that repeats – stand and stand and stand! It would seem to imply getting knocked down. We talk about falling into sin all the time. There are all kinds of potholes and speed bumps – where and when you least expect them.

Personally – I am exceedingly impressed – when people do the simplest task – very very well. When we lived in Loves Park there was a pizza place where these Italian guys worked. I’m sure those guys made more pizzas than you could count. They threw the pizza dough up in the air – around and around and around and around. They scooped on the pizza sauce – around and around with the bottom of the ladle. They sprinkled the cheese and the pepperoni and the mushrooms and onions. They slid the pizza into the stone oven and slid it back out. Chop, chop, chop, chop and they had the pieces. Sometimes – though – when someone is doing the simplest thing – and they don’t do it well – I get frustrated – sinfully impatient – and that’s wrong. It is terribly wrong. When I make that mistake – Jesus forgives me – and I have to get back up and try all over again – not to get upset. People who fumble the simplest tasks – might be distracted for the most painful reasons. It might be – they are doing the very best they can. I need to be more patient – much more patient.

Stand your ground – stand – stand firm! That’s not something we can begin to do on our own. Only Jesus can pick us up – so fill us with his Holy Spirit again and again – so that we are not discouraged – we persevere! We endure and ultimately we

overcome temptations – because Jesus has already won the battle for us!

¹⁷ **Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.** Do you watch war movies? In 2002 there was a movie called We Were Soldiers. It was about the Battle of Ia Drang on November 14, 1965. It's about Lieutenant Colonel Hal Moore. Lt. Col. Moore's unit is re-flagged prior to deployment to Vietnam to being a battalion of the **7th Cavalry Regiment**. Sound familiar? That's the unit commanded by General George Armstrong Custer when he led his troops into the Battle of the Little Bighorn. We Were Soldiers is about a terrible battle – where the American soldiers are completely surrounded. The American position is practically overrun. Lt. Col. Moore calls in "Broken Arrow"! The enemy is so close – artillery, napalm and machine gun fire is literally aimed at the American position! In all this – the remarkable thing is – Lt. Col. Moore and the other commanding officers are fighting – side by side – leading by powerful example. And you can't help but notice – no helmets! No helmets! It's unbelievable – in the midst of all this harm and danger in the valley of the shadow of death – no helmets! That was physical combat. We are engaged in spiritual warfare. We need the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. We need to be armed with the Scriptures. That means it is a powerful blessing to read your Bible – to come to Bible class – to very faithfully be a lifetime student of God's Word – and to grow in faith. Be strong for the battle raging all around you!

Life is short. People are very breakable! Just last Thursday a man just 25 years old – was at the Houston Texans/Minnesota Vikings game must have thought it would be fun to slide down the banister of the escalator. Instead he slipped and fell. Bill is a rancher in Texas – taking very good care of his cows. You can

imagine a tough cowboy – like the guy that used to be in the Marlboro commercial. Bill was attacked by his 500 pound donkey. Who saw that coming? Nobody! Life is short! Lourenco – 75 years old – was an experienced Judge with 10 years practice – with judging javelin throwing – in like a youth Olympics in Germany. Lourenco was out on the practice field – trying to be a nice guy – picking up javelins that had been thrown out there – when a young man threw a javelin. Didn't he see Lourenco? Probably not – the way you look back – and then really fling it! Who would be running out there where you throw spears anyway? Life is short. People are very breakable. That's why we need to be very careful all the time. Careful to live our life close to Jesus. Careful to put on the full armor of God – so that when the devil attacks we are protected and prepared. Know your enemy and the unspeakable evil he is capable of. But more than that – know your Savior – your Redeemer and your Rescuer – the risen Christ. He will always keep you safe. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony E. Schultz