

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map
Pastor Roger W. Huffman

Ephesians 6:10-20
September 5, 2021

We walk in danger all the way. Rely on God's PPE.

- 20 months of lessons on dealing with an invisible enemy - SAR CoV 2
- A little virus invisible to the naked eye - we can't spot, grab, or fight it
- Some reacted with fear. Many with caution. Others dismiss as not real or no big deal.
 - ◆ Some who dismissed, later infected, found out it is real - suffering, disabled, fatal
- The desire to be in control - open to all kinds of "remedies", some dangerous
- While the virus was quickly identified in the lab - how it worked was unknown.
 - ◆ How did it spread? How long could it linger? Who is susceptible?
 - ◆ What does it do? Respiratory, loss of taste & smell, blood clots, nerve/brain damage, diverse impacts on *long haulers*.
 - ◆ What offers the best protection? How is it best treated?
- We've learned a lot about this invisible enemy - how to protect ourselves
 - ◆ PPE - Personal Protective Equipment
 - ◆ Requires quality - effective PPE, used and used properly.
- ❖ Paul warns us against an ancient invisible dangerous enemy - Satan and his regime
 - *...the schemes of the Devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.*
 - 3 reactions to this warning: dismiss, fear, fascinated - Satan loves all three
 - Dismiss & fascinated (2 different deceptions from the Great Deceiver) = Death
 - Fear of: the unknown, powerless against him. Frantic to find any PPE
 - Scripture exposes this enemy. God's mission: rescue us from Satan's grasp.
 - ◆ Jesus' mission - crush Satan's head/power - stranglehold. How? Sin paid for in full!
 - ◆ Rescued from Satan's reign by God's grace through his gift of faith (new self)
 - ◆ Delivered from darkness - brought under God's reign - under God's umbrella of care
 - ◆ Jesus promises to keep us safe as we walk through Satan's playground/war zone
 - How? By angels, fellow believers and the *full armor of God* - God's PPE.

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- ❖ Avoid false *trust* in the Lord
 - One who says, *I trust in the Lord. I have faith.*, but fails to rely on God's instructions.
 - ◆ Like a soldier entering a battle without helmet, gun, or Kevlar vest. *God protects me*
 - ◆ The story of the man caught in a flood, rejecting the rescue of a canoe, boat, and helicopter saying, *I trust in God. He will save me.* When he drowns, he appears before God and complains, *I trusted you to save me. Why didn't you, Lord?* God: *I tried. I sent you a canoe, boat, and helicopter.*
 - Faith listens to God's instruction. It lets God rescue you his way - not your way.
- ❖ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*
 - *be strong* passive imperative: *be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength.* CSB
 - How? *The full armor of God* is power-packed with God's saving might.
 - ◆ It is **not** lifeless PPE - relying on you to make it work.
 - ◆ It's **not** pretty armor to put in a showcase in your home. It's designed to be used.

❖ ***Put on the full armor of God***

- These are **not** pieces for you to pick and choose - wearing some, neglecting the others
- They are interdependent - all coming from the same source - the Scriptures.
 - ◆ God's mighty gifts that cover the Christian from head to toe
- ***truth - Christ's righteousness - gospel - the faith - God's rescue - God's word***
 - ◆ Paul uses the term *rhema* for *word of God* - using a passage as Jesus did
- Examine each piece to see its power against the Devil
 - ◆ God's ***truth*** blocks Satan's lies from deceiving you - *It feels right to me.*
 - ◆ Christ's robe of ***righteousness*** that triumphs over Satan's ugly accusations
 - Those who delight in Christ's righteousness long (heart) to grow Christ-like
 - ◆ God's ***gospel*** makes us sure-footed and fleet-footed - able to stand, flee, and go!
 - ◆ The ***faith - able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the Evil One*** is not my internal believing!
 - It is the full shield of our Holy Christian Faith - what we confess with the Creeds - all the teachings of Christ Jesus.
 - Tightly interlocking - solid doctrine - solid shield, extinguished Satan's lobs
 - A shield with missing doctrines is a poor PPE - open gaps for Satan's arrows
 - ◆ God's promises to ***save*** helps us keep our head in battle and preserves our focus.
 - ◆ The ***word of God*** - Scripture to deflect Satan's jabs and send him packing
 - Words for our protection and to be God's agents to save others.

❖ Trust the Lord to deliver you. Trust him to do it through the ***full armor of God.***

- God's PPE will not work if you don't wear it as instructed.
- Does that mean *God helps those who help themselves?* **No!**
 - ◆ That is a deception of Satan to get us to rely on ourselves & God depend on us.
 - ◆ **Faith** puts on the armor of God **trusting** his strength to work through it.
- Faith that trusts God to work and save - prays.
 - ◆ Prayer is an activity of a believer who trusts God to hear, care, and act.
 - ◆ Prayer is an act of worship, treating God as God - coming to him as he commands
 - ◆ A person who trusts the Living God walks and talks to him in light of his word.
 - Praising, thanking, asking for help, praying for others
 - Imploring the Lord to help us as we *walk in danger all the way* - confident he will.
*I walk in danger all the way, The thought shall never leave me
That Satan, who has marked his prey, Is plotting to deceive me.
This foe with hidden snares May seize me unawares
If I should fail to watch and pray. I walk in danger all the way. CW 431*

Rely on God's PPE. Put on the full armor of God.

Use it. You'll see your Savior at work.