

Sermon 27: Standing with a Battle Tested Faith: Ephesians 6:10-16

Text: Ephesians 6:10-16 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked..."

Summary: Standing when your faith is tested starts with a firm confidence of your position and the collective strength of other Christians.

Proposition: We must root our confidence in Christ and draw strength from the body.

Interrogative: How do we do this?

Truth 1: Prepare your mind to face the conflict: 6:14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth..."

- We need a stabilizing standard when we face Satan's assaults.
- We must live consistently with what we believe.

Truth 2: Live like the person you are in Him: 6:14 "And having on the breastplate of righteousness..."

- We must rest our comfort in who we are in Him.
- We must live like the people we are in Him, or we will give Satan ground to exploit.

Truth 3: Strengthen your assurance with a full understanding of the gospel: 6:15 "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace..."

- **First: Why assurance matters: 2 Peter 1:10-11** "Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..."
 - **Satan's primary tactic:**
 - When you are not a Christian, he tries to strengthen your confidence in self.

- When you become a Christian, he seeks to undermine the confidence that you are a Christian so he can cripple you in your Christian life.
- **Peter's instruction:**
 - **"Make your calling and election sure:"** The word "sure" means a firm confidence.
 - **"Ye shall never fall:"** The word "fall" means to stumble.
 - **"So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom:"** A full reward as you enter the Kingdom
- **Second: Paul's illustration:**
 - Military sandals were made from a single piece of cut leather wrapped securely around the foot and ankle and then laced up in the front.
 - The thick soles were hammered with between 80 and 100 nails which provided traction like modern athletic cleats.
 - When Paul tells us to have our "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," he is saying have firm footing to stand by planting that confidence in the gospel of peace.
- **Third: The heart of the gospel is peace with God:**
 - **Ephesians 2:11-19** "Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh...at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity...that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God..."
 - **Colossians 2:13-15** "You, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
 - **Romans 5:8-10** "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then,

being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life..."

- **Fourth: Assurance is peace in your heart, that you have peace with God: 1 John 5:10-13** "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God..."
 - **Christ must be the sole object of our faith: 10:11** "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son..."
 - The objective work of Christ.
 - What God has revealed about the significance of that work in His word.
 - God's promise to give eternal life to all who believe on Christ.
 - **Things that turn our eyes off Christ and undermine our confidence:**
 - **Difficult seasons: Acts 14:22** "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God..."
 - **Failure to resist temptation: 1 John 3:2-3** "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure..."
 - **Weariness in the struggle: Hebrews 12:1-2** "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..."
 - **False teaching: Colossians 2:8** "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ..."
 - **An Unhealthy Conscience:**
 - **Hebrews 10:22** "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience..."
 - **1 John 3:18-21** "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart

condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God..."

- **Things that comfort us while we look to Christ:**
 - **The conviction that He is our only hope: John 6:68** To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life..."
 - **Evidence of spiritual life:**
 - Conviction and comfort
 - Growth in Christian virtues
 - Godly affection
 - The illumination of scripture

Truth 4: Do not neglect the collective strength of the church: 6:16

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked..."

- **First: Why the local church matters: Ephesians 3:16-21** "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus
 - **My salvation:**
 - My salvation is an individual matter.
 - I am personally responsible to God for my choices.
 - **My growth happens in community:**
 - **We are strengthened by the Spirit:** "That he would grant **you**, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man..."
 - **We are rooted and grounded in love:** "That Christ may dwell in **your** hearts by faith; that **ye**, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend **with all saints** what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height..."
 - **We are filled with the fullness of God:** "That **ye** might be filled with all the fulness of God..."
 - **We are the objects of His power:** "According to the power that worketh in **us**..."
 - **We glorify Him as a church:** "Unto him be glory in the church..."
- **Second: Paul's illustration:**

- The shield being described was called a scutum, which would have been around 4 ft tall.
- These shields were constructed by an ancient version of plywood and then covered in leather.
- Before going into battle, the soldiers would saturate the leather to extinguish burning arrows that might be shot toward their unit.
- These shields were meant to be carried by legionnaires as a unit in a formation called a tortoise.
- When Paul tells us to “take the shield of faith,” he is telling us to stand our ground in formation with our shields locked to extinguish Satan’s lies.
- **Third: God gave us the church so our faith could be grounded and strengthened: Hebrews 10:19-25** “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching...”
 - **Parallels:** We need confidence that we have peace with God:
 - “Having boldness...”
 - “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith...”
 - “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering...”
 - **Parallels:** We must draw strength from the church:
 - “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works...”
 - “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...”
 - “But exhorting one another...”
- **Fourth: A healthy church lifts us up and points us to Christ when we need it most:**
 - **Restoring to fellowship: Galatians 6:1** “If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted...”
 - **Shouldering burdens: Galatians 6:2** “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ...”

- **Rescuing from deception: 2 Timothy 2:25-26** "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will..."

Application:

- **To the doubter:**

- Are you born again?
- Do you understand the gospel?
- Have you felt the weight of your sin?
- Have you desired to be reconciled to God?
- Do you think there is another way?
- Have you called on the Lord for salvation in repentance and faith?

- **To the shaken Christian:**

- Look at the cross and remember what it accomplished.
- Rest in God's promises connected to the cross.
- Don't allow your heart to drift from the assurance of the cross.
- Don't neglect the means God has given to strengthen you.
 - The word
 - Access to God's presence
 - The preaching of the word
 - Corporate worship
 - Godly Christian community

- **To the assured Christian:**

- Keep growing.
- Keep your eyes on Christ.
- Minister to others who are shaken.
- Do not become complacent.
- Take an active role in strengthening this body.