

## It is Vital

Ephesians 6:14a Sunday AM, March 17, 2024

**Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-14a** (NASB95) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH,

**Finally, be strong IN THE LORD.** Being “in the Lord” is the only way to join Paul as a “prisoner of the Lord” and “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” There is much to learn about faith, especially when in today’s world, faith seems to be more of a good feeling giving confidence to face whatever life throws your way and to make life worth living. This stands in the face of biblical faith which focuses on God as the object of that faith leading to worship and obedience. **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.** Note that there is something coming from God enabling you to be strong in the Lord. This something is outlined in terms of battle. **11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.** There is a real devil that schemes to defeat those who would be strong in the Lord. There is a strength from God for those dressed in the armor of God that is stronger than every other thought in your mind or person that wars against the Lord and His purposes. However, if you focus only on the battle in your mind or with other people, you haven’t begun to see the real battle. **12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.** You must believe this, feel helpless before this, and put on God’s armor in full OR there is NO hope for you to stand firm in the strength of the Lord. While we will never see the full extent of the struggle, turning to God in biblical faith reveals One present, working, and able. Church, give praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation!

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): Praise to the Lord, the Almighty . . .**

How important is this armor to you? It is the only way to resist **in the evil day.** Each piece of armor shows where the devil’s schemes focus. Today, **14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH.** Your loins, your midsection, this is what you cover first—it undergirds all else. Cover it with truth. Bulletin quote by John Owen: Without absolutes revealed from without by God Himself, we are left rudderless in a sea of conflicting ideas about matters, justice and right and wrong, issuing from a multitude of self-opinionated thinkers. Truth is not merely propositional, it is personal. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. God who IS truth WILL hold fast all those who look to Him for truth.

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): He Will Hold Me Fast**

**\*Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn** **Choir:** There is a Quiet Place

**Scripture: Matthew 4:1–11** (NASB95) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” 4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’ ” 5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU’; and ‘ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.’ ” 7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’ ” 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.” 10 Then Jesus said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’ ” 11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

**Offering: \*Doxology:**

We could have looked at Satan’s deceptions from the perspective of Genesis 3, “Did God say . . .” and we see the first Adam fall to Satan’s deception. Instead, we looked at Matthew 4 and saw Jesus called to defend His deity—“If you are the Son of God . . .” And Jesus, the second Adam did NOT fall as He responded with propositional truth—IT IS WRITTEN. God’s Word stands. It is the truth that defeats Satan’s lies. Where do YOU think you are vulnerable to Satan’s lies? Much of it is shown by our fears, our need for control, in our frustrations. It is here we must remember that God is over us. He has told us what truly matters and provides what is necessary for us to please Him. Sing this John Newton hymn introduced to us at the conference this week to familiar tune of Immortal, Invisible.

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): Though Troubles Assail Us**

Where do the devil’s schemes get planted? Grow? Often in the quiet moments of our mind. Jesus, in the desert for forty days, you in the quiet of the night, in the cracks of your day. Are you regularly speaking truth about God? We must speak God’s truth to our thoughts, fears, our rights, our dreams so that we don’t merely promote our own agendas or protect ourselves from situations we don’t want to deal with. This done with the earnest prayer of Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done will expose the schemes of the devil by the truth of God’s Word. And this is what we have recorded in Psalm 6. It was a privilege to sit under powerful and strategic preaching/teaching this week and under the songleading of song writer Nathan George Clark. Learn his version of this Psalm with me as you practically prepare to put into practice this week what Pastor Jahn will preach.

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): Gently, Gently**

**Message: It is Vital Eph. 6:14a**

**\*Hymn #369: O Jesus, I Have Promised**

**\*Prayer**