

Fully Covered

Ephesians 6:14b Sunday AM, March 24, 2024

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-14 (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, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

Finally, be strong IN THE LORD. Being “in the Lord” is the only way to join Paul as a “prisoner of the Lord” seeking to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” What does it mean to trust Christ, to live for Christ, to be “in the Lord?” It does not focus where much of Christianity focuses—on having a good feeling about life and finding something that works for you and then thanking God for it. Biblical faith that gives proof of regeneration focuses on God as the object of that faith and leads to worship and obedience. And yet, even the ability to stand against all that would oppose God and to live to please Him comes from God Himself and is described in terms of battle. **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.** There is a real devil that schemes to defeat those who would be strong in the Lord, AND there is a strength from God for those dressed in the armor of God stronger than every other thought in your mind, person, or spiritual power that wars against the Lord and His purposes. You must believe this, feel helpless before this, and put on God’s armor in full if you would stand firm in the strength of the Lord. While we will never see the full extent of the spiritual struggle, turning to God in biblical faith in the face of the struggle we see reveals One present, working, and able. Church, look to our living Head and step in line under the King of Heaven!

***Hymn (Powerpoint): All Hail the King of Heaven**

That is just another of many hymns echoing Scriptures call to behold the works of God, recognize His great goodness, and then respond by verbally giving Him praise. Are you part of the worshippers? Heaven says we have more than enough reason to join in endless praise. In fact, to fail to praise God is to deny the trustworthiness of God’s revelation to us, reserving the right to determine what is praiseworthy by our own standard. This leaves us not only not praising God, but also seeking our own rightness, our own right to be not only be right, but to hold others to that righteous standard—to be hurt and feel just in meting out judgment. This puts us out from under the King of Heaven, and no true Christian will stay in this position without the Spirit’s work to lead us to heaven’s provision for standing against the schemes of the devil. Professing Christian, put on the belt of truth! **14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.** This righteousness is not yours—it is a foreign righteousness coming from the very One we spurn by seeking our own standard of righteousness. Worship God for His provision through Christ.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): His Robes for Mine**

***Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn** **Choir: This is the Time I Must Sing** **Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:18–31** For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, “I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE.” 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God. 30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

Offering: *Doxology:

Listen to the crowd as Jesus rides into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Did you hear the excitement in the choir song? Alive, happy, full of gratitude—that was and IS a part of Palm Sunday. Give glory to God and make them stop, the religious leaders said. No, if they stop, the rocks will cry out in praise of the works of God seen here in the incarnation and coming passion of the Promised Messiah. God’s Word promised to His rebellious, fallen creation to provide a seed who would crush the serpent would be fulfilled. You can trust God’s good Word to provide a way for your justification and reconciliation with Him. Church, Praise the Lord!

***Hymn #173: All Glory, Laud, and Honor**

You may be seated. Thou Good and Gracious King. Remember our Scripture reading? **30 But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, 31 so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”** Those praising Jesus on Palm Sunday probably felt they had cast their vote for Him, but many failed to recognize what was included in living under His reign. He was not King of their freedom and desires, but King of the Israel of God—those the Father sent Him to redeem. To put on the breastplate of righteousness Pastor preaches on today is to renounce all effort to do good in a way that earns favor with God and others apart from what Christ does in and through you. Watch for self-righteousness with what disgusts you in other’s lives, what keeps you from praying for opportunities to be part of God’s work in their lives. Remember, God did not choose many wise or noble. Are you willing to be considered foolish and be with the foolish or are you too refined? Do you use your gifts and personality to keep out of the mud of having your soul exposed in order to be made one with all those God has placed you with in kingdom service. As Pastor prepares to preach, sing thinking about where your righteousness (your good character and acts of service) keeps you from needing and seeking God’s righteousness.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Not in Me**

Message: Fully Covered Eph. 6:14b

***Hymn (Powerpoint): I’ve Heard the King**

***Prayer**