

The Sword: Needed & Used
Ephesians 6:17b Sunday AM, April 28, 2024

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-17

(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, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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. While the devil and those under him work to defeat those who would be strong in the Lord, God has made provision with armor stronger than every other person, spiritual power, or thought that wars against the Lord and His purposes. What wars against you being in fellowship with God living to represent Him and accomplishing His will? Identify these battlegrounds, then if your response would show strength and provision from God, you must look to God for the belt of truth—a foundation against all other realities—theirs or yours. Look to God for the breastplate of righteousness—a right standing producing right actions that please God. Look to God for footwear—the gospel of peace—quieting and protecting your soul but also the message your feet carry to those around you. Move forward intentionally, but take up the shield of faith **“with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”** Take up the helmet of salvation—first, what brings you back to God, but then what would stand against all other gospels apart from God—protect your head with salvation that brings you toward and under God. Were you aware of the devil’s arrows this week? What has God give you to believe which stands against those arrows? Christian ALL that has been given to you comes through Christ. Sing the substance of your faith in Christ.

***Hymn #117: We Come, O Christ, to You**

Today, add to your armor the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. You KNOW you are to trust God’s words. You know that we are to trust the Bible as God-breathed and without error in the original writings. But do you regularly contemplate the gift of these words? God, Your words are wonderful!

***Hymn (Powerpoint): Your Words are Wonderful**

***Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn**

Choir: Draw Me Nearer Blessed Lord

Scripture: Jeremiah 23:9–40

(NASB95) As for the prophets: My heart is broken within me, All my bones tremble; I have become like a drunken man, Even like a man overcome with wine, Because of the LORD And because of His holy words. 10 For the land is full of adulterers; For the land mourns because of the curse. The pastures of the wilderness have dried up. Their course also is evil And their might is not right. 11 “For both prophet and priest are polluted; Even in My house I have found their wickedness,” declares the LORD. 12 “Therefore their way will be like slippery paths to them. They will be driven away into the gloom and fall down in it; For I will bring calamity upon them, The year of their punishment,” declares the LORD. 13 “Moreover, among the prophets of Samaria I saw an offensive thing: They prophesied by Baal and led My people Israel astray. 14 “Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; And they strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom. And her inhabitants like Gomorrah. 15 “Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets, ‘Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood And make them drink poisonous water, For from the prophets of Jerusalem Pollution has gone forth into all the land.’ ” 16 Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. 17 “They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, “You will have peace” ’; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you.’ ” 18 “But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? 19 “Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, Even a whirling tempest; It will swirl down on the head of the wicked. 20 “The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it. 21 “I did not send these prophets, But they ran. I did not speak to them, But they prophesied. 22 “But if they had stood in My council, Then they would have announced My words to My people, And would have turned them back from their evil way And from the evil of their deeds. 23 “Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “And not a God far off? 24 “Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD. 25 “I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, ‘I had a dream, I had a dream!’ ” 26 “How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even these prophets of the deception of their own heart, 27 who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? 28 “The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?” declares the LORD. 29 “Is not My word like fire?” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock? 30 “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who steal My words from each other. 31 “Behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who use their tongues and declare, ‘The Lord declares.’ ” 32 “Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams,” declares the LORD, “and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit.” declares the LORD. 33 “Now when this people or the prophet or a priest asks you saying, ‘What is the oracle of the LORD?’ then you shall say to them, ‘What oracle?’ The LORD declares, ‘I will abandon you.’ ” 34 “Then as for the prophet or the priest or the people who say, ‘The oracle of the LORD,’ I will bring punishment upon that man and his household. 35 “Thus will each of you say to his neighbor and to his brother, ‘What has the LORD answered?’ or, ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ ” 36 “For you will no longer remember the oracle of the LORD, because every man’s own word will become the oracle, and you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. 37 “Thus you will say to that prophet, ‘What has the LORD answered you?’ and, ‘What has the LORD spoken?’ ” 38 “For if you say, ‘The oracle of the LORD!’ surely thus says the LORD, ‘Because you said this word, “The oracle of the LORD!” I have also sent to you, saying, “You shall not say, ‘The oracle of the LORD!’ ” ’ ” 39 “Therefore behold, I will surely forget you and cast you away from My presence, along with the city which I gave you and your fathers. 40 “I will put an everlasting reproach on you and an everlasting humiliation which will not be forgotten.”

Offering: *Doxology:

The sword is not merely a word, even words from the Bible, but words from God. These words are living because they come from the living God. In fact, to believe rightly and not be driven to praise God, to fight sin, to fulfill God’s will in your part of His purposes for creation as you look to Him for provision is to be far from salvation’s intent. Like the choir song, your heart should say, “Draw me nearer, nearer blessed Lord.” Learn this new hymn focusing on God’s words leading to relationship with God.

***Hymn (Powerpoint): O God, My Joy**

You may be seated. We heard VERY sobering words from Jeremiah—**My heart is broken within me, All my bones tremble; I have become like a drunken man, Even like a man overcome with wine, Because of the LORD And because of His holy words. . . 11 “For both prophet and priest are polluted; Even in My house I have found their wickedness,” declares the LORD. Therefore, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination, Not from the mouth of the LORD. But this false message is not one that irritates or that sounds implausible. It is a message of God’s peace and protection. 17 “They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, “You will have peace” ’; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, ‘Calamity will not come upon you.’ God IS the source of peace and protection, but NOT this kind for THESE people. 18 “But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened? As Pastor prepares to preach, pray not merely for discernment and words that make sense and “help you grow,” but for evidence of the Spirit’s work through His word. This is not something mystical, but something very real—simply listening to the Word of God, yielding to it through repentance, and then living in light of it. THIS is living strong in the strength of the Lord, taking up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.**

***Hymn #249: Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart**

Message: The Sword: Needed and Used Eph. 6:17b

***Hymn #178 (Red): The Bible Stands**

***Prayer**