

Grace mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ amen.

Paul begins our Epistle today with a powerful exhortation: **“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10)**. St. Paul reminds us that we cannot rely on our own strength, for we are weak and fallible. Instead, we are called to stand firm in the strength of the Lord. But how can we maintain this strength when we struggle daily in our weakness? Thankfully, Paul does not leave us with uncertainty. He offers a clear solution: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

This is a powerful passage—one that reminds us we are engaged in a spiritual battle. But it also reminds us of something crucial: **we cannot fight this battle in our own strength**. St. Paul begins by commanding us to **“be strong in the Lord,”** not strong in ourselves. Why? Because we are weak. We are fallible. We are sinful and imperfect, and if we try to rely on our own strength, we will surely fail.

It’s not difficult to see how weak we are when we honestly examine our lives. Day by day, we face temptations, struggles, and trials that seem to overwhelm us. We know what is right, but we often do what is wrong. We desire to serve God, but find ourselves distracted by the cares of the world. And in our relationships with others, even those closest to us, we can become irritable, impatient, and self-centered.

We are reminded of our limitations every day, whether it’s through the physical ailments we endure, the emotional burdens we carry, or the spiritual struggles we confront. We know what it is to feel inadequate, defeated, and broken. And the devil knows this too. He attacks us in our weakest places—our doubts, our insecurities, our pride, and our fears.

Our battle is not merely against the physical or earthly struggles of this world but against a far more dangerous and hidden enemy—Satan and his army of darkness. St. Paul, in this passage, is very clear that the battle we fight is not just against “flesh and blood”, but against **“the rulers, the authorities, the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12)**. It’s a daunting picture—one that shows just how ill-equipped we are for this fight on our own. The devil tempts us to cheat our lives of the good that God gives. He seeks to strip us away from Christ. Just as Christ governs and guides those who are light, so does the devil push and prod those who are darkness into every kind of evil. These enemies seek to draw us away from God, to deceive us, and to lead us into sin and despair. Paul uses the vivid image of warfare to depict the Christian life, where the real fight is spiritual, not merely physical. Before the devil hurts you in your body, he kills you in your mind. Through the deceit and lies of the devil, he tempts your mind to think there is good to be found where there is nothing. And through that temptation, he leads you away from God’s gifts which can be found at the Lord’s table and in forgiveness. In a similar way the devil first tempted Eve by getting her to question her thoughts and judgement by saying “Did God *really* say not to eat of the fruit?”, before presenting the fruit to her to eat into condemnation.

But thanks be to God, we are not left to fight alone! Paul doesn’t tell us to muster up more willpower or to try harder. Instead, he tells us to **“be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”** Jesus faced a similar onslaught of temptation by the devil, the answer should not have been “I think God said or I believe that is what I was told” but instead the answer should have been “It is written” or “Most certainly, God did say!” One little Word overthrows the Devil.

As Christians, we are not left defenseless. **“The strength we need to stand firm does not come from within us, but from God Himself.”** Our strength is insufficient, but God’s strength is infinite. And He gives us this strength as a gift. Each piece of armor is an important aspect given by God to protect us from the devil and his ways. God provides us with the full armor we need to stand firm in this spiritual battle. The first piece is:

The Belt of Truth reminds us that our foundation must be the truth of God’s Word. In a world filled with lies and deception, we are called to stand firmly in the divine truth that God has revealed to us. This is not just any truth—it is the truth of the Gospel, the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done for us.

The Breastplate of Righteousness guards our hearts and protects the most vital organs. This righteousness is not something we earn but is given to us by Christ Himself. We wear His righteousness, covering our sin and shielding us from the accusations of the devil. No righteousness of our own could possibly be proof against Satan; still imperfect and would promptly be pierced. It would be foolish to send us against the demonic foes with works that our own hands have done. For Christ’s sake we are declared righteous and acquitted of all our sin and guilt. It is the central part of all saving truth. The heart of the Word makes our heart invulnerable against Satan.

The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace are for the wicked day, not solid footing or ground because sandals furnish no footing but protect the feet when going over rough ground. To be prepared to march the rough courses of battle. The Gospel with its contents of peace is truth, truth must be this peace, made ours by this precious Gospel, so that the courage in our hearts makes our feet march with victorious steadiness and courage into the hostile hosts, to scatter them in defeat. Without this Gospel and its peace our feet would not stand or go forward against Satan. The peace of Christ that we receive through the Gospel allows us to stand firm, knowing that our sins are forgiven and that we are reconciled to God.

The Shield of Faith quenches the blazing missiles, arrows, fiery darts of doubt and temptation. The Word, doctrine, the pertinent Scripture passage, the objective content of faith. You may believe with all your might, but that will not be a quenching shield: Satan will easily pierce that, and you will be set ablaze. Hold up the faith, this extinguishes every tempting lie of the wicked one. You do not take up this shield, unless you believe that it will do what it did for Jesus. Faith in God’s promises allows us to trust in His strength, even when our circumstances are difficult, and we are tempted to doubt His goodness.

The Helmet of Salvation protects our minds. It reminds us that our ultimate hope and confidence are in our salvation, already accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ. That which saves and keeps safe, protects the head from a fatal or a disabling blow. No matter what happens in this life, we know that our eternal future is secure in Him.

Last piece: **The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God**, is our only offensive weapon. This is the very Word of God that we use to fight back against the lies and temptations of the evil one. Just as Jesus used Scripture to respond to the devil when He was tempted in the wilderness, we too are called to wield God’s Word as our weapon in the fight against sin. That utterance should be the sword before which the demon host flees. The demons being intangible “spirit forces”, the opposite of flesh and blood, we must have a weapon that is able to crush these hosts

Each piece of armor God has given to us to use in our lives each and every day. Although we are not perfect, God still loves us and has died for us on the cross so that we may enter into

eternal life with Him in heaven. God has equipped us with His armor so that we may stand firm in our faith and resist the devil. That is why Paul commands us to "put on" this armor. This act of "putting on" is reminiscent of baptism, where we put on the belt and are washed clean of our original sin by God's truth. We are also clothed with Christ's righteousness by putting on the breastplate shielding our heart from the enemy by declaring God's righteousness. Baptism is where our old sinful self is buried with Christ in His death, and we are raised to new life through His resurrection. Just as Adam and Eve were clothed by God after their fall into sin, we too are now clothed with the armor of Christ to protect us from the spiritual forces that seek to turn us away from Him.

To put on the armor of Christ is to walk in His steps. As 1 John 2:6 says, "Whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked." So if we wish to imitate Christ, we ought to run the same road as Christ was prepared to walk along, even in his darkest hour while hanging on the cross. Christ was fixed immovably to the cross, and yet running along the road of charity, by making supplication for his persecutors. We are able to put on the shoes of the Gospel and follow Christ into battle standing firm in God's peace. In the same way we are called to pray for those who oppose us, that God may grant them repentance and forgiveness.

So how do we maintain this strength when we struggle daily in our weakness? The answer lies in returning, again and again, to the source of that strength: the Lord Himself. We do not arm ourselves once and then walk away. Every day, we guard against doubts and temptations and return to God in humble dependence, acknowledging our need and receiving His grace.

In returning to God, we are reminded of Christ's victory won for us on the cross. A victory we can celebrate knowing we are fully guarded in the armor God provided for us. In our baptism, we are provided a firm foundation belted in God's truth and given faith to shield us from the temptations of the devil. When we receive the Lord's Supper, we are reminded that Christ has made us righteous in his body and blood and won for us salvation on the last day. So with eager feet, we tie our shoes of the Gospel of peace and march into battle with God's pure word ready to fight back against the lies of the evil one.

So do not be discouraged by your weakness. Do not despair when you feel overwhelmed. Instead, hear the words of St. Paul: "**Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.**" Trust in His power, not your own. Clothe yourself with the armor that God provides, rely on God's strength. And stand firm, knowing that the One who fights for you is the same One who has already conquered all things. Jesus' victory over death is the reason we can wear the armor of God with confidence, knowing that the ultimate battle has already been won. Amen.

The peace of God that passes all human understanding. Keep your hearts and minds fixed on Christ Jesus. Amen.