

Take Your Stand
Faith is the Victory
Ephesians 6:10-18

February 16, 2014

Dr. Steve Horn

Text Introduction: I am continuing a series this morning in Ephesians 6:10-18. First, we overviewed this passage and simply said that as Christians, we are in a battle. We are in a battle for our convictions, our culture, our children, and our churches. As a result, we are in a battle for our families and our future. We are called to take our stand in this battle. Actually, there are 3 main imperatives in this text: Be strengthened by the LORD, Put on the full armor of God, and stand.

Having given these three imperatives, Paul underscored 7 spiritual weapons that we should avail ourselves to as we carry out these imperatives. We are studying now each of these resources. To this point we have said that truth is the under armor. It is not the most important piece (they are all of equal importance), but it is the first piece. That is, it is the piece that serves as the undergirding of all the other pieces. Then, there is righteousness—the protector of the heart. Then, last time, we looked at the shoes of the Gospel of peace and said that this signifies our readiness to be in the battle by sharing the Gosepl. Today, we consider the fourth resource—faith.

Text: ¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. ¹² For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. ¹³ This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. ¹⁴ Stand, therefore,

with truth like a belt around your waist,
righteousness like armor on your chest,
¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness
for the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In every situation take the shield of faith,
and with it you will be able to extinguish
all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is God's word.

¹⁸ Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

Introduction:

Horatio Lord Nelson lived from 1758-1805. The son of a clergyman, he joined the British Royal Navy when he was 12 years old. He became a Captain when he was 20. He was heralded as a daring leader who won many a victory for the British. One of his greatest victories was over the French during the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon planned to invade Egypt so to restrict Britain's trade routes. On August 1,

1798, Nelson came upon the French Navy in the waters near Alexandria, Egypt, in what would later be referred to as the Battle of the Nile. Upon spotting the French warships, one of Nelson's men said, "If we succeed, what will the world say?" Nelson immediately responded, "There is no if in the case. That we shall succeed is certain!"

As believers in Jesus Christ—that we will succeed is certain! There is no "if." But, we live like there is an "if." We act like there is an "if." In this passage before us today, I don't see an "if." I see the certainty of our victory. This passage begins that we are in a battle. The battle is real. The battle is intense. The battle is with a powerful enemy, Satan, who is out to destroy us. But, I don't see the "if." I see the victory, and the source of our victory is our faith.

Faith is the spiritual resource that carries with it the promise of victory.

I want you to see just a couple of things about this promise of victory.

- Victory is complete. "In every situation" is in what we call the emphatic position. This phrase comes first. Now, you might have a translation that translates this phrase "above all" or "in addition to all." This translation might communicate that he is transitioning to the importance of faith. However, I think the best translation is this "in every situation" or "in all things." In every situation, we take up faith. Faith is the victory in all things. There is an idea in this whole passage of fullness. We get "take up the full armor of God." A little later we get "with every prayer and request, pray at all times, with all perseverance." So, the point is that this whole passage conveys these ideas of wholeness. The same is true with our faith. Faith is good all the time, in every situation, or it is not good at all.

Further, we are told that with faith we will extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. Paul here is continuing the analogy of the Roman shield. The shield was made of wood, but over the wood was stretched a piece of leather so to extinguish the arrows dipped in pitch and set on fire.

- Victory is certain. The emphasis of this text is like Horatio Nelson's words: "There is no "if." Our victory is certain. It is not like some sports games that we watch when our team goes into overtime and just barely gets a win at the last second. Our victory is a certain victory.

Our victory is proven by our faith in Christ.

So, why can we speak with such certainty about our victory? Somebody might say, "You're just being an optimist." Or, "You're just trying to use the power of positive thinking." Not really. Here's the reason. Our faith is not just positive thinking. Our faith is not just faith for faith's sake. Our faith is in Christ, and He has accomplished the most difficult thing of our lives already.

I want you to see 1 John 5:4-5.

because whatever has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith. ⁵ And who is the one who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Do you believe this?

Do you believe that Jesus is the son of God? You have believed that by faith. Now, when you have believed that, you have believed that Jesus died for your sin, and in His dying for your sin, He defeated sin, death, hell, and the Devil. When you believe that, you believe that when you die, you don't really die, but you live again, eternally with Him in heaven forever and ever. Do you believe this?

If you believe this, you have believed the most difficult thing that there is to believe.

So, now, what is more difficult than that? What in your life right now is more difficult than that? That is why we can speak of our certain victory in Christ.

So What?

Walk by faith

Now, just because something is certain—like our victory—that does not mean that it is easy. It certainly does not mean that there are not some episodes of doubt in our lives. That is Satan's chief tool. So, we must walk by faith. The writer of Hebrews recounting the faith of others in Hebrews 11 said, "Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.² For our ancestors won God's approval by it."

They walked by faith. Faith is usually not once and for all settled. We have to continue to walk by faith so that doubt doesn't take hold of us.

And chapter 12 of Hebrews tells us how we are to walk by faith when he tells us to "Keep our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith."

Talk about faith

In addition to walking by faith and to help others and ourselves walk by faith, we must talk about our faith. In the imagery of the Roman soldier described in verse 16, he talks about a shield. Now, the historians tell us that there were two kinds of shields—large and small. The two kinds of shields had different words. The word employed here refers to the larger shield. The large shields were put side by side together to form a greater protection. Imagine the barrier established as more than one person put their shields side by side.

I see an analogy of the church in that description. I need to hear your story of faith. You need to hear my story of faith. Sometimes I am weak, and your story props up my faith. Sometimes, your faith is weak, and my story props up your faith. Here is just another reminder of why we need one another in the body of Christ.

So, when we walk by faith and talk about faith, let us always be reminded that faith is the victory. Faith is the resource that carries with it a promise. When Admiral Horatio Nelson knew that the Battle of the Nile was won, and he saw what an overwhelming victory it was, he sent word to his superiors that "Victory is not strong enough a name to describe the scene."

We are in a battle. Our battle is against Satan, called the evil one, in our text today. Victory is not strong enough a word to describe Christ's conquest over Satan. Let's live like that is so.