

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Reformation Sunday, October 27, 2024**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)  
Hymns: 239, 292:8-9, 296, 262, 261, 501  
Lessons: Psalm 143, Ephesians 6:10-20, Luke 8:4-15.  
Sermon Text: Ephesians 6:17  
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

The WORK of God is accomplished through the WORD of God.

When a soldier or an army of soldiers goes to fight, the soldiers have to have some kind of weapon. In the twenty-first century, we may think of guns or grenades or rockets or bombs. When this letter to the Christians in Ephesus was written, the chief weapon was the sword.

The Apostle Paul, writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, has just listed how we are to be armed to fight *“against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (Ephesians 6:11–12, NIV84)

He has listed four defensive weapons and one offensive weapon. That offensive weapon which God gives us to fight the enemies is

**THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**

- 1. This sword is powerful,**
- 2. Because it is the Word of God.**

In our Epistle lesson this morning you heard again of the weapons God gives you.

The sermon for September 22, 2024 was based on our Epistle lesson encouraging us to **“PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD”**. You heard that God’s armor includes truth, righteousness, and the Gospel and that God provides a shield of faith which allows us to deflect the attacks of Satan. At that time you heard about the defensive tools God provides. He provides *“the belt of truth, ... the breastplate of righteousness,”* appropriate footwear, *“the shield of faith, ... and the helmet of salvation.”*

Guarded with these, we need one more thing to fight the good fight. That is *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”* Martin Luther leads us as we join in singing about the weapon and the shield in hymn 262, stanza 1, A Mighty Fortress Is Our God. You are invited to stand while singing this stanza.

1. A mighty Fortress is our God,  
A trusty Shield and Weapon;  
He helps us free from every need  
That hath us now o'ertaken.  
The old evil Foe Now means deadly woe;  
Deep guile and great might  
Are his dread arms in fight;  
On Earth is not his equal.

Luther pointed out that God is a shield to protect us and he provides the weapon we are to use to attack the enemies of God. Those enemies are also the enemies of the Christian and attack us every day.

Our text specifically tells us that the Word of God is the weapon with which we are to fight against *“the rulers, against the authorities, ... the powers of this dark world and ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* (Ephesians 6:12, NIV84) Those enemies are first of all Satan himself. Then we must also fight against all his allies – all the evil spirits and demons who followed him in their disobedience to God. And we must fight against the unbelieving world. That is a staggering number of people. Of the more than eight billion people in the world, we know that few follow the true God. The rest are enemies, whether they seem like enemies or not.

But you have a powerful weapon to fight all those enemies. It is the words of this book, the Bible, which is the Word of God. The Bible doesn't just "contain" the Word of God. It is the Word of God from Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 to Revelation chapter 22 verse 21.

Through Martin Luther, at the time of the Reformation, God provided the German people with the Bible, the Word of God, in their own language. Previous to this, Latin, the language people heard in church, was the way they could hear the Word of God unless they had a preacher who translated things such as a sermon text into their German language and explained the Scriptures to them. We have the Bible in language we can understand, and which of us does not have at least one Bible in our homes?

So what are we to do with that weapon, the sword that the Holy Spirit has provided in written form to us in language we can understand? We are to use this weapon to fight 'the unholy three': the Devil, the unbelieving world, and our own sinful flesh.

God provides this weapon. To the Christian prepared for battle, the apostle Paul lists only one weapon of attack; but it is enough, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Word of God has the power to kill evil desires and thoughts as they arise in our hearts. The Word of God is the answer which can conquer unbelief and error when all the enemies of God attack us.

The Word of God is not just some dusty meaningless words buried in ancient history. Scripture itself tells us "***For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.***" (Hebrews 4:12-13, NIV84)

As we fight the enemies of our faith, we don't have to depend on man's wisdom or man's words.

We read in First Corinthians: "***For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.***" (1 Corinthians 1:21-25, NIV84) Did you hear that carefully? "***For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.***"

The Apostle Paul, who wrote the words of our text, also wrote to Christians in Corinth: "***My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.***" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5, NIV84)

As we recognize that it is God's power and God's words which are our weapons, let us sing in the words of Martin Luther about where the power to fight our spiritual enemies comes from. Please join in singing hymn 262, stanza 2, and you are invited to stand while singing this stanza, too.

2. With might of ours can naught be done,  
Soon were our loss effected;

But for us fights the Valiant One,  
Whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ it is.  
Of Sabaoth Lord,  
And there's none other God;  
He holds the field forever.

When we use the strength which God has given through Christ, we are strong. The apostle is not speaking of our own strength, but the power which we have "in the Lord." We can't do anything in this fight against evil by ourselves. If we try, we lose the battle. But Jesus Christ fights for us, even now, just as he overcame the power of Satan with his resurrection.

The living and saving power which is in the Word is nothing less than the Holy Spirit Himself. So it can be said that he who fights with the Word of God fights with the Spirit of God. That Word of God is that sword, which is the Holy Spirit.

That power of God is the Gospel, as Paul wrote in Romans: "***I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'***" (Romans 1:16-17, NIV84)

Yes, our enemies are many and powerful. In fact, don't they populate the world? Please join in singing hymn 262, stanza 3, and you are invited to stand while singing this stanza, too.

3. Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill, They shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none, He's judged; the deed is done;  
One little word can fell him.

Do you remember how Jesus defeated Satan at his three great temptations in the wilderness after his Baptism? ***“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*** (Matthew 4:4, NIV84) Jesus himself used the very Words of God to fight Satan face-to-face!

It is that Word of God which gives us eternal life. Without God's Word, we are lost and condemned creatures, destined for eternal damnation in hell. But with the word of the Gospel, we have eternal life through faith.

And how does faith come? ***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*** (Romans 10:17, KJV)

Can we count on the Word of God? Can we trust it? The confession of the Christian is the words of Jesus with which we begin every sermon: ***“Sanctify [us] through thy truth: thy word is truth.”*** (John 17:17 KJV)

And it is the truth – truth that comes only from God and his Word – that sets us free from the power of death, from the fear of Satan, from our own fears. Remember Jesus words: ***“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”*** (John 8:31–32, NIV84)

The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is our weapon of attack. It is the weapon of attack with which we can attack and beat Satan and his allies each day here on earth, and overcome and win the battle and, when we join Jesus on the last day in heaven, celebrate winning the war!

One Little Word. A single word of God, well understood, and rightly applied, at once destroys a temptation or an objection, and subdues the most formidable adversary. A correctly placed Word of God can topple the enemy.

Our enemies – the Devil and the unbelieving world may ignore God's Word. They may think it has no power, as we will sing in the last stanza of our hymn. But even if they take everything away from us on earth, we still have, by the Grace of God, his ruling in our hearts. Please join in singing hymn 262, the last stanza, and you are invited to stand while singing this stanza, too.

4. The Word they still shall let remain Nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, Goods, fame, child and wife,  
Let these all be gone, They yet have nothing won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.

God's Word is our great heritage, and we pray and plead with God asking that it be ours forever. God wants that to happen, but we must be on our guard so we don't substitute something else for God's Words.

And with the sword of the Holy Spirit, with the Word of God, the Christian can overcome and definitely conquer all the forces of evil. As Luther writes: “Here it is not enough that we defend ourselves against the devil with faith and hope as our shield and helmet, but we must also draw the sword and go for him with such insistence that he must fall back and flee, and we thus obtain the victory over him.”

Since the Word of God is this weapon, we must make use of it at all times. In order to do this, we must be thoroughly acquainted with it. And how do we learn God's Word? Certainly by personal Bible study, as we “search the Scriptures.” But we must never neglect public preaching and joint study of the Bible. We must learn it, know it, and remember it!

Only in this way shall we be able to make complete and appropriate use of the Word of God as a true weapon of offense at all times.

May that Word of God be your powerful weapon every day, in every way. ***“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*** Amen.