

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
For the Installation of Teacher Laura Pringle
Pentecost 15. September 13, 2009 Ephesians 6:10-17



Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand 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. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.



people of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God – especially you Teacher Pringle:

A movie star named Bonnie – was filming a movie in the wee hours of the morning on the streets of LA – when they saw in the street something that looked like a sweat shirt. Upon closer examination it was a small dog – lying in the street – a dog badly burned. This lady took the puppy to the Veterinarian who said there was no hope – that the dog should be put to sleep. The lady said she wanted to take the puppy home first – to show it love and kindness – so that at least it's last hours or days would not be only pain. She took the puppy home and put ointment on its wounds. She put it inside her sweat shirt – so it could peek it's head out. So it would feel love and warmth and compassion. That little puppy lived 11 more years. That's 77 more years in dog years! That's the power of love! Today as we install our Sunday School teachers and a new teacher at our Trinity St. Luke's Lutheran Grade School God's Word is powerful encouragement to live your faith in the light of Law and Gospel. Today God's Word encourages you:

Be Strong In The Lord!

- 1. Put on the full armor of God**
- 2. Stand your ground**

If you pay close attention you are aware that we have been reading through the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians for several weeks now. Back on Sunday, July 26th we started reading from Ephesians. Remember? **Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ... I love that word *adopted!* Made part of his family by grace alone. *Adopted as his sons.* We talked about that in Bible Class last Sunday. **Adopted us as his sons** means we are heirs! Not heirs of grandma's cameo jewelry**

or grandpa's pocket watch or an antique night stand. But heirs of an inheritance incorruptible—stored up in heaven—where moth and rust cannot corrupt—where thieves cannot break in and steal. Where our hearts are—that's where our treasure will be, too! Ephesians chapters 4 and 5—run right together. Chapter 5 begins, **“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”** Imitate God! That again—is setting the bar for teachers exceedingly high. Be more and more like God! *God is love*. That means to be more and more like God means to love more and more. Love and forgive one another. Remember last Sunday—from Ephesians 5. **Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.** Don't get drunk on wine or beer or Friday night fish fry old fashioned or martinis after playing golf! There are a whole bunch of bill boards in downtown Detroit that say *“Buzzed driving is drunk driving!”* Think about that! Is that really news to anyone? As soon as you drink enough alcohol to start thinking and doing things that you wouldn't do cold sober—you are drinking *too much!* If you have a bunch of beers watching the Packers and the Bears and the next thing you know—you are cursing the Bears—or cursing the Packers for not beating the Bears—there's something seriously wrong! It's not just wrong for our children and grandchildren to hear their parents and grandparents cursing. It's wrong for Jesus to hear you calling down eternal destruction upon a bunch of pudgy men playing a children's game poorly!

Chapter 6 begins with very practical words, too! **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”** *Children—obey your parents*—for Jesus' sake! Little children learn that—when little people come to Church—Sunday after Sunday—and Wednesday after Wednesday during Advent and Lent! Children—obey your teachers—for Jesus' sake! That means show respect for Miss Pringle and Miss Wiedmann and Mrs. Ehlke and Mrs. Pagels and Mrs. Holzhueter and Mr. Maurice and Mr. Willems and Principal Moeller and Mrs. Kiecker and Mrs. Meschke when you are paying for milk and hot lunch. Show respect for Mr. and Mrs. Ewardt who are cleaning Jesus' school. It doesn't say obey your elders if you like them—and you can be disrespectful if you don't like them! Parents need to show respect for your children's teachers. When I was growing up—my pastors and teachers were sinners just like I am! But my parents never ever said anything hurtful about any of my pastors and teachers. My earthly father always made a point of bumping into my teachers at Church on Sunday—to make sure I was being a faithful student. My earthly Father would find out if there was any way I could grow in being a faithful and respectful student! We need to spend our time and energy—not grumbling and complaining about any teacher. Instead we need to pray for them—speak well of them—take their words and actions in the kindest possible light. We need to build them up and help them!

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood... Our day school and our Sunday School are about the fact our struggle is not against flesh and blood! If it was—all we would have to do is take some martial arts class—and give the devil a bloody nose and a black eye—and he would leave us alone. We could all wear bullet resistant vests and we would be ok. It's not nearly that simple. Our fight is **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** Our fight is against the devil and all his demons. Our fight is against this world—with all of the music and movies, all the video games and

advertising – all the peer pressure that people can apply to us. Make no mistake that is considerable power, too! It seems to me the worst danger of all is our own sinful flesh. God's Word says, James 4:7 "**Resist the devil and he will flee from you!**" You can turn off your TV. You turn off your radio. My friend who was pastor in Belvidere, IL used to go through his garage to get his mail. He then dumped his junk mail in the garbage. He never even carried it into his home. I think that was pretty smart! You can, by the power of the Gospel work very hard to resist the devil and this sin infected world. But where can you go to get away from your own sinful flesh. Wherever you go – there it is! Within a heart beat it's there right beside you!

Our Sunday School and our Day School are about God's encouragement--**put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then... Stand, stand, stand...** That seems to imply we are getting knocked down. I can still remember playing football my first year in High School. I was literally the smallest person on the team. When the biggest seniors used the littlest freshmen for blocking practice – there were times I was literally knocked off my feet. It is an indescribable feeling to literally fly through the air – only to crash land on my face mask – literally scraping grass and soil into my face. The best you could do was scramble to your feet and pretend it didn't hurt. Get back up! After a while it frustrates the people who knock you down – that you don't stay down! We fall down – spiritually – all the time. We fall into sin. We make painful mistakes all the time. This world knocks you down. What are you going to do? God's Word says, **Put on the full armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground – after you have done everything to stand. Stand firm then...** Don't be discouraged in your marriage. Don't be discouraged when you raise and discipline and love your children. Don't be discouraged. Don't give the devil the satisfaction of thinking he has made you discouraged. **Stand firm** – by the power of the Gospel – for the glory of the LORD! **Put on the helmet of Salvation!** Be careful what you let into your head! It's nice to know what's going on in this world. But don't become obsessed – worried and anxious about this world! Remember Jesus didn't spend most of his time in Jerusalem. Jesus didn't send his disciples to Rome to straighten out Caesar! Jesus was concerned about the Kingdom of God – not the Kingdom of Israel or the Roman Empire! Our first concern dare not be health care nor taxes nor earthly and worldly justice! Our first concern needs to be the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. Be concerned about the Kingdom of God first – and all those other things will be taken care of as well! Love and forgive one another for Jesus' sake and we will make our country a better place to live – one home after another – one neighborhood after another one – community after another!

Our Sunday School and Day school are about having **your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.** Feet take you where you need to be – to do something – when you see something that isn't right. I was taking my walk the other day – when I saw a person going down the street – in a huge pickup truck – hauling a big trailer. This person was texting – while driving. I don't mean one hand on the wheel – and one hand thumb-ing little buttons. He was using both thumbs – no hands on the steering wheel at all. I signaled him – hey, eyes on the road – and he stopped! Now what? I walked up to him and said, "Dude! If you take both hands off the steering wheel – you could hurt – (who? My children – they are all grown up! My grandchildren – they live in Detroit!) I said – you could hurt yourself! I care about you!" "You're kidding!" "No, I'm not!" When you see people in danger – you need to tell them – because you care about them. Because you love them! The greatest danger again is not flesh and blood. The greatest danger is to our faith and to our soul. What's at stake is eternity! We need to go by those people and talk to those people and talk to them now – before it's too

late! Tell them you love them. Tell them you care about them. The results are in Jesus' hands – and Jesus can change hearts and minds and souls for eternity!

Sunday School and TSL mean **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.** Jesus invented a dog called a Newfoundland. They look like a black bear – daddy Newfoundlands 120 to 140 pounds – even up to 200 pounds. They have large bones, powerful muscles – for swimming in the ocean waves and ocean tides. They have enormous lung capacity so they can keep on swimming – thick oily double coats to keep them warm. Droopy lips and jowls – so they can breathe when their mouth is full and they are swamped by the waves. They have webbed paws. And when they swim they don't dog paddle. They have a kind of modified breast stroke – a very powerful and efficient stroke to propel them through the waves. These dogs can save people. There was a blizzard – with a ship wrecked. A Newfoundland swam from the ship to the shore – with a massive rope in his mouth. The people on the shore – anchored the rope and brought 92 people safely to shore. Puppies can save a few bodies from the waves of the ocean. Jesus died for the sins of the whole wide world. Jesus died and rose again to save our immortal souls for eternity. **Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.** Know that **the LORD is our Refuge and Strength – an ever present Help in time of trouble. Therefore we will not fear** – for Jesus' sake. God bless all who teach and all who learn – in all our schools--this new school year. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Anthony E. Schantz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.