

Daily Devotional, March 4, 2021 Strength in God and in One Another

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:10-11 (NIV)

The more people I talk to, even amongst the most optimistic, I sense great burden, worry, and weariness. Now is a time for spiritual strength! Now is a time to be fortified with the practices and graces of faith. Now is the time to hold fast to faith, prayer and perseverance. The challenges and troubles we face in this pandemic are real, pressing, and destructive. They are surely tiring and are trying us all! But we don't fight back with violence or anger, but with trust in God's power so that we can withstand, and in time, overcome and defeat this silent enemy.

As new coronavirus variants quickly spread around the world and start to cause further harm here, I am reminded that with all the progress made, the fight against this deadly virus is far from over. While vaccines are steadily being administered and new vaccines are on the way, every one of us must recommit to the fight. We are every one of us, out on the front lines now. We are all in this together.

We mask and distance, wash our hands, disinfect, spray and wipe, stay home and make other sacrifices and adjustments so that together we may defeat the deadly virus. The public health measures we have been forced to take up are like the "armor" that Paul describes in Ephesians, for those "on the front lines" of battle. We take these measures and safeguards to help us stand against illness and death. These are the weapons that we have in this fight, and meager as they seem, they are effective if we are diligent in utilizing them at all times, and in all places.

I must tell you that I miss being with all of you in person. I miss the routines and places we all cherish and love. I'm trusting that we all long to be back together in the sanctuary for worship and in our large fellowship hall for meals and conversation. Unfortunately, we are in a fight for human life—our own and those of everyone in the congregation and in our communities. Now is the time to strengthen yourself with the armor of God and take up the shield of faith in order to stand firm. Now is the time to trust in God's grace and to pray for one another, to keep alert and to persevere. Now is the time to keep up safe practices in order to win this fight for life and health!

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. Ephesians 6:14-17 (NIV)

Prayer: Almighty God, as we continue to battle against this deadly virus, we pray for spiritual strength, for health and recovery and we pray for each one who cares for the sick. Help us fight the good fight with all of our might and lean upon Christ's strength daily. In the power of your Spirit, help us persevere. Amen.