

Fight for Faith...Fight for Life

1998 Life Sunday Sermon

(Ephesians 6:10-18) 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 devils 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. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

I knew I was in trouble a number of years ago when we no longer had garbage men but sanitation engineers.

This has become an age of political correctness that has certainly touched life issues and even us in the national office of WELS Lutherans for Life. People will argue for choice because abortion is too harsh a term. The movement toward assisted suicide has been augmented by the word physician as though it somehow sanitizes the killing that is to be done.

So it was within this politically correct climate that we received a letter critical of our convention theme. The writer argued that the terminology is too negative and combative. Well, folks, what is before us is nothing less than full-scale war. Terms of war and battle are the same used in the inspired Word of God, such as where Timothy writes, **(1 Timothy 6:12) *Fight the good fight of the faith.***

What we have before us is nothing less than a full-scale war. But it is more than a fight for lives. Christ said, **(Mark 8:36) *What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?*** To rephrase that to apply to abortion we might say, What does it profit to save a child from an abortionists knife, but to lose that child's soul eternally? Or, What does it profit to rescue the elderly from death by starvation, if the soul is starved without the message of salvation? So, our sermon theme for this pro-life Sunday reminds us that we should **FIGHT FOR FAITH FIGHT FOR LIFE.**

This is a spiritual battle that rages in the world, in our government, in our people and yes, even in our own hearts. And in this spiritual battle it is important that we understand who the enemy really is. Paul provides this answer: **(Ephesians 6:10-12) *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 devils 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.***

I want you to consider the following facts:

The President of the United States is considered to be a Southern Baptist member in good standing yet, he is compelled to veto partial-birth abortion legislation.

Mr. A. James Armstrong provided this testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Human Life Amendments in 1974: Should a male dominated religious hierarchy determine the moral posture and legal status of the opposite sex when the woman in question is caught up in a dilemma no

man can fully understand? Mr. Armstrong was the president of the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church.

A 1970 statement of the Lutheran Church of America (now the ELCA) read: On the basis of the evangelical ethic, a woman or couple may decide responsibly to seek an abortion.

And finally, on page 21 of his infamous suicide formula book called *Final Exit*, author and Hemlock Society founder Derek Humphry writes: If you consider God the master of your fate, then read no further. Seek the best pain management available and arrange hospice care.

The attacks against life also hit close to home. We have had windows broken and graffiti scribbled on our Pregnancy Counseling Center sidewalks. We have had counselors verbally and physically assaulted. We have received the hateful phone calls and letters.

But, folks, our enemies are not those who would do these things. Our enemy is not the President of the United States, leaders of religious church bodies, Derek Humphry or even Jack Kevorkian. They all reflect the spiritual bankruptcy promoted by Satan. Concerning him Peter writes: **(1 Peter 5:8) *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.***

We won't beat abortion or euthanasia with the demise of pro-death leaders and the destruction of abortion mills. We also won't win with just an increase of pro-life leaders and pro-life agencies. Until we can effect change in the hearts of people, efforts to protect life will be shallow. We need pro-life leaders. We need courageous pro-life efforts. But to win the war we need to quit going after the humanitarian missionaries of the pro-death movement and go for the heart.

We will not win with words of hate, weapons of physical destruction or protection against physical injury. Our tools for victory and protection are different.

Verse 13 reads: ***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.*** In the fight for faith and for life we are to be fully equipped. We are to be fully suited up to conduct this effort. You can't play football with just a helmet. So also, you can't conduct spiritual warfare with half a uniform.

We are to wear a special belt: ***Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.*** Our battle is to be conducted with honesty. We do not lie to lure potential clients into Christian Life Resources centers. We do not portray ourselves as compassionate when we have no intention of caring for those others do not want. We must be honest.

We are to be pure. ***With the breastplate of righteousness in place.*** Our minds and motives are to reflect God's will. He purified us with the blood of Christ so that we stand right in his sight. We therefore act right with confidence knowing that nothing can separate us from God's love. We are to be prepared to witness with good news. ***With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*** Peter said it this way: **(1 Peter 3:15) *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.***

We must at all times be ready to talk about the God of eternal life. When in battle and the enemy seeks to harm you, stand firm with your faith as your shield. ***Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*** It is that faith which enables us to counsel when we

normally are scared to death to say anything. It is that faith which enables us to stand up to those who seek to force their religious views of individual freedoms to the cost of human life on all of us.

Protect your most vulnerable part of the body your head, with the Word of God. ***Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*** We can learn all we want about the effects of dehydration on the human body or the pain caused to an unborn child in abortion. But ultimately, it is the Word of God which changes the heart. We are told, **(Hebrews 4:12) *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.***

This is how you lower the abortion rate. This is how find the stamina to care for the dying patient. This is how you face your own impending death while others are suggesting you should die rather than be a burden on your family.

It is by truth, righteousness, gospel-readiness, faith and the Word of God that you can walk into this battle and walk away from it a winner.

With all this having been said Paul concludes with these words: **(Ephesians 6:18) *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*** You finally are on the winning side when you maintain communication with the one in charge.

Over the course of time I have spoken with many of you to help you wrestle through the challenges of life and death. I have prayed often for you that you might be strong and get through. And here you are. Even though the devil, the world and your own flesh are suggesting that the battle is too big, you have fought it for too long, and its time to move on here you are.

And the same can be said for all of us. Our Commander-in-Chief has obviously heard your prayers because here we are.

I encourage you to keep up the fight for life by always remembering that this is really a fight for faith. You cannot lose, despite the odds. You cannot fail despite the way it looks sometimes. You are children of God, objects of his love, instruments for his work and victors over all that is evil. Never forget and never lose heart. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.

by Rev. Robert Fleischmann - National Director, Christian Life Resources