|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **We Have an Enemy**  *Promise: God equips us to withstand the enemy* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Deut 4:1-2, 6-9; Ps 119:129-136; Eph 6:10-20; Mark 7:14-23 (15th Sunday after Pentecost, Pr. 17), 9/1/24)  *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.* – v. 12  **Lead In –** Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are in a war whether we realize it or not. We may not be, at the moment, in a war zone; but that in itself isn’t good news. It could indicate that we are far behind enemy lines and don’t sense the heat of the battle. That hardly means we are safe! To be sure, victory in this war is assured. The decisive battle has been won. But when our ancient foe is finally utterly vanquished, we sure as shooting don’t want to be found in his clutches. The final judgment will come suddenly…   1. **We Have An Enemy and He Is Clearly Identified**    1. Monsters, beasts, and dragons, not just fiction!    2. Our real enemy is not flesh and blood, but demonic…    3. Our enemy knows that he is no match for God! 2. **Be Strong in the Lord, Stand Firm Against the Schemes**    1. Be strong! Be courageous! Yes, but in the Lord…    2. Notice the baptismal imagery here…    3. Doctrines matter, schemes involve false teaching… 3. **We Live By Breathing the Word In Prayer**    1. Christ’s strength includes the full armor…    2. It’s worth looking at the components of salvation…    3. Prayer itself is not a piece of the armor, instead it is...   **Final Word –** I love the sign some churches have above the entrance to the church, but visible from the inside as you exit. Perhaps you have seen it before. It simply reads “Servants’ Entrance”. What a healthy attitude. At the same time, I can think of other apt slogans. How about “Mission Field”? Or “Mash Unit”? But a final one to offer, and one in keeping with our Ephesian Reading is this: “War Zone!” And if you sense and believe this to be true, it’s more than a little frightening. At the same time, if you believe it you will put on your baptismal garment, the garment of salvation. And you will be well fortified in Christ as you breath His Word in constant prayer. And just so, you will be able to withstand in the evil day. And our Lord will deliver us from evil.  **Ge 3:1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.  **Re 12:9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.  **1Pe 5:8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.  **Js 1:9** “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”  **Ps 28:7** The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.  **Ga 3:27** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.  **Ro 13:14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. | **Ephesians 6:10-20 ESV**  *The Whole Armor of God*  10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.  **Ep 4:24** Put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.  **Is 61:10** I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  **1Ti 4:16** Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.  **1Th 5:8** But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.  **He 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.  **2Co 10:4-5** For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. |