

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost – August 29, 2021

“Put on the whole armor of God...” (Ephesians 6:11)

The apostle Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ....and I live in the flesh by faith in the Son of God” (Gal. 2:20). Whoever belongs to Christ crucifies the flesh. But because we have not yet died, we still sin. We still get angry, feel envy, impatience, and sexual desire. But these feelings are not carried out because the flesh is crucified by repressing it with spiritual disciplines and by walking with the Spirit. We are instructed, encouraged, and comforted by the Word of God, by faith, and by prayer, which helps us to refuse to yield to our desires. When we resist, we nail our flesh, passions, desires, and our sins to the cross of Christ, with Christ, who takes them as his own. Though our “flesh” is still alive, it cannot accomplish what it wishes because it is nailed to the cross by its hands and feet.

We dress ourselves with faith, hope, and the sword of the Spirit. We fight back at the flesh; and with these nails it is fastened to the cross, so that against its will it is forced to be subject to the Spirit. Eventually, when we die, we will put it off completely, forever. In the resurrection we will have new flesh that is pure, without any passions, evil desires, or sin. We have gone from sinner to saint.

We put on the breastplate of righteousness so the chest is protected against flaming darts (vs. 16). This gives us courage and a good conscience, which is righteous because we rely on God’s armor. When we are attacked by the flaming darts, we feel guilt and disgrace. The shield helps us from becoming fearful by putting our trust in God alone.

We need the helmet of the Savior, Jesus Christ. He made himself into a helmet when he said to us, “Remember the word that I said to you” (John 15:20). A helmet gives the head protection and we can feel secure and peaceful when thinking of the things that are happening to us also happened to Jesus.

We take the sword (not the sheath!), which is the word of God, and strike out against the flaming darts with the sharp blade of spiritual understanding. We have the word of God deep inside our hearts, protected under the breastplate, and we strike at the slings and arrows that are attacking us. Thanks be to God! Amen.

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