

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

Theme: “Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11 NASB).

- I. The action required to stand (put on the armor)
 - a. Our need
 - i. No strength of our own
 - ii. Need the strength of another
 1. Be strong in the Lord
 2. In the strength of His might
 - b. Our resources (the means of grace)
 - i. The Word of God: our chief means of grace
 - ii. The Sacraments
 1. Baptism
 2. The Lord’s Supper
- II. The armor required to stand
 - a. The full armor
 - b. The armor of God
- III. The activity against which we stand
 - a. Schemes
 - b. Of the devil
- IV. The attitude with which we can stand (firm)

If we did not have the Word of God, wouldn’t we wonder what is going on in our world?

Life, as many of us have known it, is under attack. Fifty years ago, our nation legalized the

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

killing of babies in the womb. In several states, people have been given the right to end their lives. The devaluing of the elderly continues to escalate. Marriage has been redefined by the U.S. Supreme Court. The sex one is born with is now up for change.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10 ESV). Thankfully in this verse Jesus unmasks for us what is happening. There are two opposing forces in this world: One is the culture of death, and one is the culture of life. What a contrast is revealed between these two ways of life! The world offers destruction, and Jesus offers abundant living. It is becoming more apparent to us all the time that we live on a battlefield, and we need to be equipped for the schemes of the devil.

We must remember that Paul, as he writes under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is writing to believers in Ephesus; thus, he can exhort them with the action required to stand. The believer has spiritual armor available (Ephesians 6:14-18), but it must be put on. Before it is put on, we must daily be reminded of our need by reading the Word of God. We have no strength of our own. Verse 12 of this chapter reveals to us that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities ...” We are no match for the devil. We need the strength of another.

That is why Paul’s exhortation in verse 10 is to “[B]e strong in the Lord ...” Our Lord Jesus Christ disarmed the devil of his victory when He shed His blood for us on the cross. If we focus on ourselves, we see sin and failure, but in Jesus, there is righteousness and perfection. He is our perfect substitute, so we are strong in Him. The rest of verse 10 says to be strong “in the strength of his might.”

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

As we think of young people being educated today, we need to help remind them of who they are in Christ. Young people, you will face a very different world than your parents and grandparents faced. You will need to put on your armor because the battle will be fierce.

Then look at the resources we have available. When a nation goes to war, they may get focused on the enemy and forget all the resources they have available for the battle. If you have enough firepower, you need not fear any enemy. Wow, does the believer have resources! As Lutherans, we refer to them as the “Means of Grace.” God didn’t write His love and mercy in the sky, but He did choose to communicate it to us through these means. We have the chief means of grace in the Bible, God’s holy inerrant Word. In His Word, God detailed for us His plan to save man from sin by sending His only Son into this world. In verse 17 we are reminded that we have “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Because of this, we need to stand up for what God says about life. When assaulted by doubts or mistakes in our past, we stand on the promises of God. In your past you may have “played around” in the devil’s minefield sexually, but if you have repented of your sin, God’s Word says that sin is gone. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). You can stand for life today, even if you have had an abortion. When you bring any sin into the light, Jesus disarms the enemy. The devil can no longer hold that sin over you. Christ is your righteousness, and you stand in Him. God’s Word declares it to be so.

Not only has God given His Word, but He has given us two powerful, visible means to remind us that in Christ we are forgiven and new creatures. When we were baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection, His death became our death to sin. Also, His resurrection became our

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

resurrection to a new life. We can only stand by faith in that relationship with Jesus. When you are with others and a life issue comes up, don't fear to speak up for life because Christ lives in you.

Furthermore, God assures us when we come to the Lord's Supper that Jesus gave His righteous, spotless, blameless life for us. His body and blood are offered to us to guarantee us that in Christ our sin is forgiven. We come to the communion table as repentant sinners, confessing no confidence in the flesh but utmost confidence in our Savior who took all that the devil could muster in our place. It is Jesus who stood against every temptation of the devil as He quoted, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4a).

So, yes, you are in a battle, but because of your great resources, you can stand as you put on the armor of God.

Secondly, we all need the armor required to stand. There's no need to go and take out a loan to get such armor. It too has been supplied by our Savior, and it is not missing any parts.

We need the “full armor” (Ephesians 6:11 NASB), and it is repeated in verse 13 for emphasis: “...take up the full armor.”

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying 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 ...” (Ephesians 6:14-18 ESV). Think of how vulnerable a soldier is who is missing protective equipment. You who are in

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

Christ, put on the armor, take up the armor! Parents, you have an important role to play with your children. You have brought them to the Lord in Baptism, but have you taught them how to use the armor they have been given? God’s Word is absolute truth. Most of our culture does not believe there is any such thing as absolute truth today. Your children live in a world of relativism. Teach them what truth is when they hear the news. Teach them how to deal with a suggestive billboard or an advertisement during a television program. Fathers, instruct your boys to turn their eyes away from scantily dressed women and reserve their sensitive minds for the one woman to whom they will vow their life before God.

We also must realize this armor comes from God. This armor has been tested. Jesus dealt with the devil for 40 days and nights in the wilderness before He began His public ministry. He dealt with the devil by using the Word of God. “It is written” was His main defense. This is good armor. In the Old Testament, you remember how when David was going to battle Goliath, he was offered Saul’s armor. David tried it on, but it was untested. He could not go to battle with it. He had to use his sling and stones. Believers, we must use the Word of God as our standard for what God calls good. He created life and called it “good,” and after He created man, He said it was “very good.”

Who would have thought that such fundamental issues of life would ever be challenged in our world, but we have God’s Word to stand on. And stand we must, for there is a war going on. The two opposing forces of death and life are very active. Our text says the activity of the devil is described as “schemes” (4:11). These are not arbitrary situations that believers face. These are well-calculated schemes. There is thought and planning behind the activity. There is strategy behind the activity. In a game between two neighborhood football teams, there may not

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

be a lot of well-thought-out strategy, but in professional football, the thought and planning goes on into the wee hours of the morning. So it is with the schemes of the devil. The devil was a high-ranking angel before his fall. He knows strategy very well, and his schemes are planned. So we must pray against his strategy today. That is the last, but not least, piece of armor that we need to put on. In our churches, we need to gather to pray against the forces of evil in Jesus' name.

In Daniel 10:10-21, we have a picture of the schemes of the devil. It appears to be like a spiritual chess board with princes of kingdoms of this world doing battle with the heavenly angelic realm. Consider verses 11-13 (ESV): “And he said to me, ‘O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you.’ And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, ‘Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia.’”

Daniel was in prayer, humbling himself before God, and it had influence on the spiritual realm. What power the believer in Christ has available by using the armor of God! And let me remind you that our God has not changed, nor has the point of access to His throne changed. His children have direct access through Jesus their Savior.

And lastly, with what attitude should we stand? Ephesians 6:13b tells us: “[S]tand firm”! What picture comes to your mind when you think of someone standing firm? Perhaps a U.S. Marine? How about a person trained in karate? If you watch carefully, they do not stand with

Here We Stand 2023

Ephesians 6:11 “Here We Stand”

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, former President of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
lutheransforlife.org

feet together but apart, so they can withstand an attack from any direction. That is what the armor of God does for the believer. It makes him invincible in Christ! The devil cannot overcome the believer. Remember: It is the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ that empowers us. What a blessed place the believer has to stand—in the righteousness of Christ!

So, believer, daily put on the armor that is supplied to you in Jesus. You have no strength of your own, but the Word of God tells you of all the armor that is required to stand—the full armor of God. We stand against the schemes of the devil, and against those schemes we can all stand firm in Christ.

Augustine, when tempted to plunge into the old life, said: “Thou fool, dost not thou know that thou art carrying God around with thee.” Oh, how the believer in Christ needs to remember that Christ lives within! This is no longer my life, it is Christ’s. Yes, you live in the midst of a battle between the culture of death and the culture of life. Stand firm in Christ, where the abundant life has always been and always will be!