

Stand Firm

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[0 : 00] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

The common theme of a great battle, including this battle, the battle at Kruger, is that! the confrontation is pivotal! And life and death hang in the balance.

And there is no battle of greater importance than the one being waged over your eternal soul. As we mentioned last week, Scripture makes it clear that the greatest enemy of our soul, the devil, is like a prowling lion seeking someone to devour.

He is looking for the wobbly need, the unstable, the vulnerable. He seeks to kill, to steal, and to destroy. Everything Christ has done, he's seeking to undo.

Everything, from personally to the corporate. Where there is grace, he wants to bring condemnation. Where there's hope, he wants to bring despair. Where there's generosity, selfishness.

[1 : 07] Where there's trust, doubt, godly zeal, he wants to replace with apathy. Where there's unity, he wants isolation. Charity, he wants cynicism. Gratefulness, he wants discontentment.

Life, he wants death. The war against the lion is raging all the time. All the time. And last week, Walt, he helped us see the nature of the war.

And he helped us see the enemy. And now, Paul here, in our text, he wants us to understand how to engage in the battles ahead. Paul's going to teach us what it looks like to stand firm.

To stand firm. And it is so much more than an image of a statue standing firm in place. Independent and unmoving. No.

We are to stand firm together like that living wall of buffalo. Paul is addressing a church. Not just individuals.

[2 : 08] He's talking to a group of believers together. United in life and in purpose. A people set apart for God who takes on the enemy together.

He's calling us to take a stand that, even though it's seemingly defensive, it's actually offensive in nature. It's pressing in with a singleness of mind and purpose to maintain unity, to protect and defend one another, even in this room.

All of the weapons Paul lists in our text this morning serve this singular driving command at the very beginning. Stand firm.

Stand firm. So I believe that the main point for us very simply this morning is stand firm together in the power that Christ supplies. Stand firm together in the power Christ supplies.

And so we're going to look at each of the six parts of Christ's armor so that we might know how to stand firm.

[3 : 12] So the first one is to live in light of the truth. Truth. Truth. Paul riffs on the previous section by calling us to stand.

In verse 14. So in light of the enemy's presence, you must be alert. Wake up. Don't be caught strolling along the riverside, in other words.

Don't be oblivious and unaware. Paul is not calling you to paranoia. Just to be clear. That's not his goal. But he is calling us to wake up.

Don't slide into passivity when it comes to your soul or the souls of those around you. The call to stand is plural.

He opens verse 14. If we were to translate this to Appalachian culture, he'd be saying, Y'all stand. Y'all stand. So this is an address to a body of believers united in faith through Jesus Christ.

[4 : 21] This is not an individual letter, but a letter to a church. The enemy is looking to isolate us. To get us to be individual. To be vulnerable.

To be alone. So then he can annihilate. But the clarion call here is to stand together. Y'all stand as a herd. Watch out for one another.

Take responsibility for one another. Are you your brother's keeper? Well, in this case, yes. Yes. Yes. The Lord wants Trinity Grace Church to be scanning for danger for one another.

To look out for the vulnerable. To look out for the wobbly need among us. We're not a bunch of individuals who battle alone and then occasionally we just come near each other on Sunday mornings.

No, no. We're a new people set apart by the living God as a family in Jesus Christ. So if you were to look around this room and you find it unthinkable to risk dying in battle for the people in these chairs, then our scripture would seem to suggest you have a sub-Christian view of your relationship to the local church.

[5 : 39] We're called to lay down our lives for one another. To go all out for one another. We're called to look out for each other as family.

Not just any family. Eternal family. Our family forever. In this room. Right now. Right here. Oh, and I'm so grateful that this church, this church is just filled with brothers and sisters willing to go to battle for me when I'm wobbly need.

To stand up for me in the face of affliction. I've experienced this personally. To stand firm together in the power that Christ supplies. So Paul is calling us first and foremost to be attentive together and to be ready for action.

So how do we stand? How do we do this together? Well, Paul begins in verse 14 with fastening on the belt of truth. Remember when we played basketball in our jeans during sixth period gym class, we'd empty our pockets out, tighten up our belts.

Because it was game time. You better believe it. We're about to go into action. So in this case, it's very similar. The idea of fastening the belt meant readiness for battle.

[6 : 56] Paul seems to be drawing from Isaiah chapter 11. Hundreds of years before Jesus walked the earth. Where this divine messianic warrior comes as a righteous judge to deliver all those who are meek, all those who are downcast.

The deliverer is described in Isaiah as being belted with righteousness and his loins bound up with truth. You have those themes embedded in there.

And now, the armor which that Messiah wore in battle is now provided for his people as we engage in the battle.

So those in the church, they've embraced the truth. The truth found in Jesus and his gospel.

Ephesians 1, earlier in this very same letter, it said, In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

So standing, our standing in the battle begins with truth. It begins with truth. Jesus declared that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

[8 : 17] Jesus claimed to be the Messiah predicted in Isaiah 11, who came to save sinners. So before anything else, we must reckon with what Jesus actually said about himself.

C.S. Lewis famously said that Jesus introduces a trilemma. It's a dilemma, but now there's three options. It's a trilemma. He is one of three things.

Either he is a liar, who was intentionally deceiving people, and he's not the Messiah. It's option one. Or, he was a lunatic, who was just crazy, simply deluded.

And he's got to be excused as a crazy person. Or, option three. He's truly Lord. These are the three options.

Is he a liar? Is he a lunatic? Or is he Lord? What is the truth about Jesus and who he says he is?

[9 : 30] See, that question, it begins there because everything is at stake. Right there. Paul even concedes that much whenever he said, if Christ is not raised, then our faith is futile.

And we are still in our sins. This is Paul writing. In other words, if Christ is not who he said he is, then our faith is a sham.

And we're wasting our time. We are wasting our time in this building right now. Why do this? If what he said is false, we, as Paul said, should be pitied above all people in all the world.

It would be the most pathetic thing for us to waste our time with this person, Jesus, if he's a liar or a lunatic. But, but, if Christ is true, then we must live in light of this truth.

We must live in light, all out, in light of this truth. He famously asked Peter, who do you say that I am, Peter? And now I turn and ask you the same question.

[10:51] Who do you say that Jesus is? Who do you say that Jesus is? Do you believe he is a liar, a lunatic, or the Lord? Who is he?

Is he truly the Lord? And if so, is he truly your Lord? Is he your Lord? Because belief reveals belonging.

I want you to know to whom you belong today. Do you belong to the Lord? Is he your Lord? And if you belong to Christ, if you belong to Jesus Christ, then you are truly forgiven.

You are truly redeemed. You are truly transformed. Fastening this belt of truth is the starting point for standing in the battle.

So stand firm together in the power that Christ supplies. Point two, seek righteousness. How do we stand together?

[11:53] Secondly, seek righteousness. If you look at verse 14, we'll also see the breastplate of righteousness. And here Paul draws from Isaiah 59.

Again, Isaiah, where Yahweh himself puts on the breastplate of righteousness as he comes to deliver his people and he punishes the nation's enemies.

Isaiah 59, 17, he put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on his head. You have two elements that are alluded to in our very text from Isaiah 59.

So in Isaiah, righteousness often is parallel to salvation. Righteousness points to God's faithfulness as he keeps his promise by saving his people from their cruel oppressor.

That's what he does. God acts on behalf of his people. He straps on righteousness to go into battle on their behalf to save them. Righteousness in Paul's letter often means justification.

[12:59] justification. Perhaps you're familiar with that term. That is, in other words, God's gracious initiative. Him moving towards sinners to make sinners right with himself through Jesus Christ.

So to be clothed in righteousness, which is not your own but Christ's, is to stand before God not condemned but accepted.

So, so how does this function in the attack of the enemy? We're talking about warfare. Well, according to the Puritan pastor Thomas Brooks, the devil has a couple of plays in his playbook.

He has temptation and he has accusation. Temptation and accusation. Brooks describes temptation as Satan presenting a golden cup but hiding the poison in it.

That's temptation. They are the whispered seductions that the enemy promises will satisfy but they end up leaving you emptier.

[14:05] It can come in so many forms. Promising satisfaction but leaving you emptier. Exploding in anger. It almost feels good, doesn't it?

It almost feels right. And then it leaves you emptier and the people around you emptier. Maybe it's gossiping. It feels so good at first.

It leaves you emptier. It leaves the people around you emptier. Slandering. Indulging lustful fantasy. Chasing praise. Compromising truth.

Drifting into ease. Oh, it feels good at first, doesn't it? Eating or drinking too much. Maybe it's escaping into the screens.

Try to wipe away the pressing responsibilities that are beckoning for your attention and your dependence on the Lord. It comes in so many shapes. It's so many varieties.

[15:03] But no matter the temptation, if you succumb, the whispered seduction of the enemy quickly shifts to the screaming accusations.

That's what he does. With the claws dug in, the lions roar your failures. As soon as you give in, the lions roar your failures.

We knew you'd fail. We knew it. We knew you were a fake. We knew you weren't righteous. We knew that you weren't worthy.

Who do you think you are? You see, the accuser, he wants to drive you away from the only hope of righteousness you ever had to begin with.

And the truth of the matter is that you are not worthy. You aren't worthy. Satan accurately captures what the scriptures teach.

[16:18] There are none who are righteous. No, not one. That's the truth of the Bible. And he's quoting that to you. In that moment with his claws dug into your body, into your soul, that's what he's saying.

But the accuser conveniently leaves out the rest of the story. He leaves out 1 Peter 3.18 that's also true, which says, for Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he

might bring us to God.

That's what he does. The Christian assurance of righteousness begins with what theologians call an alien righteousness. That's a righteousness that comes from outside of yourself.

So as long as you're looking inside of yourself, it's accurate. You're not worthy. None of us are worthy. None are righteous. But, the righteousness that comes from outside of yourself is a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

That's where righteousness comes from that you appeal to in that moment. Martin Luther encourages us wonderfully when he says, when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, you tell him this, I admit that I deserve death and hell.

[17 : 45] What of it? For I know one who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God. And where he is, there I shall be also.

That's what you say in this moment. How do we know this? How can we be encouraged by this? Romans 8 instructs our hearts to say this, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. It is God who makes righteous. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.

More than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who is indeed interceding for us. That's who we have whenever the accuser locks in. That's the truth about us.

The assurance of righteousness, of a right relationship with God through Christ is a strong breastplate to protect us from satanic accusations.

[18 : 49] So stand firm together. Stand firm together in the power that Christ supplies. Third, proclaim peace.

Proclaim peace. If you look at verse 15, it says, and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

See, the word here used for shoes was used to describe this half boot of the Roman military. They were made of leather and they left the toes free.

They were light and they have these heavy studded soles. So the shoes, they provided stability, they provided protection and traction to move forward without slipping at all.

Well, in 490 BC, a miracle happened. The outnumbered Athenian army miraculously defeated the invading Persian forces at the city of Marathon.

[20 : 06] And after the battle, a messenger was sent to Athens to announce the victory. So, according to the legend, the messenger ran about 25 miles from Marathon to Athens without stopping.

And when he finally got to the city, he breaks into the city gates and cries out, victory! And then collapsed and died on the spot.

Amazing, an incredible story. Well, in writing to the Ephesians, Paul references another long distance runner from Isaiah 52.

Isaiah 52 depicts this lone messenger whose beautiful feet are just flying across the mountaintops in order to bring a message of good news to Jerusalem.

So, like that messenger from Marathon, when he comes within earshot of the city, he shouts, good news of peace. Salvation has come!

[21 : 18] That's what he yells. Your God reigns! It's the message that he brings desperately drumming across the mountains. The feet that bring the good news, the gospel of peace, it is a message of salvation.

That's what he brings. So you hear the echoes of that. It can be seen in Ephesians 2.17 which we studied a month or so ago, where peace is announced to those who are far off and those who are near.

Ephesians 2.17 through 18 said, And he came, Jesus came and preached peace to those who are far off and peace to those who were near.

For through him, we both have access in one spirit to the Father. So the messenger who came to proclaim the gospel of peace in Isaiah is the same messenger in Ephesians 2.

Jesus is both the messenger and the message. He's both, through Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles now have access to the Father in the same family.

[22 : 36] The implication is that they didn't used to have access. They didn't have access to the Father before. Whether near or far, they both were cut off from the Father.

The reason is that they were at war against the Father. And we also were at war against the Father. We stood against God as his enemies.

We deserved his wrath against us. It would have been just. But Christ came. Christ came as a substitute to die in our place.

To take on the just wrath of God for our sin. Christ absorbed all of our war penalties. If you think of it this way, he took all of our war penalties and then purchased for us passports through his blood to a new kingdom.

That's what he did. Romans 5 tells us clearly, therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God.

[23 : 54] Not on our own, but through our Lord Jesus Christ. You see it? He proclaimed peace. Peace is not all things going comfortably or smoothly or according to my plan.

I can go there in my mind. This is what peace really is. It's comfortable, it's secure, and it's going according to my plan. That's not the peace he's talking about.

In fact, we're guaranteed the opposite. Jesus ascends, he says, my peace I leave with you. You will have tribulation in this world, but my peace I leave with you.

Take heart, I have overcome the world. Peace and tribulation at the same time is what he guarantees us. But he gives us a different kind of peace.

It's peace with God that leads to peace with the world and peace with others. Even when the world is at war.

[25 : 06] So what I mean is this. When we have peace with God, we are set free from expecting too much from this world and the relationships in it.

Think about it. before we became Christians, before you became a Christian, you submitted to God, we were at war with him and we were trying to live as if we were God in his place.

We were attempting to have the things in the world and the people in the world do our bidding.

That's what our lives revolved around. Do you remember that?

Do you remember trying to make life work that way? But when we experience peace with God, it rightly orients us toward the things and the people of this world.

It changes us. Our peace is no longer tethered to the ups and downs of our circumstances. All the acclaim that we used to chase after, going up the ladder, the house that we just couldn't live without, the hobbies that used to rule our lives, the quest to just stave off every possible anxiety and fear with earthly securities.

[26 : 25] Do you remember these times? These things are limited to the here and now. The best that this world has to offer will all be left behind in the end.

But now that we have peace with God, we're no longer trying to rule from his throne. God's love.

Now we can enjoy the things of this world for what they are. They're not things to be worshipped or things to be fought over, but good gifts pointing us to an even greater God.

So people are no longer servants to be subdued or masters to be worshipped. people are either brothers and sisters in our eternal family through Christ or they're enemies at war with God in need of the same gospel of peace that we've received.

So as Christians, we can have peace with God and tribulation in this world at the same time. Do you have that kind of peace? Do you have this kind of peace?

[27 : 35] Do you have peace with God through Jesus Christ? Do you have peace with the things of this world and with the people of this world? The result of the gospel of peace is that it frees you from the temptation and the tyranny of things and people.

That's what it does in the eyes of the world, in the eyes of the people in this world. It is a kind of peace that surpasses all understanding. This is what Christ supplies to his people.

This is his kind of peace. So stand firm together in the power that Christ supplies. Fourth, defend with faith.

Defend with faith. In verse 16, it says, in all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.

shield. The kind of shield that Paul refers to here was this large, heavy shield made from a bunch of wood planks and it's covered on the outside with a canvas of leather.

[28 : 52] It has a metal trim on the top and on the bottom. It's secure. Soldiers could soak this as well with water. And soldiers could hide their whole bodies behind this.

Even when arrows would rain down from above. So here, in our text, the shield is a shield of faith. Faith.

It's meant to protect you from the assault of the enemy. Here, it describes that assault as flaming darts. So in Roman times, these arrows would be dipped in tar and set ablaze so that they could be shot in mass like a rain of fire.

So even if the flaming arrows that are flying through the air, even if they didn't directly kill their intended target, they would scorch and destroy the shield, either directly or they'd deflect and then catch things on fire and eventually set the whole area on fire.

Set it all ablaze. So just imagine for a second being in an open field with fiery arrows raining down on you. Just imagine that.

[30 : 08] You hear the whir of these arrows grow until they land all around you. I mean, it's just incredible. Some of them are stabbing into your shield while others ignite in the grass nearby.

The heat is increasing. You can feel the temperature rising. Fire is spreading. The shield is failing. The arrows are still coming. The imagery is intended to simulate the experience of the enemy's assault in spiritual warfare.

The attack is unyielding. It keeps coming. It keeps falling. The flaming darts are his mischievous accusations which inflame our conscience to guilt.

The goal is to destroy our faith to burn down everything around us including our relationships our witness to the Lord and even our own lives.

He loves to destroy all of those. But notice what this shield is able to do. Did you see?

[31 : 20] this shield doesn't just withstand the arrows nor does it just merely deflect the fire only to be consumed over time.

Instead this shield quenches the fire. So to take up the shield of faith is to claim the promises of God on our behalf.

Confident that he's going to protect us in the midst of the battle. Last fall I went on a retreat in an area I hadn't been to since I was in college.

And I was honestly very surprised at the memories that surfaced as I was driving along this road. there were memories of impulsiveness and foolishness on one road I was driving on that cost me a friendship.

And I started to feel at the very beginning of the trip just this kind of burning sensation of sorrow and guilt and regret. Even at the front end of this trip.

[32 : 35] A little bit later on this retreat I woke up in the middle of the night with these unexpected memories of sin.

Sins I committed over 20 years ago. And it was just like one after the other. I couldn't stop it. It just kept coming. The memories kept surging.

They were like specific moments of sinful indulgence, of rash words that I spoke. selfish thoughts that I had. It was like I was transported back to those very moments.

And I felt like I was all alone in the field with the flaming darts just coming down. It seemed like morning would never come. That's the sensation that I had.

But then as I was laying there in the middle of the night something wonderful happened. I remembered something. I am not who I used to be.

[33 : 48] So I was laying there in the dark. I picked up the shield of faith. God said, that's not me anymore. I said it out loud. That's not me anymore.

Galatians 2 20. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live. That was the old me. That Taylor is dead.

I have been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. In the life I now live, I live by faith.

In the life I now live, I live by faith. In the Son of God who loved me and he gave himself for me. Another verse came to mind, 2 Corinthians 5.

I said it out loud. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. I am a new creation. The old Taylor has passed away.

[34 : 48] Behold, the new Taylor has come. All this is from God. This is not my own doing. Who through Christ reconciled me to himself and then he gave me the ministry of reconciliation.

The flaming darts of the enemy were extinguished that morning. They were dead. They were snuffed out with the shield of faith and the promises of God. This is what's available to you.

The arrows come in so many different varieties. Doubt, anger, passivity, regret, despair, even believing false teaching.

What flaming arrows are flying towards your heart today? What arrows are burning all around you? Where do you feel the heat? Let me urge you, pick up the shield of faith. Pick it up. Extinguish the flaming darts with the promises of God.

[35 : 51] And let me urge you, think of a friend you know who is being assaulted right now by the flaming darts. Who's someone you know that's experiencing the barrage of the enemy's assaults?

Perhaps you can help them lift the shield today. God is eager to extinguish the flames. So stand firm together and the power Christ supplies.

Fifth, embrace salvation. Embrace salvation. Scripture says, and take the helmet of salvation. Paul returns to the image of Isaiah 59 where we saw that breastplate of righteousness on the messianic warrior coming to deliver his people.

It's a bleak picture in Isaiah 59. It's this overwhelming power of present darkness. So what do we do? Lord strapped on the helmet of salvation.

He came for us and delivers us personally when we could not do anything for ourselves. You remember the battle at Kruger. That vulnerable baby buffalo was under the complete control of the lions.

[37 : 09] It was hopeless on its own. However, the herd returned in force and shockingly, the lead bull comes out and lowered his head momentarily in order to raise it up again and fling the lion away for good.

And in a matter of moments, that helpless, hopeless baby buffalo was released from the clutches of the lion and disappeared. That battle at Kruger points to the greater battle at Calvary.

And even though sinners like you and I were hopelessly locked in the jaws of the enemy, Christ, the warrior, came for us personally. He came for us when we, He could have left us, He could have left us there.

And yet, He ascended the hill called Calvary and was nailed at a cross. For a moment, He lowered His head. He did, He lowered His head, but His head did not remain down.

Three days later, He raised it up again. Three days later, He rose from the dead. He served the death blow to death by dying for sinners. He raised His head.

[38 : 16] And when He raised His head, He sent the lion flying. That's what Jesus did at the cross. He accomplished salvation for all who placed their trust in Him for the forgiveness of their sins.

The warrior spoken of in Isaiah has come. Jesus came personally to conquer death and salvation, but there's more. Because now the helmet of salvation is being offered to His people.

He wants us to put on His helmet. We're reminded to enter into His victory by uniting ourselves with Him. That's what He's calling us to. He's saying, remember how I came to you in your hopelessness and I brought you salvation?

Look at the helmet. Look, put it on. Unite yourself to this reality. I raised you up, seated you in the heavenly places. I rescued you from death, wrath, bondage.

I transferred you into a dominion where I rule. That's what's happened. So put on the helmet for the battle ahead. When Satan tempts you to despair and tells you of the guilt within, upward you look and see Him there who made an end of all your sins.

[39 : 28] Salvation is yours in Jesus Christ. So stand firm together in the power Christ supplies. Lastly, engage with the word.

Engage with the word. The end of verse 17 alerts us to the final weapon available to us, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

Of all the elements mentioned, the sword is the only offensive weapon. It's a concept connected with the word sword. Here is this short-handled sword used in close hand-to-hand combat.

So when an enemy made a direct attack with the sword drawn, the short-handled sword was used for a counter-attack. Quick jabs to thwart the enemy away, reclaim position.

So here we see that this is the sword of the spirit. To clarify, it's not the sword made up of the spirit, like we're wielding the spirit as a weapon.

[40 : 31] We know that because the very next phrase says the sword is the word of God. the sword is not the spirit, but the spirit makes the sword of God's word powerful and effective.

We saw this when Jesus is tempted in the wilderness. Temptation comes and he responds rightly with the word of God, a counter-attack. This same defense is given freely to us.

Paul wants us to prepare for the day of battle. My friends, don't wait until the lion is upon you to prepare for the day of battle. Where are you vulnerable to his attacks? Maybe it's the thought of suffering we sang about earlier today.

Maybe fear and anxiety tend to grip your heart. Maybe you find yourself in that sinking sand of disappointment or you're easily wounded by criticism.

Maybe you've got a limping faith right now. whatever the case, it seems the Lord would call us to store up the word in our hearts for the counter-attack.

[41 : 40] I want to call you and commend to you Bible memory and meditation. It's so much more than a nice habit. It's a double-edged sword to defend your soul from the enemy.

I think one more thing could be said about the sword of the word of God. Because in Paul's letters, the phrase word of God is often used in reference to the gospel. And in many cases, it's connected to the act of proclaiming the gospel.

If you remember Paul standing before King Agrippa on the defense, on trial, he's the one in chains making his defense. And what does he say to Agrippa?

Agrippa says to Paul, in such a short time, would you persuade me to be a Christian? And Paul said, whether short or long, I would to God that not only you, but all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.

The counterattack with the word of God, the proclaimed gospel, it's amazing. God gives us the weapon of his word, not only to defend, but to advance the cause of Christ.

[42 : 48] Is this not the picture and the pattern of Christ's work in the world that we see over and over again? When the lowly seems to be lost, the tables turn to reveal that it is those who belong to the Lord who are actually the victors.

Like the herd in the battle of Kruger, they not only return to defend, their united stand puts the lions on the defensive. Another vulnerable creature is released from the clutches of the lion and joins the herd, and the herd moves forward.

The herd moves forward. This is what happens. This is what happens when we open our mouths at work or in the home when we're discipling our children, proclaiming the word by the power of the spirit.

The tables have turned and the enemies are brought into the herd. Christ the warrior is with his people and he has armed us for the battle until he comes again to bring us safely home.

So let us live in light of the truth and seek righteousness. Let us proclaim peace and defend with faith. Let us embrace salvation and engage with the word.

[43 : 55] Trinity Grace Church, let us stand firm together in the power that Christ supplies. May God help us. Let's pray. Oh Father, we turn to you, cast ourselves afresh on you, the sustainer of our faith.

Thank you that you don't leave us alone, but you arm us for the battle so that we can cling to you in dependence and fight the war that's before us, knowing that we are safely in your grip.

Help us to move together in the power you supply. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.

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