

## **The Church Militant Triumphs By Faith Alone**

II Chronicles 32:1-21, Trinity Sunday XXII

November 8, 2009

Beloved of the Lord.....As long as you and I live on the face of this earth, until the Last Day the Lord returns in all His glory, there is going to be a bitter spiritual battle between the Children of God and the Children of the devil for the souls of men. The saints on earth are called the Church Militant and we wage our war against the devil's kingdom by faith alone. Faith sees what the eyes cannot see. Faith hears what the ears cannot hear. Faith knows what the mind cannot explain. Faith is knowledge, trust, and hope in Jesus our Savior. We know Him above. We trust Him above. Our heart has its hopes set on Him above. When the devil then assaults you, besieges you, sets his troops about you, you must in faith see Him who cannot be seen. The Lord through Christ will help you to fight this battle. His mercy through Christ is yet upon you, and His Word is ever your comfort, ever your stay. Battle your devil then, in whichever way he comes, by faith alone in Christ and you through Christ will be victorious every time. The Church Militant triumphs by faith alone in Christ alone. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith."

I. The King strengthens us through His Word.....When Hezekiah, King of Judah learned that Sennacherib, King of Assyria was coming to overthrow Jerusalem, "he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken.....He made darts and shields in abundance." In short he did all he could to prepare himself to withstand the great strength of the enemy so Jerusalem would not be overthrown. Our first lesson here is that if we do not defend ourselves, Satan is well able to overthrow our faith. We dare not be carnally secure, thinking with pride our faith so strong we cannot fall. How many souls think by pride they cannot be overthrown - hence by pride were overthrown? "Pride goeth before destruction, and the haughty spirit before the fall." It is by the grace of God alone, by His strength and not our own, that His Spirit upholds our spirit. When it comes to the preservation of our faith, we give all glory to God. For "Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." I Pet. 4

Like Hezekiah, we too need to strengthen ourselves with God's Word before the onslaught of the enemy. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." God's Word, the sword of the

Spirit is the only effective weapon in this battle with the Prince of this World. If we neglect to study God's Word privately, if we don't often hear the Word often in church or continue in His Word, if we don't commune: we permit the devil to tear down our own wall of defense, and the enemy without and within extinguishes our lamp of faith. But "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Gal. 5 In like manner if we allow our flesh to run wild, if we willingly live in sin, do we belong to Christ? Let us not think we can repent and NOT amend, continuing to live in our sin. If we have no desire to amend we have fallen. But if we desire to amend, faith in Christ will give us the strength to amend. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

When Hezekiah as a king strengthened the people with God's Word, Hezekiah was a type of Christ who strengthens us by His Gospel Word. It is really Christ then who says to His Church Militant, "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles." In this world the Church Militant is indeed outnumbered. There are always more unbelievers than believers. Though Christ died for all and "many are called" few are chosen. We then who by faith know our King, likewise know this Almighty Warrior is at the forefront of our Battle, not the rear. He is not apart from us, but with us in body and Spirit on the battlefield even now. His standard is our standard, the cross, and when we in the battlefield have our eyes of faith fixed on this standard, we cannot lose. If God be for us, who can be against us? Moreover our merciful King sends forth His angels who guard and protect us against that legion of the devil. By faith alone Hezekiah knew that though Jerusalem was surrounded on all sides by the enemies, those enemies were surrounded on all sides by God's angels. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels."

II. The devil seeks to overthrow us by his word. Just as our King strengthens us through the Word of Truth, so the devil works through agents to undermine the Truth with lies. Sennacherib, through his agent Rabshakeh, sought to discourage and bring fear into the hearts of Judah's soldiers. "What are you trusting in O Jerusalem? The God of Israel cannot save you. If you stay with this king you will only suffer hunger and thirst. Don't you know what I've done to all the people

of other lands?" These words are taken straight from Satan's playbook. One of his fiery darts is doubt. With a forked, crooked, and lying tongue, the devil says, "Did God really say that Eve?".... Would a loving God send souls to hell, Eve? Can't we all just get along and live in peace? Is doctrine all that important, must it divide us? Is Jesus really the only way to heaven? Satan preaches these words of doubt to us daily through his agents in the world. His mediums are ungodly TV, radio, Internet, music, false prophets and unbelieving friends.

But when Satan tempts us with such words, contradicting God's Word, we must fight fire with fire. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." He, dear Christian, will run away from you, if you fight back with God's Word. "My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.....Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." Faith is a shield in that it is our sure defense against the fiery darts of Satan, the Accuser. When he accuses us of sin, reminding us of our past, we defy him and say, "Dear Satan, whose days are numbered and whose days have no end? God has promised you hell, and God for Christ's sake has promised me heaven. While you can indeed rightly accuse me of sin and I must agree my sins merit death and damnation, God has promised me, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" and "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth." Now if God has justified you dear sinner through His own blood, and you believe and trust in His free gift of salvation, does the devil truly have any power over you? Is there really anything He can do which can overthrow what God has done for you? If Christ through His blood has justified you, who can condemn you?

When the host of his enemies surrounded him, Hezekiah prayed and cried to heaven, but he also had faith God would help. We too should daily repent, and daily in faith remember God will help. Throughout our life then, the Church Militant, every believer on earth, is much like those of Jerusalem who stood upon the wall hearing the vexing words of the enemy. We should not listen or give in, but remember our faith is built upon Christ, we stand upon THIS ROCK. Our foundation is sure. If then we fall into the hand of an unbelieving

devil who takes out his sword threatening to behead us unless we deny Him, will we deny Him who never denied us? Won't we gladly die for Him who died for all? Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Let us by no means deny Him but happily confess Him for the gates of paradise are open before us. Before Stephen was stoned to death the Lord gave him a glimpse of what was to come. "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."

### III. The Church Militant triumphs by faith alone.

Beloved of the Lord, the Church Militant always triumphs by faith alone in Christ. "Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Though there is much before our eyes to discourage us, faith triumphs every time it remembers "Jesus came to set me free." Faith sees that by His blood, by His merits there is that City of God above us, the Church Triumphant, the heavenly Jerusalem which shall not pass or fade away. We too shall triumph, if only our faith is in Jesus' triumph on the cross. The persecuted St. Paul thus triumphantly declared, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

It was indeed by faith that Hezekiah and Jerusalem triumphed over God's enemies. In one night one angel slew 185,000 captains and leaders of the army. King Sennacherib went home like a dog with his tail between his legs. We might wonder why God at times doesn't do such great miracles today? But we have seen and known by faith a far greater miracle, Jesus came and Jesus humbled Himself, being obedient unto the death of the cross. "By His stripes we are healed." Let us then stop being such timid and weak soldiers of the cross and let us boldly go forth to conquer and win over the souls of the lost by the preaching of the Gospel. Because He suffered all things for us, let us likewise suffer all things for Him. Amen.