



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost, August 22, 2021

Standing and Stepping

By Daniel H. Wilcox

Ephesians 6:10-20

6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.

6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

6:12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

6:14 Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness.

6:15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace.

6:16 With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

6:17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

6:18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints.

6:19 Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

The ancient Chinese proverb, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” encourages us to move toward a goal by initiating an action. Beginning a goal is as important as concluding it. While at conclusion, accolades come forth, yet it is beginning that makes concluding possible. A step toward positively affirms faith in a goal and determination to achieve it.

Apostle Paul commends to the people of Ephesus how to contend with the devil through the strength of God and with encasement of divine protection, God’s armor. Shoes seem to be least important in this armor, but shoes are implements of forward movement. Shoes protect feet on which the body stands and supports walking by securing firmness of balance. Shoes support the gospel of peace, the good news of Jesus Christ, reminding us that our victory over the devil and death already has been won. Peace restores solidarity that violence breaks and bridges separation that sin produces. Sharing the gospel of peace signifies a willingness to stand for truth and to step forward with faith through the effectual support of shoes. It means that movement toward the great goal of heaven starts with a lone step toward God and the ensuing goodness. It means that a step toward heaven is a step of service to others, encouraging their journeys. Proclaiming the gospel becomes a profession of pursuing peace by standing and stepping forward.

Let us pursue God and righteousness by proclaiming the gospel of peace through stepping toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)— Reflecting on the scripture, share a time/instance when you have trusted God by stepping forward? How did this experience make you feel or direct you?

PRAY: Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Ghost, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Adaption from The Book of Common Prayer

ACT:

1. During the Kingdomtide season, make and implement a plan that indicates Christian commitment. Journal your experience and reflect on your spiritual journey. Do what you can to protect the health of others and yourself by practicing social distancing as much as possible, washing your hands often, wearing face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and prayerfully considering getting the vaccine when it is available—See: <http://www.amehealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

Song:

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus
AMEC Hymnal, #412

1. Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss;
From victory unto victory
His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.
2. Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict,
In this His glorious day;
Ye that are *brave now serve Him
Against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.
3. Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own;
Put on the Gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger,
Be never wanting there.
4. Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song;
To him who overcometh
A crown of life shall be;
**They with the King of Glory
Shall reign eternally.

*men **He

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.