



Trail Guide – August 3, 2020:

Ordinary Time

I have at various times read [The Screwtape Letters](#), by C. S. Lewis. I plan to re-read some or all of it this week. It is a fascinating insight into the nature of spiritual warfare of which Paul writes in Ephesians 6. I commend this short book to any sincere Christ-follower who realizes that there truly is a spiritual battle taking place for the souls of every person alive – including yours and mine. Yep. Pastors and other clergy are not exempt. Neither are you. We, all, face the struggle. This is not meant to be frightening; but instead sobering. The scriptures remind us of the struggle we face against spiritual forces. We do well to read, heed, and respond in faith and in the power of the Spirit. We do well also to remember that we do not battle alone.

Mon, 08/03 – [John 10:10-11](#) – “The thief comes only to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...” Followers of Christ have long known that we have an adversary. In what ways have you encountered or experienced or witnessed this “thief” at work?

Tues, 08/04 – [1 Peter 5:8-9](#) – The Hebrew word “ha satan” literally means adversary. Peter warns that our adversary is like a prowling, roaring lion. What is to be our response? How are we to “resist” our adversary? What can we learn through the experience of others around the world who experience similar struggles

Wed, 08/05 – [Ephesians 6:10](#) – What strength do we have for this struggle, this battle? How can we rely on God’s strength; and, what helps you to rely on that strength? Can you think of a time when God’s strength more than made up for your weakness in order to see you through?

Thur, 08/06 – [Ephesians 6:11-12](#) – If you are old enough, try to recall the lyrics for “Onward Christian Soldiers”. Look carefully at the text. What are we proclaiming? Advocating? Striving for? With whom are we fighting?

Fri, 08/07 – [Ephesians 6:13-17](#) – Identify the six pieces of “armor” that Paul mentions here. Which are offensive? Which are defensive? How might you use these today?

Sat, 08/08 – [Ephesians 6:18-20](#) – We often say, “Well, all we can do now is pray.” Is prayer your last resort? Or, your first response? What sort of praying does Paul have in mind? Do you include in your praying, “supplication for the saints”? And, how often do you pray for those who proclaim the gospel – pastors and preachers? Evangelists? Missionaries? With this in mind, who do you need to add to your prayer list?

(Next Sunday, the 9th, we’ll wrap up our look at Paul’s “sermon to the Ephesians” and the message of God’s reconciling work through the cross.)

Feel free to share reflections, reactions, questions, inspirations – jim@leesburgumc.org. Looking forward to next Sunday!