



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: The Battle for Our Children *Part I: Insights From Scripture*



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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Helen is a lay-Dominican, which is also known as the Order of Preachers, and she, along with her husband Dan, are engaged in youth catechesis and music ministry. Sharon is our token cradle Catholic, and, as everyone by now knows, I am simply here to ask questions, because that is the easy part. To do the hard work of answering those question is why we have our panel, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Discussion:

Last time, as we concluded our series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” we discussed the question, “How can we engage to defend against the wolves?” We noted that, alone, we cannot solve the problems of the world, but we are part of the tide. By ourselves, we will not

influence any change in the political discourse, but if we do not engage, there is one less soul working to accomplish what God asks of us.

People have produced any number of political ideologies for the control and governance of society. What is right or wrong within any of them is not the purpose of our discussion, it is about what is right and just in the eyes of God. If we understand our faith, we will be guided by what God asks of us. If we open our hearts in prayer, the Holy Spirit will lead us in how we may engage. Here, we must be careful, for we must truly allow our hearts to be open to the Holy Spirit and not our personal agendas.

The very first step for any of us to act is to decide. We are often tempted to believe that the action of a single person is useless. That is exactly what the evil one wants us to believe, for if he is successful in making us believe we are helpless or useless, he has taken us out of the fight.

Too often we are tempted to respond with any number of excuses as to why we cannot act in or engage in ministry. We tell ourselves, this is something for someone else who has whatever we feel we lack. If we are uncertain as to how we might engage, then, we should ask in prayer. Let us ask God to help us see the gifts and talents over which He has given us stewardship and the purpose to which they may be put so that His will may be done.

The answer may not be immediate. God may not speak to us directly, but if our heart is open to Him and we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, He will point the way. If we are observant, we will sense when He nudges us.

The one thing we must trust, God created us for a purpose. If we do not stand in the way, He will guide us to that purpose. God did not create us to simply while away our time, but to engage within His creation. He also gave us the gift of freewill so our choices of what we do or choose not to do will have meaning. History books may not write about us, but if we endeavor to do what is right and just, if we seek to do the will of God; heaven will remember and will rejoice.

Today, we begin a new series, entitled, “The Battle for Our Children.” As we discussed during our last series, the evil one is willing to work across the generations. One of the tactics of the dark one is to plant seeds in one generation which may be used against the next. He pushes the line a little each time so the generations fail to recognize, until there is great pain, just how much our society is constructed to pull us away from what God asks of us.

Let's consider this scripture as the Lord ponders Abraham:

(Genesis 18:17-19)

17 The LORD considered: Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 now that he is to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth are to find blessing in him? 19 Indeed, I have singled him out that he may direct his children and his household in the future to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD may put into effect for Abraham the promises he made about him.

(Question 1: As we look at the generations, we must consider our role. Who is responsible for engaging our children and helping them to learn the fullness of faith which may be found within the church Christ built upon Peter?)

(Genesis 18:22-32)

22 As the men turned and walked on toward Sodom, Abraham remained standing before the LORD. 23 Then Abraham drew near and said: “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there were fifty righteous people in the city; would you really sweep away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people within it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike! Far be it from you! Should not the judge of all the world do what is just?” 26 The LORD replied: “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake. 27 Abraham spoke up again: “See how I am presuming to speak to my Lord, though I am only dust and ashes! 28 What if there are five less than fifty righteous people? Will you destroy the whole city because of those five?” I will not destroy it, he answered, if I find forty-five there. 29 But Abraham persisted, saying, “What if only forty are found there?” He replied: I will refrain from doing it for the sake of the forty. 30 Then he said, “Do not let my Lord be angry if I go on. What if only thirty are found there?” He replied: I will refrain from doing it if I can find thirty there. 31 Abraham went on, “Since I have thus presumed to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?” I will not destroy it, he answered, for the sake of the twenty. 32 But he persisted: “Please, do not let my Lord be angry if I speak up this last time. What if ten are found there?” For the sake of the ten, he replied, I will not destroy it.

(Question 2: In this scripture, Abraham converses with God over the future of a sinful city. What responsibility did Abraham exercise and how did he accomplish it?)

(Deuteronomy 4:9-11)

9 However, be on your guard and be very careful not to forget the things your own eyes have seen, nor let them slip from your heart as long as you live, but make them known to your children and to your children’s children. 10 that day you stood before the LORD, your God, at Horeb, when the LORD said to me: Assemble the people for me, that I may let them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me as long as they live in the land and may so teach their children.

(Question 3: We already pointed out that we all have a responsibility for the generations which come after us. As we read Deuteronomy 4:9-11, though, what are we to discern?)

(Deuteronomy 4:25-31)

25 When you have children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, should you then act corruptly by fashioning an idol in the form of anything, and by this evil done in his sight provoke the LORD, your God, 26 I call heaven and earth this day to witness against you, that you shall all quickly perish from the land which you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You shall not live in it for any length of time but shall be utterly wiped out. 27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and there shall remain but a handful of you among the nations to which the LORD will drive you. 28

There you shall serve gods that are works of human hands, of wood and stone, gods which can neither see nor hear, neither eat nor smell. 29 Yet when you seek the LORD, your God, from there, you shall indeed find him if you search after him with all your heart and soul. 30 In your distress, when all these things shall have come upon you, you shall finally return to the LORD, your God, and listen to his voice. 31 Since the LORD, your God, is a merciful God, he will not abandon or destroy you, nor forget the covenant with your ancestors that he swore to them.

(Question 4: In this scripture, we see a warning against corruption. What is the consequence for those who turn away and what is the hope for those who realize what they have done?)

(1 Kings 3:19-27)

19 This woman's son died during the night when she lay on top of him. 20 So in the middle of the night she got up and took my son from my side, as your servant was sleeping. Then she laid him in her bosom and laid her dead son in my bosom. 21 I rose in the morning to nurse my son, and he was dead! But when I examined him in the morning light, I saw it was not the son I had borne." 22 The other woman answered, "No! The living one is my son, the dead one is yours." But the first kept saying, "No! the dead one is your son, the living one is mine!" Thus they argued before the king. 23 Then the king said: "One woman claims, 'This, the living one, is my son, the dead one is yours.' The other answers, 'No! The dead one is your son, the living one is mine.'" 24 The king continued, "Get me a sword." When they brought the sword before the king, 25 he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other." 26 The woman whose son was alive, because she was stirred with compassion for her son, said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby—do not kill it!" But the other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours. Cut it in two!" 27 The king then answered, "Give her the living baby! Do not kill it! She is the mother."

(Question 5: In this scripture, we see the love of a mother tested. One woman responds with the power of love. The other woman, responds with the power of envy. What lesson might we discern about the power of love and the power of envy? What is revealed about the woman consumed by envy?)

(1 Maccabees 2:49-64)

49 When the time came for Mattathias to die, he said to his sons: "Arrogance and scorn have now grown strong; it is a time of disaster and violent wrath. 50 Therefore, my children, be zealous for the law and give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors. 51 "Remember the deeds that our ancestors did in their times, and you shall win great honor and an everlasting name.

(Question 6: This scripture speaks of a specific time in the life of Mattathias. What period of life was this and how did he use that time? What example does this present?)

(Mica 6: 1-6)

1 Woe is me! I am like the one who gathers summer fruit, when the vines have been gleaned; There is no cluster to eat,

no early fig that I crave.
 2 *The faithful have vanished from the earth,
 no mortal is just!
 They all lie in wait to shed blood,
 each one ensnares the other.*
 3 *Their hands succeed at evil;
 the prince makes demands,
 The judge is bought for a price,
 the powerful speak as they please.*
 4 *The best of them is like a brier,
 the most honest like a thorn hedge.
 The day announced by your sentinels!
 Your punishment has come;
 now is the time of your confusion.*
 5 *Put no faith in a friend,
 do not trust a companion;
 With her who lies in your embrace
 watch what you say.*
 6 *For the son belittles his father,
 the daughter rises up against her mother,
 The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,
 and your enemies are members of your household.*

(Question 7: This scripture provides insight to a time when the people were turned away from the ways of God. What might we discern from the opening verse that reads: “*Woe is me! I am like the one who gathers summer fruit, when the vines have been gleaned?*” What are the consequences we observe and what do we see as a result in the household?)

(Matthew 18:2-6)

2 *He called a child over, placed it in their midst, 3 and said, “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.*

6 *“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

(Question 8: In this scripture, we see both encouragement and warning. What might we discern from scripture as to the importance of children to God? To whom is the warning? In what ways might we fail this test?)

(Revelation 2:19-23)

19 *“I know your works, your love, faith, service, and endurance, and that your last works are greater than the first. 20 Yet I hold this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, who teaches and misleads my servants to play the harlot and to eat food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent,*

but she refuses to repent of her harlotry. 22 So I will cast her on a sickbed and plunge those who commit adultery with her into intense suffering unless they repent of her works. 23 I will also put her children to death. Thus shall all the churches come to know that I am the searcher of hearts and minds and that I will give each of you what your works deserve.

(**Question 9:** Here, God tells the angel of the church in Thyatira to write in warning to the people that despite what they have done in faith, there is something God holds against them. What does God hold against them? Why might we think God would put the children of the false prophetess to death? What might we discern from this as to the meaning in relation to our modern times?)

Quotes:

Dear friends! In what happened to the Child of Bethlehem you can recognize what happens to children throughout the world. It is true that a child represents the joy not only of its parents but also the joy of the Church and the whole of society. But it is also true that in our days, unfortunately, many children in different parts of the world are suffering and being threatened: they are hungry and poor, they are dying from diseases and malnutrition, they are the victims of war, they are abandoned by their parents and condemned to remain without a home, without the warmth of a family of their own, they suffer many forms of violence and arrogance from grown-ups. How can we not care, when we see the suffering of so many children, especially when this suffering is in some way caused by grown-ups?

– *Saint John Paul II*

Dear boys and girls who are the same age as the twelve-year-old Jesus, are you not reminded now of the religion lessons in the parish and at school, lessons which you are invited to take part in? So I would like to ask you some questions: What do you think of your religion lessons? Do you become involved like the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple? Do you regularly go to these lessons at school and in the parish? Do your parents help you to do so?

– *Saint John Paul II*

What does it mean that "unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven"? Is not Jesus pointing to children as models even for grown-ups? In children there is something that must never be missing in people who want to enter the kingdom of heaven. People who are destined to go to heaven are simple like children, and like children are full of trust, rich in goodness and pure. Only people of this sort can find in God a Father and, thanks to Jesus, can become in their own turn children of God.

– *Saint John Paul II*

And so down the centuries, up to our own times, there are many boys and girls among those declared by the Church to be saints or blessed. Just as Jesus in the Gospel shows special trust in children, so his Mother Mary, in the course of history, has not failed to show her motherly care for the little ones. Think of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes, the children of La Salette and, in our own century Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta of Fatima.

– *Saint John Paul II*

Final Thoughts:

As we opened today's discussion, we related that the teaching of faith to our children is first the responsibility of parents, but, we all have a role towards looking after the youth of our day. We must also recognize that we succeed or fail in this role by what we do and what we fail to do.

The battle for the generations began with the first man and woman and continues to this day. Whether we are aware or not, each of us is engaged in this battle, not just from the perspective of our soul, but the souls of those whom we love and those who surround us. It should not surprise us that the evil one works tirelessly to capture the souls of our children, for it is the way of the predator to target the most defenseless first.

The question before us is, "How will we choose to engage to protect the weakest among us?" If we are uncertain, let us pray that God will guide us in what He asks of us. Let us ask God to help us see the opportunities we have to help teach and protect our children. Let us pray God will guide us to the work He desires we accomplish so His will may be done.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we discuss the impact of secular values upon today's children.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: [The Battle for Our Children – Part II: The Impact of Secular Values on Our Children](#)

References:

Saint John Paul II; (13 Dec 1994); "Letter of the Pope John Paul II to the Children in the Year of the Family;" Vatican; https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_13121994_children.pdf

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