



# A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Martin Luther saw things on a grand scale. Like the Apostle Paul, who warns that our battle is not against flesh and blood, Luther understood that we are players in a supernatural heavyweight contest, a bout between our ancient foe and the Man of God's own choosing. On one side, the adversary unequalled on earth; on the other, God's truth.

God, of course, has to play more than one role here. He acts both as combatant on our behalf and shelter for us at the same time. Not only does He win the battle, but He protects us, fortifying us as a never failing bulwark, prevailing against the flood of mortal ills that attack and surround us.

Somehow, in the script of this mystical drama, we have multiple roles to play as well. Yes, we are His children, gaping open-mouthed at the struggles and battles we see in the world and hiding in Him who sides with us. But we are more than that. We become the chosen foot soldiers in the very exhibition that we don't understand and by which we are cowed. Commanded by Him to enter the fray, we are armed with the Spirit and with gifts so that we do not have to rely on our own strength, lest we lose.

We are then left with two choices. One choice, the easy choice, the choice that most of the world (and sadly, much of the church) takes is to ignore the devils that fill the world, to call the spiritual warfare parts of the Bible "symbolic," and to focus on what can be seen. That our own faith is in the invisible King, that we walk by faith and not by sight, does not seem to deter some from discounting what their eyes cannot see.

But there is another choice. It is the choice to sing this anthem, to stand up and shake our fist in the face of evil, in the very face of Satan, the prince of darkness, and to proclaim that "we tremble not for him." Such a declaration is based not on our own abilities, or our own sight, but instead on our knowledge that one little word from our Lord is sufficient.

Of course, taking this second choice is not easy. The same faith that says "we will not fear" must also say "the body they may kill." Our strength comes not from chain mail or shields or antidotes that can guarantee us even one more breath. Indeed, there is no such armor or medicine, and our mortal bodies may well be collateral damage in the battle against one as crafty as our enemy. But this choice is sure as is his doom, for we are on the side of the forever Kingdom.

This is not a hymn to be raised lightly. It is not a promise to be made uncertainly. It is not a boast to be made cavalierly.

It is instead a pronouncement of assurance. "Let goods and kindred go. This mortal life also." It is surrender. It is faith.

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