

The other day on our way to play a round of golf I asked Sue what the Junior Choir would be singing today.

A song about David and Goliath was the answer.

“Maybe I should preach on that story,” I said.

“It is Reformation Sunday,” she reminded me. “What would you say?”

“I think I would preach about the armor.” was my reply.

Goliath’s armor weighed one hundred and twenty-five pounds. And he had a shield carrier to go in front of him.

David wore no armor – he had faith – he relied on God.

Some years ago in a Bible study someone explained to me how having no armor was to David’s advantage.

David was not weighed down, he was free to move, able to dodge the huge sword of Goliath. If the battle came down to trading blows in close combat David stood no chance at all. Saul wanted to dress David in Saul’s own armor. The protection armor would afford seemed essential to Saul. But David refused, said he could not walk in the armor because he was not used to it. David entered the battle with no protection but a stick, a sling and some stones, and his faith in God.

In Luther’s day a man named John Tetzel was selling armor. Here is your shield against the eternal punishment your sins deserve. Buy this indulgence and you will be protected by all the good works of Christ and the saints – a great treasure stored up in the church and now sold to you. But this armor against God punishment and you can live any way you want. You will be safe – you will never go to hell.

But that was long ago – no one is selling armor these days. Or do we?

Is confirmation a kind of armor? Students and their families go through two years of going to classes and being involved in activities – two years of getting up on Sunday mornings and coming to church. And when the two

years are over some just disappear. Saturday night activities become more important than hearing God's word and receiving Holy Communion.

I wonder – why do they come to confirmation at all? Is it to get some armor that they think will protect them when the day of judgement comes? Some basic knowledge? Fulfilling of a requirement? A way to take care of an obligation?

What about you? Is coming to church a way to get some armor? Giving to benevolence? Visiting someone in prison? Preparing the altar for worship? Serving as a council member? Singing in the choir? Teaching Sunday School? Will these be our protection from the judgement our sin deserves? Are we getting credit from God for doing these things?

It was not the money that the church was charging for indulgences that upset Martin Luther. It was that the people were putting their hope in the wrong place. They were trusting in a hope that could not save them. Only faith in Christ can save.

Saul did think that armor would be David's protection. But David had learned in his battles with bears and lions that God was his protection. David had faith in God.

David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin but I come to you in the name of the Lord of host, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This very day the Lord will deliver you into my hand and I will strike you down and cut off your head."

Everything that happens here is so that you might have faith in God. You are not a spectator here – a soldier sitting on the sidelines cheering while David does battle with Goliath, you are David, you are the one who practices faith in God every day. Praying, hearing God's word, receiving the body and blood of Christ are all so that you might believe and trust in Christ in every battle of your life.

On this Reformation Sunday it is not the battle Luther fought that matters but the battle you fight. You are God's chosen soldier doing battle with sin and evil every day. Your weapon is faith in Christ, faith in Christ's victory

that was given to you in baptism. God's word is your guide for this battle. Sin and death and Satan are the enemy you encounter. Faith in Christ will bring this enemy crashing down. Amen.