

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

### TUG-O-WAR

Hebrews 10:23 “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”

I remember my elementary school every spring participating in a joint field day with neighboring Lutheran schools. The one event that drew the spectators was tug-o-war. Each school chose eight strong students for their team. Two teams at a time would pull against each other until there were only two teams left. Every ounce of energy each team member had left was concentrated on pulling the rope and winning the event.

Spiritually, in your life there is a tug-o-war match going on every day. This match, so to speak, has you on one end of the rope with three opponents on the other. Those three are Satan, the world, and your sinful flesh. Your opponents are strong and committed to pull you from your faith in your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to committing yourself to them. They want, as Luther says, to “lead you into unbelief, despair and other great shame and vice.

These words in Hebrews 10:23 were addressed to believers in Jesus who were under persecution because of their faith. Their enemies were trying to draw them away from Jesus, back to the slavery to the Old Testament sacrifices of their ancestors. And, today, your evil adversaries are trying to drag you back into slavery to your Old Adam, Satan, and the world.

Today’s devotional verse is an exhortation to you to not waver in your faith. It encourages you to “hold on tightly” like with a death grip on Jesus, your Savior and Lord. “Hold on” to the faith you profess with your fellow Christians in Jesus knowing that He alone is the way for you to receive the gift of eternal life.

Thankfully, although at times you may feel alone on your end of the spiritual tug-o-war rope, you are not alone. Jesus is there with you as He promised in Matthew 28:20. As you become tired and weakened through your battles with the forces of evil, Jesus says, “Come unto me all you who are weary and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

Prayer: Come to my rescue Lord Jesus as You have promised, especially when I am in the heat of battle with the forces of evil. In Your holy name. Amen.

A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;  
He helps us free from ev'ry need That hath us now o'ertaken.  
The old evil foe Now means deadly woe; deep guile and great might  
Are his dread arms in fight; On earth is not his equal.

With might of ours can naught be done, Soon were our loss effected;  
But for us fights the valiant One, Whom God Himself elected.  
Ask ye, Who is this? Jesus Christ it is, Of Sabaoth Lord,  
And there's none other God; He holds the field forever.

Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill; They shall not overpow'r us.  
This world's prince may still Scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none. He's judged, the deed is done;  
One little word can fell him.

The Word they still shall let remain Nor any thanks have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life, Goods, fame, child, and wife,  
Though these all be gone, Our vict'ry has been won;  
The kingdom ours remaineth.  
(LSB 656)