

The Shield of Faith

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AM Service

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Text: Ephesians 6:10-18

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11: Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13: Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14: Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15: And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16: Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17: And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Introduction

Today consider with me the fourth piece of the armour of God which God supplies to us as we fight the spiritual warfare in our lives - the shield of faith.

Ephesians 6:16 **Above all**, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

This verse starts with the words “above all”. Paul is not saying that the shield is the most important piece of the armour but what he is saying is that **on top of everything else**. A soldier before he enters the battlefield must have his belt on, he must have his breastplate on, he must have his shoes or sandals on but on top of all that, he must also have his shield. This really provides double protection. **In addition to everything else** a soldier needs to have the shield.

Each piece of the armour is important to a soldier. A soldier may have all the other pieces of the armour but if he has not taken the shield he is defenseless. He is still **exposed** and **unprotected**. If he does not have the shield he will soon be defeated. A soldier without the shield will become a casualty of war. But if a soldier has taken up the shield, regardless of the assault that is being launched against him he will stand firm and strong because of the strength of the shield. This is how important the shield is.

To understand and profit from this study we must again look at the **physical shield**, the **spiritual shield** and then draw some **practical applications** and receive **practical admonitions**.

I - The Physical Shield

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the **fiery darts** of the wicked.

In the ancient warfare, one of the weapons they used is **fiery darts**, which are actually **flaming arrows**. These arrows have metal tips; and they would wrap them with flammable materials, dip it in tar – a heavy thick oil, set it on fire and shoot these flaming arrows at the enemy. When it would hit the shield of the soldier the tar would splatter in all different directions and fire would then be spread in all the various different locations. The impact of these flaming arrows is such that it would **confuse** and **disorient** and eventually **bring any soldier down** and take his life if the shield is not up and in place.

This is why it is critically important for a soldier to take up the shield if he is to survive and not be a casualty of war. Roman soldiers have **two kinds of shields** - small shield and large shield. The **small shield** is used when they engaged the enemy in hand to hand combat. They are usually two feet in diameter. It is so small that it would only provide a protection for a certain portion of the body around the chest.

Then there is the **large shield** which is the shield that Paul is referring in this text. This type of shield was **as large as a door**; it would be about 2.5 feet wide and 4.5 feet high. It is large enough to cover the entire body of the soldier and protect him from the incoming flaming arrows. The shield was rectangular in shape and rounded on the ends. It was typically made from **two sheets of wood that were glued together**, and then covered with canvas and leather. Also, the Roman soldiers before they went into the battle in which flaming arrows might be shot at them; they would **soak the leather covering with water** to extinguish the flaming arrows.

The large shield is used when an army is laying siege of a walled city and they had to advance while arrows are flying in from the above. What the soldiers would do is, stand side by side and position their shields so as **to form an enclosure around them**. And then, those in the middle raised their shields overhead to protect against arrows flying in from above. As they have these enclosure they would advance together **like a moving wall** and even though they are being assaulted with flaming arrows, no arrows could penetrate not only through the board but also between the shields either. This is **a strong defense in marching into the battle**, an effective way to protect them against arrows launched from the walls of cities they were attacking.

But if any soldier decided that he would march by himself, that he did not need to be in standing side by side with his fellow soldiers in the left and on the right, will have no chance of survival because he has no protection against arrows coming at a slight angle from his side. So it is critically important in ancient warfare that soldiers had a shield.

That is the image that Paul is seeking to convey to the believers in Ephesus as he writes them this epistle. The believers in Ephesus know exactly what Paul is saying because this is part of their everyday life as they are surrounded by Roman soldiers.

II - The Spiritual Shield

Now let us look at the spiritual shield but before we do that, let us look at what we are up against. To understand and appreciate the importance of the spiritual shield we must have a firm grip of what we are up against as we engage in this spiritual warfare.

1. We have a wicked enemy

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Satan is our great enemy. He is evil and so evil that he is referred here as **the wicked** or **the evil one**. He is the embodiment of all evil. He is the source of all evil. He is evil in his character - his being, nature, motives, intents, ways, actions, and words. He is corrupt, polluted, vile, foul, immoral, cruel and hateful. His mission is to hurt, to destroy, and to kill every believer.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Satan, who is not content to perish in his own destruction, but seeks to drag everyone else down with him to the utter ruin that will be his in the future eternity. - Wuest

2. We have a wicked enemy firing flaming arrows at us

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Our wicked enemy is incessantly firing fiery darts at us. He has a whole load of flaming arrows in his quiver that he shoots at us. Sometimes they come in the form of **tribulation**, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword. Other times they come in the form of **temptations** with which when they hit us it leads to temptations to lust, covetousness, greed, materialism, vanity, immorality, envy, jealousy, fear, anger, bitterness, impatience, pride, doubt, unbelief, discouragement, discontentment, dissatisfaction, distress, despair, depression, etc. It leads to licentious sins which cannot be easily extinguished.

These **flaming arrows of oppressions and temptations** have been and being fired at each one of us. And they come to us one after another **to confuse us** and **to cripple us**. They often come when we least expect them. He ambushes us and catches us off guard. Therefore we must always have shield of faith.

In ancient warfare, these fiery darts were launched in great number at the beginning of an attack. The idea was not only to injure the enemy, but to shoot at him at all sides with a massive number of darts, and thus confuse and panic the enemy. - Guzik

This is what we are up against, a wicked enemy who is incessantly firing his fiery darts which cannot be easily extinguished. Therefore, we read in ...

Ephesians 6:16 **Above all, taking the shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

As soldiers of the cross, we need protection from the "fiery darts" being hurled at us by Satan. God has given us the shield of faith for our protection to deflect Satan's most powerful arrows. Now, whatever the shield of faith is, it is sufficient, because it quenches; it extinguishes; it puts out all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

[Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.](#)

When our enemy shoots his flaming arrows at us to cause us to be down, discouraged, disoriented, discontented, disappointed, depressed, defeated, doubting, the only defense we have at that point is the shield of faith. This shield of faith is able to quench all the incoming flaming arrows. This shield of faith is so powerful it is able to extinguish **all the fiery darts**. No temptation can succeed; no enticement can penetrate; no seduction can gain entrance. Let the forces of hell come, they cannot touch us when we take up the shield of faith. You are given superior weaponry, placed in your hands as a soldier of the cross. You can withstand any enemy's every assault.

What is the shield of faith?

[Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.](#)

To protect us from the fiery darts of the wicked we must take up the **shield which is faith**. The shield we are to take up is the **shield which consists of faith**. Faith whose object is God; faith whose object is Jesus Christ; faith based on the sure Word of God; faith in His exceeding great and precious promises.

Faith is seeing the Invisible. Faith is confidence in God that God will do what He promises He will do. It is believing in the trustworthiness of God. It is trusting in God's wisdom, power and goodness.

[Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2: For by it the elders obtained a good report.](#)

It begins with saving faith. It continues and grows throughout our entire Christian life.

[Colossian 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.](#)

We receive Christ Jesus by faith, and we walk in Him by faith.

We cannot stop Satan from throwing his flaming arrows, but we can keep them from starting a fire.

We do not quench the darts by faith in ourselves, faith in faith, or faith in some creed. If we are to be protected against flaming arrows of oppressions and temptation, we must have **firm belief and unwavering trust in the trustworthiness of God.**

We win by believing and trusting God's promises, plans, and truth. You may have doubts and anxieties, and various struggles and trials, but as you daily (and you must do this daily, even moment by moment!) choose to believe in God's Word and power, you will be strong in Him and victorious in Him.

III - The Practical Admonition

1. We must take up the shield of faith if we are to be protected.

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, **taking** the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Taking up is in the active voice indicating that each believer make the choice to do this. We must choose to believe God, His Word, His goodness, no matter what happens. In all things we must give thanks and walk humbly in obedience with our God.

A shield, whether it be physical or spiritual, **can only be effective when it is raised**. This requires an ongoing state of preparedness and patience on our part. The apostle Peter paints a vivid picture of how we must humble ourselves and hold up the shield of faith against Satan:

1 Peter 5:6 **Humble yourselves** therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 8: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9: **Whom resist steadfast in the faith**, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 10: **But the God of all grace**, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

2. We must march side by side with other believers

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Don't think far too highly of yourself. Don't think that you are strong enough to stand by yourself. If you stand alone you will most likely go down. **You and I are in army with other soldiers of the cross all around us**. We must link up with the faith of others to present a solid wall of defense. **We are strongest in battle when we are putting up the shield of faith next to others who are doing the same**.

The apostle Paul spoke of the need for the Body of Christ to be joined together, helping each other, much like the band of soldiers who raised their shields to defend each other:

Ephesians 4:16 From whom **the whole body fitly joined together** and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

3. We must nurture our faith

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

As you go out into battle today, put on the whole armor of God. Above all, take up the shield of faith. Reassert your trust in God and commit your ways to Him.

God will give victory in the darkest hour of our life as I find myself in the valley of the shadow of death. I will nevertheless lift up my head and set up my heart upon God and I will live victoriously because my trust is in the Lord.

[Psalms 5:12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.](#)

*I need thee every hour
Stay thou nearby
Temptations lose their power
When thou art nigh*

Closing Words

Do you have the shield of faith? Do you want this shield of faith? This shield of faith is given to anyone who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?

[1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and **this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.** 5: Who is he that overcometh the world, but **he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?**](#)

If you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, I invite you this day, to come to Him who has overcome the world, our sins, the devil, death and hell. He is the One you need to rescue you from the great enemy of your soul; from the enslaving power of sin; and from the dark consequence of sin. Run to Him and He will save you and give you the victory that He alone could give.

AMEN!