

SHIELDED BY FAITH

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Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. (Ephesians 6:10-17)

FAITH

Dictionary definition: Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

Synonyms: belief, confidence, conviction, credence, reliance.

Shield: a large flat object made of metal or leather that soldiers held in front of their bodies to protect themselves.

Biblical definition of faith:

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made from things that are visible. (Hebrews 11:1)

- God must be the object of our faith
- Faith consists of the persistent hope in God's promises
- Faith is accepting that God is sovereign over the situations we face

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them." (Mark 11:22)

Our confidence, hope, credence, reliance must be in God because in Him we will not be let down.

WHY IS FAITH IMPORTANT?

Faith is the currency of Heaven and there is no way around it. Faith is foundational to our relationship with God.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

There are not many things we can do to please God, but faith is one of them. Faith will get God's attention. Faith is our countermeasure against the enemies' fiery arrows.

"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him." (Proverbs 30 :5)

FAITH IN ACTION

Faith must be accompanied by some action. Faith is a verb; it is an action word. When you profess your faith there is normally some action that follows.

Turn to James 2:14-16

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible... By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family... By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice... by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise... By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned... By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. (Hebrews 11:1-39)

By faith the foundational members of HCC bought the chairs we are all sitting on.

Faith was the driving force for the action taken by men and women of God. When you believe in something, that belief will cause you to act. That belief will cause you to stand guard with your shield of faith.

What is God challenging you to do? Could it be to step out in faith for that business idea? Could it be to sacrifice and make church a priority?

By faith: _____

It is important that we look at how faith extinguished the fiery arrows by looking at the example of Jesus Christ.

Jesus faced some fiery arrows before he was even getting started in the ministry. This was the temptation of Jesus found in Luke 4:1-13:

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

The devil attacked Jesus where there was a need. He knew after fasting Jesus would be hungry and in a vulnerable place. The devil will attack you where you are vulnerable or desperate.

The devil will fire an arrow of worldliness.

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours."

The devil will use things with no eternal value to take you from your eternal destiny.

- Career choices
- Ungodly relationships

Another arrow of the devil will be an arrow that will test your relationship with God.

- Doubt
- Discouragement
- Setbacks

Jesus faced all sorts of fiery arrows during His ministry. He gave us a blueprint on how to overcome the enemy and how we can build our faith. The scripture goes on to say the devil departed from Him until an opportune time.

HOW DO WE ACQUIRE THIS FAITH TO QUENCH THE ENEMY'S ATTACKS?

So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. (Romans 10:17)

The environment you put yourself in will have an influence on your faith. Church is where you will be encouraged to exercise your faith and build your faith.

If you are not a believer when you hear the word of God, you must have faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ.

We must read and understand the word of God. Jesus not only knew the word, but He applied it correctly when the enemy was misusing it (2 Timothy 2:15; Psalm 119:105).

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

Stay committed to the place God has planted you (Hebrews 10:25, Proverbs 16:3, Acts 2:42).

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Maintaining our shields

- Devote ourselves to the reading of God's word

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105)

- Prayer

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 6)

- Godly counsel: an isolated soldier will not last long in war (Proverbs 15:22, 11:14)

For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers. (Proverbs 11:14)

Conclusion

The Bible tells us to put on the whole armour of God, meaning every piece is important to keep us balanced so that we can stand firm against the attacks from the enemy.

Faith is reinforced by reading and understanding the word of God. Like a shield raised in defence against flaming arrows, we can raise the word of God in faith against temptations, difficulties, discouragement, doubts and setbacks we will face in this lifetime and we shall withstand! Amen!