



Lesson Eight

The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

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Text: Ephesians 6:16

Lesson Outline

Details concerning the Belt

Introduction: The shield is the first piece of armour that must be taken up.

Illustration: Important character of the shield

1. The shield is necessary to fight a good warfare.
2. The shields were large and could be linked together to form a wall against the enemy, and therefore able to protect others as well as the individual soldier.
3. The fireproof metal lining was able to extinguish the fiery darts of the enemy.
4. The shield of faith will enable the Christian to be victorious against every attack of the enemy. Romans 8:32 'If God be for us, who can be against us'.

Details concerning the Shield:

Two kinds of Roman Shield - One shape was circular or oval, but that used by the Roman legionary was oblong and curved into a half cylinder to protect the body.

Oblong shield

1. Shield measured 1.3 metres (4 feet by 2½ inches)
2. Covered the whole body – neck to knee.
3. Made of a double layer of boards fastened together with glue and linen.
4. Outside surface covered with calfskin bound at the edges with a framework of metal to enable the shield to withstand sword blows.
5. The shield had a fireproof metal lining.

Introduction: The shield is the first piece of armour that must be taken up by the Christian soldier.

'But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.'
(Hebrews 11:6.)

We will be an easy target for the enemy if we do not hold up the shield of faith.
The shield of faith does not operate automatically.

Illustration:

In ancient times a soldier knew he must always retain his shield.

The Roman historian, Tacitus, states that during Roman times the Germans held the shield in such high honour that it was considered the greatest disgrace for a soldier to lose his shield in battle.



Tacitus 'Germania' Chapter 6

'To throw away one's shield is the supreme disgrace, and the man who has thus dishonoured himself is debarred from attendance at sacrifice or assembly. Many such survivors from the battlefield have ended their shame by hanging themselves.'

1. We need the Shield of Faith to fight the ‘good fight of faith’.

1 Timothy 6:12 'Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.'

The word good is the Greek word 'kalos' this word describes something that is precious because of its own quality and beauty.

The fight of faith is precious in the sight of God. It is precious because God delights to see faith, Hebrews 11:6a 'But without faith it is impossible to please him.'

Trial of our faith

Peter considered the trial of our faith as being more precious than gold. It is a joyful thing to use the shield of faith in difficult circumstances. 1 Peter 1:6 -7 'Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:'

Faith in God and faith in His promises.

The good fight of faith relies entirely upon God - it is faith in His character and faith in His word. 'But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' (Hebrews 11:6.)

When the enemy attacks we raise the shield of faith that God is the I AM THAT I AM and He will always honour His word.

If we are to rely upon a promise we need to know two things.

Is the character of the person reliable?

What exactly has been promised?

The Shield of Faith trusts in:

The Character of God - He cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2:13)

The Word of God - The promises of God are yes and Amen. (2 Corinthians 1:20)

We cannot fight ‘the good fight of faith’ by trusting our own methods.

We will be defeated if we cannot tell the difference between the shield of faith and human abilities and methods.

It is not wrong to use methods, but we cannot trust these things as they will fail in spiritual warfare, and we will be defeated.

A good soldier does not become caught up in civilian affairs, 2 Timothy 2:4 'No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier.'

US dollar bank notes have the words written on them ‘In God we trust’.

But many people have the words written upon their lives ‘in the US dollar we trust’. It is not wrong to earn money but if we put our trust in it then we will become discouraged when we have financial problems.

The believer in Christ must not be like the world.

The only shield that will enable us to stand in spiritual warfare is faith in the promises of God.

Faith must be the armour that covers the heart as ‘a breastplate and a shield’.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.' Faith is both a breastplate and a shield.

The breastplate covers the heart, which is at the centre of our lives because out of it flows our affections, thoughts and desires.

Faith must be in control of our lives.

- 2. The shields were large and could be linked together to form a wall against the enemy, and therefore able to protect others as well as the individual soldier.**

Forming a wall of defence.

The shield is for the individual but also for use in protecting one another.

Satan seeks to weaken the body of Christ by causing divisions.

Satan seeks to weaken the body of Christ by promoting a unity that does not uphold the shield of faith.

We are strong when we remain united with our shield of faith forming a wall of defence.



We must use the shield to protect one another.

We need to be our brother's keeper when it is necessary and be considerate of one another in the body of Christ.

Romans 15:1 'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.'

We are strong when we remain united with our shield of faith forming a wall of defence.

It was important that every soldier kept the shield in place.

If there were any gaps the whole group was in danger.

Meaning of the Greek word for shield 'thureos'.

The Greek word for shield is 'thureos' which was the word for a stone sealing the entrance of a cave.

It comes from 'thura' meaning door.

The shield of faith is a door of protection from the enemy and a door of escape from the enemy.

The Romans could link shields to form a wall of defence.



3. The fireproof metal lining was able to extinguish the fiery darts of the enemy.

The fiery darts of the wicked one.

What are the fiery darts?

'Fire-tipped darts' – when they hit they burn.

Seeking to cause the most destruction.

The fiery darts aim to stop us trusting in the promises of God.

Fear regarding what might happen will make us ineffective in Christian warfare.

If we desire the comforts of life, the riches of the world or the honours of earth then we will not have a shield to stop the fiery darts.

The shield protects us from the fiery darts of the enemy.

The Roman shield had a fireproof metal lining that could withstand the fiery darts of the enemy.

When the devil throws the fiery darts at us then faith must be our shield.

The shield of faith – a door of escape.

We can be assured that we can always uphold the shield of faith because the Lord continuously protects us.

God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our spiritual strength, and he always provides a door of escape.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ‘There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.’

Illustration: People are drawn to Christ when they see believers having great faith in times of distress or danger

CHURCH HISTORY

The faith of the Moravians in the storm

John and Charles Wesley were brought to faith in Christ through the preaching of the Moravians.

Their first encounter with the Moravians was on ship to the American colonies. They were astounded by their fearlessness in the storm. Death did not concern them because of their faith in Christ.

Faith must be the shield that enables us to fulfil a specific work we are called to do.

The devil will throw fiery darts to stop us.

These darts can sometimes be thrown by other Christians who do not understand what we are doing.

In these circumstances we must know that the Lord has led us.

Personal testimony: Obedience to the Lord.

Preparing the Bible Teaching Program - the Lord laid this project on my heart and it has meant that I have spent much time. Some people wondered why I stayed home and did not have a 'proper' job.

Words can hurt when times are difficult but when we know that the Lord has called us to do a specific work then the shield of faith will quench the fiery darts of the enemy.

- 4. The shield of faith will enable the Christian to be victorious against every attack of the enemy.** Romans 8:32 ‘If God be for us, who can be against us’.

Resist (Gr. anthistemi)

Withstanding the attack. 1 Peter 5:9a, ‘Resist him...’. The Greek word resist is ‘anthistemi’ which means resist by standing against.

In Ephesians 6:13 the same word is translated ‘withstand’, ‘Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand (anthistemi) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.’ The Shield enables us to stand when the enemy throws the fiery darts.

Being immovable. 1 Peter 5:9b, ‘... steadfast in the Faith’. The devil runs when the believer is steadfast (Gr) 'stereos' which means ‘immovable’ in the Faith.

James 4:7, ‘resist the devil and he will flee from you’. The devil cannot move the believer provided he or she takes up the Shield of Faith.

The Shield of Faith will make us overcomers.

1 John 5:4, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith'.

The great overcomers are listed in Hebrews 11. The great characteristic of their lives was faith.

Abraham '...looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God', Hebrews 11:10.

The shield of faith enabled Abraham to overcome the attraction of worldly security to become a pilgrim and a stranger.

Moses held 'the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:' Hebrews 11:26.

The shield of faith enabled him to overcome the attraction of the worldly pleasures of Egypt.

The shield of faith enabled the heroes of faith to overcome in the face of great trials and afflictions.

Hebrews 11:35-38 '...and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.'

Personal Testimony:

Missions

Overcoming – stedfast in missions.

When a lot of money is put into a missions project usually there is a lot to see.

Large buildings are impressive.

But much of the real work that the Lord is doing is unseen.

It takes the Shield of Faith to do the Lord's will when there is little that we can show to people.

Christian missions should always be focussed on people – their lives and needs.

Religion likes to build impressive buildings but true Christianity will work among the people.

Summary

1. We must take up the Shield of Faith so that we can fight the ‘good fight of faith’.
2. The Shield of Faith is both a wall and a door. As a wall it provides protection and as a door it provides a way of escape.
3. The Shield of Faith is able to stop all the fiery darts of the enemy.
4. The Shield of Faith enables us to overcome every obstacle.