

## **The Shield of Faith** **by Dr. Lee Roberson**

Text: Ephesians 6:16.

### **Introduction:**

We are well acquainted with the Christian's armor as given in Ephesians 6. For successful warfare we must put on the whole armor of God, because" . . . 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."

I want to call your attention to one piece of the armor carried by the Christian-the shield of faith. The shield that Paul had in mind here is not the small, round buckler, but the oblong, door-like shield, measuring 4' x 2', curved to the shape of the body and carried by the Greek and Roman soldiers. When joined together, these large shields formed a wall behind which a body of troops could hide themselves from the rain of the enemy's missiles.

These military shields were made of wood, covered on the outside with thick leather, which not only deadened the shock of the missile, but protected the frame of the shield from the fire-tipped darts used in the artillery of the ancients.

So, faith is the shield of the Christian soldier, defending him from the fierce attacks of the foe from within and without. The shield of faith is able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. This shield cannot be pierced or destroyed by the fiercest fires of hatred or malice. The arrows of the evil one, though flaming with cruelty, are stopped by the shield and extinguished.

By the help of the Lord, I want to strengthen your faith. I want you to go from this building feeling stronger in faith than when you entered. There are so many things which work to destroy our faith in God. The skepticism and the doubts voiced by an unbelieving world are often used by Satan to shake the faith of the best of God's people. Again, the unfaithful lives of Christians are often used by the Devil to wreck faith. Therefore, we need to know some very simple but fundamental things about faith and what it can do for us.

### **I. WHAT IS FAITH?**

Simply defined, faith is belief and trust. It is believing God and trusting God. Both elements must be present to make faith. It was a good answer that was once given by a poor woman to a minister who

asked her, "What is faith?" She replied, "I'm ignorant, and I cannot answer well, but I think it is taking God at His Word."

Faith is the foundation of all Christian graces. Dr. Arthur Pink says, "The beginning of faith is faith in the beginning." The Word tells us, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

There is no true faith that does not begin at recognition of God as Creator. We must believe that before we can believe anything else. After the acceptance of God, we must accept the way for coming to God. This is the blood-sprinkled way. No one can come to God except through Jesus Christ. This must be accepted by faith.

After salvation, it is necessary that we walk and work by faith. Someone may be asking even now, "How can I get faith, and how can my faith be increased?" This answer is given us in Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The beginning, progress and strength of faith are by hearing. God gives faith, but it is by the Word as the instrument.

If we are to have faith, we must hear and believe His Word. It is not hearing the enticing words of man's wisdom, but the Word of God which will increase faith. And how must we hear it? We must hear it as the Word of God. Believe the Word, read the Word, hear the Word is the way for faith to increase. Read His precious promises and rest upon them. There is no other way to get faith but this way.

## **II. WHAT FAITH DOES NOT DO**

There are disappointed and disillusioned Christians all about us because they misinterpreted the working of faith.

As an example, I heard a man say not too long ago, "Since I became a Christian, it seems that everything has gone wrong. We have had sickness and suffering. I have lost my job. We have had much trouble, but through it all God has been good and has helped us."

Notice some things that faith does not do:

A. DOES NOT SHIELD FROM PHYSICAL SUFFERING. 2 Cor.11:24-27.

B. DOES NOT SHIELD FROM LOSS OF EARTHLY POSSESSIONS.

I firmly believe that God does bless those who believe in Him and are honest with Him. I have seen this proven many times. But we do not put our faith in Christ and serve Him simply so that we can prosper in a material way.

Some Christians seem to think that because they believe in God and Christ that they must prosper greatly; and if they lose their earthly possessions, they become rebellious and feel that God has failed. We can find the records of many great Christians who were stripped of every possession; for in it all, God had a definite purpose.

#### C. DOES NOT GUARANTEE EASE.

Turn to Hebrews 11, that great chapter of faith, and you will see that those whose names grace God's honor roll suffered much.

Moses, chosen of God, turned from the ease and luxury of Egypt, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

See--Heb. 11:36-38. How did they do this? Through faith in God.

D. DOES NOT SHIELD FROM GRIEF. We will have grief in life, for death is all about us. Our loved ones will be separated from us. God does not promise anything else, for saints and sinners come to die. He does not say that we can simply have faith and live on in this life. Or that we can have faith and sustain the lives of others.

These are some things that faith does not do. Now, may we turn to the positive side of the matter.

### **III. WHAT FAITH DOES**

#### A. FAITH SAVES. (Eph. 2:8,9)

Salvation is not by works; it is not by doing, but it is by believing. God has put salvation in such a place that it can be reached by all men.

#### B. FAITH JUSTIFIES (Rom. 5:1)

When we are justified, we are made right in the sight of God.

#### C. FAITH STABILIZES.

In the same passage, Ephesians 6, the apostle speaks again and again of standing, being steadfast in our warfare. It is faith that makes us steadfast when the battle is raging hot. It is faith that gives us the courage to stand when the flesh desires to run.

Compare I Corinthians 16:13; Psalm 125:1 The shield will be sufficient to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

D. FAITH STRENGTHENS. (Phil. 4:13). When we have faith in God, no task is too hard. God has the power for our lives, if we will tie on to Him. In ourselves we can do nothing; through Him we can do all things.

E. FAITH SINGS. When I mentioned a moment ago the many hardships that Christians can expect in this life, I did not exaggerate one bit. That is the common portion of man. But I want to emphasize this: though we have physical suffering, loss of possessions, hardships and grief, we can have a song in our hearts in the midst of the darkest night. It was faith that made Paul sing at the midnight hour. They were not singing because they feared the darkness or the hand of the Roman government. They sang because their hearts were full of faith and they knew that God was with them. Take this motto for your life: "Rejoice evermore." Rest on the promises. Rejoice in the Lord.

6. FAITH SENDS US OUT. It is faith that makes us messengers and witnesses for Christ. What God has done for us, He can do for others. The same Christ who saved me can save any lost one who will come in repentance and faith to Him.

I have faith in the willingness of Christ to save anyone who will receive Him as Saviour. Whether that person be in the heart of Africa or in our own city, His promise is, ". . . him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

We can have faith in the power of Christ to save to the utter-most. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

In Hebrews 7:25, we read, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. "It is a joy to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ and to know that He is able to save. I would not want to preach if there were a doubt in my mind regarding His power.

Therefore, it is my faith in the blessed Saviour which sends me into the field to preach and witness. "Above all, taking the shield of faith Friend without Christ, His promises are true. He will save you now, if you will only believe. Not a fiery dart of the wicked has ever pierced the shield of faith. No one has ever been lost who has stood behind that shield. It is yours today for the taking.

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