

The Shield of Faith

(Ephesians 6:16)

Sunday, July 2, 2017

Do we need to be reminded that as Christians, we have an enemy in the Devil who is seeking to defeat us in our worship and in our work for our Lord? All around us we see evidence of the work of Satan's forces. Day by day he seeks to invade our innermost being to cast doubts and fears into our hearts.

In the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Paul spiritualized the various pieces of armor worn by a Roman soldier in battle. The Apostle asserted that we need to do more than merely profess faith in Jesus Christ if we want to live victoriously in a world dominated by evil. We need to put on the equipment with which our Father God provided us for achieving victory. It is not our Father's will that we live in failure and go down in defeat. Above all, we must put on and utilize the shield of faith to quench Satan's fiery darts.

The Roman soldier's shield was rectangular and formed of thin pieces of brass laced together with leather. It served to protect against arrows whether the soldier was advancing or retreating. In warfare those who were defending a position would often dip arrows in pitch and set them afire before launching them toward the enemy. To be struck by an arrow that had been dipped in pitch and set on fire was to experience an injury that was almost always fatal. Survival depended on the use of a shield.

What are some of the fiery darts the devil launches against us today? What is the shield of faith we can use today to protect us from these flaming arrows that would destroy us?

Sunday, July 9, 2017

I. All of us are seeking shields.

The trouble in our seeking of shields is that we often concentrate on those that do not provide ultimate protection.

Property is a shield of great value. To own property, provides one with a degree of economic security and protection against poverty and need. We live in a world where cash is needed. Some depend on the government to provide them with cash. Some work and save. While others invent and try to increase their net worth.

Insurance serves as a shield against catastrophe. It is one of the largest industries in the western world because people feel the need for a shield against that which threatens them.

When we study the life of the Apostle Paul, we have to come to the conclusion that he was talking about a different kind of shield than those I have mentioned above. He was not thinking primarily in terms of physical protection but in terms of spiritual protection from that which was destructive to one's spiritual life. We come to this conclusion because Paul was not primarily concerned about protecting himself from physical harm (2 Corinthians 11:24-33).

Sunday, July 16, 2017

II. The flaming arrows of Satan.

The flaming arrows against which we need spiritual protection are those that would destroy us as far as our spiritual life. We can be certain that the devil is going to shoot his fiery arrows at us. We will face the fiery arrow of temptation to do evil. It is within the power and the practice of the devil to tempt us in such a manner as to lead us astray unless we are on guard.

- We will be tempted to live an immoral life.
- We will be tempted to live for secular materialistic values.
- We will be tempted to live only for those pleasures of the moment.

We will face the fiery arrow of doubt that leads to disappointment and despair. Since the beginning of time, Satan's strategy has been to raise questions concerning God's goodness. He will cast doubts into our mind concerning our own integrity and motivations as well as concerning the intentions and abilities of others. Satan will seek to destroy our faith in God, self, and others.

We face the fiery arrow of discouragement. Satan means "accuser." The devil will accuse God of things for which He is not responsible, and he will accuse us of not being all that we ought to be. He will slander our character to our face. He will cast aspersions on our personal ability and remind us of our past failures and mistakes.

Sunday, July 23, 2017

We face the fiery arrows of personal disappointment that will numb us and destroy us. Satan will be certain to bring across our pathway that which will disappoint us and hinder us in our forward thrust in doing God's will.

We face the fiery darts of disease and disability. Paul speaks of having a thorn in the flesh that seemingly was a gift of God to keep him humble, and yet

he refers to it as a messenger of Satan that harassed him (2 Corinthians 12:7-8). The devil will give us a false interpretation or explanation of the circumstances that life brings to us.

We face the fiery arrow of personal injury. We all are subject to injury because of our own errors in judgement and because of the cruelty of thoughtlessness of others. To be injured gives us an occasion to feel hostile, to develop hate, and to begin carrying a grudge. The devil will slip up on our blind side and shoot some arrows that are destructive and hurtful to destroy our spirituality and to deprive us of being the persons we should be.

What kind of flaming arrow is Satan using on you? Could it be that he is making you wealthy or successful in order to lure you away from God? Wealth is not always the blessing of God. It may be a gift from the underworld of evil to get you away from the pathway of righteousness and faithfulness.

Sunday, July 30, 2017

III. Above all taking the shield of faith.

The Apostle Paul declared that there is no possibility of victory in the struggle with evil unless we utilize the shield of faith. It was through faith that the saints of old accomplished great things in God's name and for the people of their time (Hebrews 11:32-40).

Jesus our Lord, is the pioneer and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). If it was necessary for our Lord to face life with all its struggles with a great faith in God, we can be absolutely certain that we must face life with faith and not give way to fear; "without faith it is absolutely impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). To not trust in the truthfulness and in the faithfulness of God is an insult to the divine creator.

If we are to utilize the shield of faith and develop a great faith in God, we need to be obedient to God's will as we know it in the present. God's promise of His blessings on the tither is a case in point (Malachi 3:10-12). Those who do not bring their tithes into God's storehouse in the present, deprive themselves of the blessings that God has promised to those who in faith obey His command.

If we are to utilize the shield of faith and develop a greater faith, we need to get acquainted with those whose experiences can strengthen our faith and cheer our spirit. Hebrews 11 has been called, "Faith's Hall of fame." This chapter gives us a list of the great heroes of God who through faith overcame evil and accomplished much in the kingdom of God. What have you done with the faith you have?