

## **UNDERSTANDING FAITH SERIES**

### **SHIELD OF FAITH**

Turn with me to Ephesians 6:12 *For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded our loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

What we want to see here this morning is the shield of faith. We are looking at the shield of faith as an aspect of faith in our life. The shield of faith is the only piece of armor that Paul gives a description as to what it does. All the other pieces of armor are listed and you have to cross reference to find out what they do. But the shield of faith Paul immediately describes what it does. He even emphasizes “above all”. He does not say that about the other pieces of armor. That doesn’t mean that the other pieces are not important. But there is an emphasis that Paul places here in the context on spiritual warfare. He starts with verse 12 and as he speaks about spiritual warfare he emphasizes an important weapon. I see all the other pieces of armor as not only defensive armor but they are also weapons. Any weapon that can neutralize the weapons of our enemy and cause our enemy to be powerless must be important.

And here he says in Ephesians 6 that above all take up the shield of faith whereby you are able to quench all the fiery darts of the enemy. Our enemy has fiery darts.

And those fiery darts can be quenched by one of our armor. Its wonderful to know that there is a piece of our armor that can quench the enemy darts. That can destroy his weapon against our life. In any warfare if you are able to disarm an enemy you have won part of the battle. So according to Ephesians 6 there is a piece of armor that can quench the enemy darts. In any warfare there must be an ability to disarm an enemy. To cause the enemy weapon to be obsolete it must be a powerful weapon. See in warfare we could cause our enemy to be weaponless and disarmed. To be in a position where our weapon becomes offensive it must be a powerful weapon.

In fact in the 1973 war between Israel and Egypt, the Israelites almost could have gone straight to Cairo. But in the first stage of the war the first thing that the Israelites did was to bomb all the air-fields and all the air ports that are possible for Egypt's planes to take off. So immediately at the beginning of the war Egypt lost its air power. And all of their armies on land were at the mercy of the Israelites air force from the first stage of the war. And it was this decisive attack of Israel even though they were out numbered that caused them to win the war. See that in modern warfare this applies how much more in spiritual warfare when we have weapons that could cause our enemy's weapons to be useless against us.

And the shield of faith is important for the enemy's main weapons are fiery darts. And it is this shield of faith that we take that causes Satan to be powerless against us. People are talking how powerful he is, how big he is. But if we have a weapon that can make him nothing more than a pussycat, that will be lovely. That's what Paul says that is why he emphasized "*above all taking the shield of faith*". We have to understand how this shield of faith works.

There is another part of our armor that is described in the book of I Thessalonians 5:8 *But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love.* In Ephesians 5 he speaks about the breastplate of righteousness. You wear a breastplate of righteousness; you wear a breastplate of faith. See faith gives us a double protection against the enemy. It is with faith that we can reach a point where we don't feel the devil any more. Neither are we afraid of his attack or counterattack or his strategy or his attempts against us. We have a dual protection: the breastplate of faith and the shield of faith. Remember faith is the force that

quenches the fiery darts of the enemy. So you have the shield of faith and when it gets through you still got the breastplate of faith. There is a dual protection against the fiery darts. Twice does the force of faith operate to neutralize the weapons of our enemy the fiery darts.

In a practical way when our faith increases we become immune to the enemy. When you start moving into the spiritual realm, or maybe you first start casting out demons or praying for the sick or being active in the Lord's ministry, people will come and tell you, and there are a lot of them available, to tell you don't overdo it, otherwise Satan counterattack. You probably have heard this yourself before. And after some time when you are active they will say the demons follow you home, trouble you, cause you sleepless nights, oppression, attack your family. So when you give him one punch he gives you two punches. And because your faith level is low, and since you have only just begun, you accepted that statement. According to your faith, so be it onto you. It happened exactly as you accepted. You were troubled, you were oppressed, demons did follow you home, and he did counter attack. And the next time you minister for the Lord at the back of your mind you were wondering what is the next counterattack. Until one day God shows you His Word where He says in Psalms 91:10 *No evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.* And He tells you in the gospel of Luke 10:17-21 It tells you that you shall tread upon scorpions and serpents and in no way shall they hurt you or harm you. So we know that Jesus is talking about a faith level where you reach the point where his attacks cannot touch you. And that is where faith can bring you. This is the true faith that is from God.

Many Christians go out into spiritual battle without understanding the shield of faith what it is for. Here is how faith operates. You go out and people tell you all these things. Don't simply lay hand on demon-possessed people because the demon will come through your hand and come into your life. Its unscriptural, you can't find a single scripture. Some of you may quote Paul told Timothy don't lay hand suddenly. That doesn't talk about casting out demons. That talked about appointing people to leadership. See laying hand is also to an appointment to a leadership post. Whenever they choose leaders they lay hands and set them apart. Paul was telling Timothy about that ordination and not about casting out demons. It's a misquoting of scriptures. There is no scriptural basis for that kind of belief. The only problem is their faith level is so low that Satan is making use of it to throw his fiery darts. And

his fiery darts are coming through and hitting their family, hitting their mind, hitting their lives and they are suffering because the shield of faith is not quenching the enemy darts. In fact they just lay it down and they are not using it. Neither did they have the breastplate of faith. Faith is not operating in their life. Fear is operating in their life.

In the early days of the ministry when I was told all these, I took the Word of God and said I will not accept it. Because No. 1 I don't see in the life of Jesus. No. 2 I don't see in the life of the apostles. No. 3 its unscriptural. No. 4 I have scriptures that tells me the opposite that I am protected. If I were to work for an earthly employer, if he is a good, he will take care of my needs because I am giving my time to the earthly employer. And if I serve God who is the best employer in the world, if I serve my Father in heaven and I give my life to Him how can He not protect my family? He does. So we take the Word of God and meditate on it. I don't believe that his counter attacks will be effective. He can try but it won't have any effect. Neither would I accept or believe the fact that you need to succumb to all his attacks. You can be immune completely. That is more scriptural. The more we meditate on that Word you will reach a point where you are no more afraid of what he tries to do back to you. You begin to develop a faith in the boldness to go ahead and uproot demonic powers from people's lives. You go ahead and destroy the works of the devil in any city in any place with full confidence that He that is with you is greater than the enemy. With full confidence that God protects you, your family and all your love ones. With full confidence that you are immune to the enemy.

In the natural, immunity means that you could face certain sicknesses or diseases without succumbing to them. Why? What makes a person immune in the natural? When we say a person is immune against for example small pox what are we talking about? We are saying that if that person is exposed to that small pox virus there are elements in the blood of that person that will destroy the small pox virus and germs. So when a person develops immunity that person has the anti-bodies in his blood system against viruses or germs. When they immunize a person what they put into a person is a very weak strain of the germs and it causes the body to produce the anti-bodies to kill the weakened germs. And those anti-bodies remain in the blood stream from that time onwards. And there is in our blood stream a lot of immunity against various types germs and viruses.

In the same manner spiritual immunity to the attacks of the enemy are such that whatever Satan try you have faith in your life to overcome it. It is call the fight of faith. If fear tries to come you take the Word of God. The only weapon the enemy has is fear. If he could succeed in putting fear into your life he will have a hold on you. Only the Word of God can knock out all the strong holds. Only the Word of God can cut it off.

How do we know that this true faith is operating and not just presumption? Last week we talked about faith and the conscience working together. We are talking about the fight of faith. Lets look at II Tim. 4:7 *I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith.* Your fight is to keep the faith, to hold on to faith. Faith that is exercised in the Lord is not a struggle. Faith is a rest. How do we tell if somebody is exercising faith or presumption? It is very easy. Presumption is anxious, fearful, worrisome, doubtful, but faith has a peace and calmness in God. How do we know before we pray for someone whether the faith that is exercised has contacted God? If a person has a faith of God working there is an inner confidence that flows out. When a person says I know that when you pray for me I will be healed. There is a peace it comes in what that person is saying. That is the faith of God. And many times when you pray it works accordingly. But human presumption that is not at the level of faith yet is anxious, worried. Softly they will say please pray for me. When a person says like that there is no faith its only anxiety. Faith and fear cannot co-exist. Faith and anxiety cannot co-exist. Faith and worry cannot co-exist. When you hear a person talking that way you have to convey faith to that person. You have to either calm a person down with the Word, remind that person what the Word of God said until that person reaches a rest. Then you can minister successfully. If you just minister as it is sometimes all a person wants is sympathy.

Heb. 11:6 says without faith its impossible to please God. Sometimes people can draw faith from others. Like for example if about 10 of you are in a boat. The storms come and the sharks go round it. And part of the engine breaks down. And the waves are tossing to and fro and the sharks are coming nearer and nearer. And 9 of them panic. But if one person among them who would stand and say, "The angels of God are with us," and there is a calmness in that person voice. Others can catch

that person's faith. Fear is also contagious; it passes on from one to the other. When Gideon had a whole group of people come, God said to Gideon tell those who are fearful to go home. Nearly twenty thousand went home. And in His instructions to Moses in talking about fighting emphasizes that the fearful will not fight for him. Fear is also contagious until it contacts faith. When fear and faith fights faith wins. The peace and the calmness of God wins. There is a peace and a rest with true faith.

You can tell whether people are talking out of their heads or out of their hearts. Like someone comes and say I am believing God for this I am believing God for that. You examine very carefully. If the so-called believing and all those confessions are filled with anxieties, fear, then faith has not settled in. And usually people who talk like that the thing they are hoping for doesn't come to pass. Neither do they have the substance of faith to bring it to pass. The first circumstances, the difficulties that person faces, that person gives up. So how can that be faith? Faith doesn't give up. It was never faith. It was human confidence. Now faith talks differently. Faith has a calmness to it that says I know that God has shown me this. Sometimes a person gets excited that's alright. But there is calmness and a peace about the way a person talks when faith is there. There is a rest about the way a person talks. That person says I know that God has shown me this. I know He will bring it to pass. The way a person talks convey a peace all around. And when people say that you know that faith is there. And they will be as immovable as Noah building the ark. Come what may they will pursue it. The breastplate of faith and love and the shield of faith do the same thing. See Satan is always hasty. He that believeth does not make haste.

When the enemy's darts confronts the faith of God, the conquering peace will nullify them. We think of peace as a force that is fragile and easily broken. For our concepts of peace are sometimes inaccurate from what we see around us. Like we see the peace of nations are quite fragile. Whenever one nation upsets another war is easily provoked. All it takes is sometimes a wrong statement or taking of one foot of the other nation's border and whole nations are offended. And war has erupted over one foot of soil. We live in the world where peace is something that is so fragile. In the same way as you see the water. It is nice to see clear water running peacefully. And when wind comes you can see the ripples on the water. And our concept of peace is something fragile. But not in the spirit realm. In the spirit realm we have said meekness conquers, peace conquers. Rom. 6 says the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet.

Look at Rom. 16:20 *Then the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.* Peace is a powerful force. And this peace that we are talking about is a peace that results out of faith. Faith can be examined and it has its properties and it has its characteristic. Just as in chemistry you examine a substance you can classify the characteristics the chemical properties of a substance. Faith can be examined and it has properties. One of the properties of faith is peace.

Look at Rom. 15:13 *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.* See we have joy and peace in believing. The word *believe* in the New Testament comes from the same Greek word as the word *faith*. If we could have use the word *faith* as a verb instead of a noun we could have read it this way. *That the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith-ing or exercising your faith in God.* So when we exercise true faith in God peace and joy are its characteristics. You can tell whether its faith or human confidence working in a person.

Look over at Philippians chapter 4 this is the type of peace that must come if your prayers are to be answered. And of course we see the connection that it has with faith. The reason why not many people's prayers are not answered is they don't have faith. Without faith God cannot be moved.

Phil. 4:6-7 *Have no anxiety about anything.* Paul did not put that verse in just to fill up that line. Anxiety is an enemy of faith. You can't exercise faith and be anxious at the same time. Faith has hope and confidence. There is no anxiety in faith. Paul says *don't be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

See this peace that we have seen is produced according to Rom. 15:13 from faith. When you have removed all those anxieties in your life and allow the Word to be a revelation in your life, that revelation or that rhema of the Word of God in your life

in your spirit is faith. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the rhema of God. Rom. 10:17. That rhema of God becomes a revelation to you. And that revelation is faith being birthed in you. And that faith in your life will give you a rest, a peace, a calm. It's a powerful peace.

The bible says in Phil. 4:7 peace garrisons your heart and mind. Have you ever imagine peace as a soldier. That's the picture it gives you. Peace is a soldier it marches around and around your heart. Peace guards you. And it is this peace that guards you that is faith as a shield of faith demonstrating against the enemy. When the enemy throws a dart of fear, a dart of anxiety, this peace that is faith guarding you will be able to stop those fiery darts so that your peace is not disturbed and your position of faith remains. Satan can throw a missile at you and the peace that is guarding you can block the missile and it cannot get in. Provided it's the peace that comes from the revelation of the Word in your life. Two people can come up to you with the same sickness with the same problem. And both of them are on medication. One of them said, "I believe the Lord has touched me. God spoke to me through His Word. I know I am healed. I know God has touched me and done something in my body. I am putting away all the medicine." Another comes and asked, "Can I put away all these medicine?" Your answer to the first one is I believe that God has really touched you. The answer to the second one is no you can't yet. See that is why people get into problems. They don't discern faith when it comes. Faith can be discerned. Acts chapter 14 tells us that as Paul was preaching he saw that the man has faith to be healed. Faith can be discerned. You can discern faith when it is there. And when faith is there and its acted upon a miracle takes place. Jesus can discern faith. When they open the roof He looked up and He saw the faith of the people. They have such confidence, where against odds they try to come into the house there was no room. Ordinary people give up but not faith people. Its sure would take faith to dig a hole in a roof just to get to Jesus. Ordinary human confidence would have given up. But there was something in them that say they know that person would be healed. Faith is a knowing so confident, so peaceful, so full of calm and rest that it is a shield, garrison upon your heart and on your mind.

Now there is more to it here. Lets look at the book of Hebrews where we can show that faith when its being acted has a rest. Hebrews chapter the context is talking about unbelief. Chapter 3:19 and chapter 4:1-2 *So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest remains, let us fear lest*



*any of you be judged to have failed to reach it. For the good news came to us just as to them; but the message which they heard did not benefit them, because it did not meet with faith in the hearers.* See when you believe you enter into rest. When you don't believe there is no rest. You are anxious, you are fearful, you are doubtful. You can be easily tossed to and fro by contrary wind. But when you believe you enter into rest.

In Heb. 4:10 *For whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from His.* The rest that you enter through faith will allow the work of God to come forth. It says that he who enters that rest will cease from his struggles. You cease from your works, you cease from your efforts. Because now it is that Word that has gone into you that will bring forth the works. It says now it is the Word that does the fighting for you. Its like a seed planted into you. And the life that is in that seed will burst forth now that you have entered into that rest inside of you.

I have known of people who have received faith for certain areas in their life. And when the contrary winds and circumstances come against them, the Word in them speaks to them. While the outward circumstances tries to bring confusion and fear the inward calm and peace hit the spirit. It shall be so, it shall be so according to His Word. And the peace that is inside will rise forth and the God of that same peace will see to it that the peace will crush Satan under you. That's how powerful the shield of faith is. Shield of faith is faith manifesting in your life. It must be a tremendous weapon to cancel the weapon of the enemy, neutralize it, quenched it. And that shield of faith has characteristics of rest, of peace. With that same peace the bible talks about it that crushes it underneath. If you watch carefully it is those who have that inner peace and calm who are the greatest warriors of God. It is those who have the inner peace and calm that comes from faith that when you put them in a difficult circumstances they will pull through. But those who don't have that foundation of peace in their life you put them in any circumstances they will shake, fear, tremble and fall. It's the inner stability that faith gives you. It's a powerful force. If you love and desire to defeat the enemy you must tap on this force of faith to come into your life in such a way that it produces peace, joy, rest.

Having spoken about this method, now the most important fact is for you to identify at which point the Word of God have moved into your spirit. As we have said if I could identify for you what are the characteristics of faith, you would know

when it has entered into your life and you will know when its not there. And you need to still meditate for it to get in. Just like cooking an egg. When you cook an egg the transparent white turns into a opal white. And it is an irreversible process. But in the early days in school days you remembered if you heat egg white just a little bit it will change the color. But if you retain it at a certain temperature, when it cools down it will reverse itself back to transparent. But at a certain point of temperature when it is no return, it will remain opal white otherwise it transparent. Some chemicals are that way. In the same manner you must be able to identify when faith comes in. Lets not fool ourselves. If faith is not there lets recognize it and lets get into the Word. Don't go into battle when faith has not entered. You can't fight the fight of faith if there is no faith. And the reason is people have not discerned faith in themselves and they have not discerned faith in others and it's a confused walk all the time. But when God helps you to identify and discern faith then you are better off. You know when to go into the boxing ring and when to keep training.

To discern faith we need to understand the characteristic of faith, which is why we touch on this subject. And having seen the characteristics now you can examine yourself and you can examine others whether you have faith for something. Sometimes you may have faith for certain area but no faith for other areas. You may have faith for finances but no faith for healing. Or you may have faith for healing but no faith for finances. Examine your own life. Judge yourself. Before you take a step of faith, before you go forth and proclaim boldly from the housetop examine your heart whether faith is there. If faith is not there you have not entered into the rest yet don't say anything to anybody. Just keep meditating on the Word until it gets into you. Hear the Word meditate on it and I can assure you one day when that revelation of the Word enters into your spirit faith is born. It's a supernatural force of faith that brings joy, that brings peace, that brings an inner calmness and with that inner stability you could stand against contrary winds. How strong a building is depends on the inner structure of that building and the reinforcement that is in that building. Some buildings don't have much reinforcement and so if a bomb explodes next to that building not even on that building the vibrations that take place will knock the whole building down. But modern builders discovered how to have reinforced concrete. So what they do is they put steel pars into those concrete pour cement on it and there is a greater strength in that building. And some of those building you could drop bombs next to it, it shakes but it will remain standing.

Faith in your spirit gives you a strength of reinforced concrete. How much you can stand through contrary circumstances depends on how much reinforcement is in your life. Right now you are an anxious, fearful, doubtful, timid person there is no doubt if we send you as a missionary to Timbuktu, the Christians there will have to minister to you and not you to them. What you are right now shows how much faith is in your life. None of us will send an anxious, fearful person to a difficult area. But we would rather send a peaceful, calm, full of faith and Spirit person into that area. It is the same way with God. God discerns faith and we need to see ourselves the way God sees us. There are certain things that we must be realistic. Sometimes God gives you a vision and you don't have faith to fulfill that vision yet. Be realistic. Some people have good intentions when they began. They say we are going to build this ten million dollars building. And yet they don't have even faith for half a million. And whenever they think about it they are fearful, shaking. I can assure you they won't get through. But to fight that kind of faith you must have an inner strength that comes from faith. It doesn't mean that it comes easily.