

The Shield Of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

Pastor John Miller

Well we're learning on Wednesday nights it's very clear that we're in a spiritual war. In Ephesians 6:12 Paul tells us, "...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." The enemy is real. He is powerful and wicked. He knows our weaknesses. Did you know that satan is aware of our weaknesses and many times he wants to capitalize on those weaknesses? He hits us at our weak moments and vulnerable areas. He has a quiver full of "fiery darts" (as Paul refers to them or arrows that are flaming) and he shoots them at us, but God has given us armor so that we can stand equipped to face the enemy. Look at verse 13. He says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God," why? "that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day," that's the day of tempting, testing, and attack, "and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." God has provided the armor that we need to stand against satan's attacks.

We have the belt of truthfulness. I like to translate that "truthfulness" because it's not talking about the truth of what we believe as Christians, it's talking about living lives of truthfulness or living lives of integrity. It's talking about what Paul said in Ephesians—that we should truth it in love. Our lives should be characterized by honesty, integrity, sincerity, and we should be living lives of truth. That's the belt that we wear. The breastplate (verse 14) is the righteousness of Christ lived out in our daily lives and standing in that righteousness. Then, the shoes of peace (verse 15), "...your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." We looked at that last Wednesday night, so we come to the fourth piece of equipment or armor that we must wear if we're going to stand against the wiles of the enemy. Let's look at verse 16 together. He says, "Above all," which means in addition to these other things, in addition to the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of peace. He's not saying it's more important than these things (we need all of these aspects of the armor), but in addition to them we add the shield of faith, "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

What was the shield that the Roman soldier used? There were actually several shields that Roman soldiers used but two of significance. One was a small round shield. It was lightweight and about two feet in diameter. It had straps on the back that would hold to his arm (probably mostly his left arm), and he would hold the sword in his right arm. This shield was made for close hand-to-hand combat. When the enemy would swing their sword, that would be the shield you would use to protect yourself against the swords of the enemies in close hand-to-hand combat. The Greek word that Paul uses for "shield" here is not indicating the small, little round oval shield but the second shield that was of significance. The one based on the Greek word that Paul actually used was a larger, oblong or rectangular shield. It's interesting. The Greek word that he used for it we actually get our word "door" from. It looked like a door. It was oblong, about four-and-a-half feet high, and about two feet wide. They would take two pieces of

wood and laminate them together. They would cover the front of the shield. On the back, the shield would be wrapped in thick leather. They would actually put linen between the wood and leather and wrap it in leather. They would border the shield in metal or steel. The leather was very, very thick and sometimes put it in water before battle. This is because many times the enemy would shoot (as the text would indicate) arrows that were dubbed in pitch and were flaming. These flaming arrows would sink into the leather and be extinguished. Many times they would hit the leather, sparks would fly out, and things would start on fire, but they would sink into this leather shield.

This shield (as I said, about two-and-a-half feet wide and four-and-a-half feet high) would cover the entire soldier's body. They were designed on the ends and sides to actually link together and would form a wall for quite some length—they would have a whole wall! The archers would be behind the shields. Holding the shields, they would just move forward into battle like a wall. They were indestructible. They couldn't be hurt or harmed because they were protected behind this large body shield as they went to battle. There were three purposes for these Roman shields. First, it covered their entire body. The little round shield wouldn't cover your legs or whole body. Secondly, it was linked together forming a wall for defense. Thirdly, it would extinguish flaming arrows. That's probably what Paul had in mind because notice in verse 16 he says, "...wherewith ye shall be able to quench," or extinguish, "all the fiery darts of the wicked."

For the Christian the shield represents faith. This is a clear reference from Paul. He makes it clear in verse 16 saying, "Above all, taking the shield of faith." He doesn't just say taking the shield. He said, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Now, he actually says, "I want you to have your 'shield of faith.'" He makes it very, very clear in the passage that the shield represents, for the believer, faith. When you introduce the subject of faith, it is as large as the Bible itself. I experienced a lot of frustration today because the subject is so large. I felt like I was standing on the seashore trying to capture the whole Pacific Ocean in a little cup—it's just impossible—but it's very clear from the passage that it's faith. Let me narrow it down just a little bit. The question needs to be asked: What kind of faith? Why would we ask this question? Here's the answer—because there are different kinds of faith. A lot of times people don't stop and think about there being different kinds of faith. This is not exhaustive but let me give you the three basic kinds of faith.

First, there is what we call saving faith. Ephesians 2:8 is a common verse that we all know. It says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast." By grace you have been saved. Literally, in the Greek it's actually by grace you are being saved because there's a present tense of salvation. Then, it tells us we are saved by faith and Jesus Christ is the object of our faith—that is salvation faith. No one can be saved apart from faith in Jesus Christ. It's faith alone in Christ alone. Amen? Jesus has to be the object of that faith. If your faith for salvation is church attendance, water baptism, living a good life, some kind of penance or works, it won't get you to heaven. It's "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy," the Bible says, "he saved us." We are saved by faith. "For God so loved the world, that he gave

his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," believes in Him. I want you to also think in these terms. This kind of faith can be referred to as believe, trust, or relying upon.

A missionary by the name of John Paton was working among the natives in the South Pacific. He was trying to translate the Bible into their language. He was really struggling with the word "believe." The language of the people on the island didn't have a word for "believe." One day a native came running into his little hut, huffing and puffing from running and exhausted. He sat down on his cot, threw his body down, and lifted his feet up and said, "It's so great to put my whole weight here and just lie in your cot." A light went on in John Paton's mind and he realized, That's my word! The word "believe" means to put your whole weight on, and that's how he translated it in their Bibles. This is salvation faith. Nothing in my hand I bring, we sing, simply to the cross I cling. That's salvation faith.

The second kind of faith that the Bible speaks of is "the faith." It's "the faith," and that is referred to in the book of Jude, the third verse (only one chapter in the book of Jude, so verse 3). It says, "...that ye should earnestly contend for," here's the phrase, "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." What is "the faith?" "The faith" is the body of truth that we believe as Christians. By the way, "the faith" are the essentials of Christianity. I realize some people may debate as to what the essentials are but most Christians concur there is one God, three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. I believe that if you deny the triune nature of God, you don't have Christian theology or doctrine. He's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God that created the worlds, the God of the Bible; and the second Person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ, became God incarnate. If you deny the deity and the incarnation of Christ, you don't have "the faith." He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, He died on the Cross (the substitutionary death), and He rose again from the dead. I don't know why I'm telling you this because this is not the faith that he's talking about in our text. I just thought it was important, okay? The personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, salvation by grace alone through faith alone, and the resurrection of Christ—these are essentials. If you deny those you don't have Christian doctrine. You might be born again, but you don't understand doctrinal truth of what Christians hold to, what Christians believe.

The third kind of faith is what we have in our text. He's not talking about saving faith. He's not talking about "the faith"—the body of truth that we believe. He's talking about our personal faith or trust in God. Every commentary, every writer that I read on this passage agrees and I would concur, that the faith is our personal, subjective, individual faith and trust in God for all of life. You could actually almost stop right there. That's basically what Paul is saying. He's basically saying what Habakkuk said, "...the just shall live by his faith." "But without faith it is impossible to please him." You have faith to save you and you believe the faith, but as a Christian you have to trust God, right? Some of you are going, "No. I don't want to trust God." You have to trust God. God puts us in places in our lives where we are forced to trust Him and need to trust Him and learn to trust Him. We need to grow in that kind of faith. This is the faith that we can actually grow in or expand. I believe that Proverbs 3:5-8 fits this kind of faith perfectly. In that passage it tells us, "Trust..." there it is, faith, "in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto

thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," or make your path straight. It goes on to say, "Be not wise in thine own eyes," if you're trusting God you're not looking to your own wisdom, strength, and resources, "fear the LORD, and depart from evil." In the King James it goes on to say, "It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Everyone needs a healthy navel. The Hebrew word translated for "navel" actually means your nerves—you won't be stressed out, you won't be freaking out, and you won't be all filled with anxiety. It'll be health to your nerves and bring blessing to you, so you need to learn to trust the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In everything you do acknowledge Him and He's promised that He would direct your paths. If you fear the Lord, you depart from evil. It'll be health to your nerves and God will help you in life's journey. This is what I believe is the shield of faith Paul is talking about in our text tonight. It's our faith and trust in God.

Let me give you one of the greatest verses in the Bible on the subject of faith. It's Habakkuk 2:4. It says, "...the just shall live by his faith." That's the way it would actually read in the Hebrew. That verse is quoted three times in the New Testament. It's quoted in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. In Romans, the emphasis is the just; in Galatians, it's shall live; and in Hebrews, the emphasis on that verse is by faith. Interesting that this one verse is quoted three times in the New Testament—in each one of these key books of the New Testament. I believe (the more I've thought about it over many, many years, I just keep coming back to this) this is the Christian life—"the just shall live by his faith." We're justified by faith, we live by faith, and the Christian life is all a matter of faith. You say, "Well, what do you mean by faith?" Again, I believe that faith is simply trust in God.

You're sitting on the pews here tonight by faith. You drove your car to church tonight by faith—and seeing some of the cars you drove it takes a lot of faith to drive those suckers! Have you ever thought about how much faith you put in your car? Have you ever been in the mountains coming down the mountain? We used to live by the San Bernardino Mountains and we'd come down the mountain. Every time I'd come down the mountain I'm thinking, I hope and pray my brakes are in good shape, because you're geared down but you're riding your brakes and you're thinking, My whole life is in the hands of these brakes! It's a scary thought. Or, you get into an airplane by faith—knowing planes and stuff today, you put a lot of faith in those airplanes. You go to a restaurant and eat food by faith. Have you ever thought about opening up a can of food? Who knows what's lurking there! You just open that sucker and start eating it. You know, there are some bizarre things that have been found in canned foods—you do that by faith. I just thought I would encourage you.

We put faith in so many things. The Bible says, "Have faith in God," and for some reason we just freak out. "Well, I can't do that. I can trust the men who build the freeways. You go over these huge freeway overpasses. Sometimes when I'm going over those things I'm thinking, Why do we build these in Southern California? I'm going over it thinking, Not now, Lord. Not now. Ooohhh. Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus! Whew! I remember when my kids were little we'd go over these big freeways, and they'd put their hands out in the car like they're flying, "Woohoo!" I'm like, "Huhhuhhuh!" and they're like, "Heeeheehee!" the faith of a child, you know.

I've been at those construction sites. I see all those beer cans those guys drink while they're building them freeways! They're building them freeways half drunk most of the time, I think. We put our faith in so many things, and this whole focus is—put your faith in God. Trust in God for, "...the just shall live by his faith," not by your feelings, not by sight, but by faith.

If we're going to be able to stand against the fiery darts of the wicked, it's going to take trust and faith and dependence and reliance upon God—not going by your emotions or feelings or circumstances or by what you see—and the object of your faith needs to be the Lord. Write down this other verse about faith, Hebrews 11:34, which is the greatest chapter in the Bible on the subject of faith. It's the "Hall of Faith" of the great men and women in the Bible who did great exploits and conquered through their faith. It says, "...out of weakness were made strong," I love that statement! "Out of weakness (they) were made strong," Hebrews 11:34. It says they, "Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong...received their dead raised to life again," these Old Testament stories are recounted, and all of them took place because they were men and women of faith. Faith can move mountains! In 1 John 5:4 it says, "...this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Now, our enemy is the world, the flesh, and the devil, but I think that when we're dealing with this one aspect of the world as it attacks us and we stand against it that it's our faith that overcomes the world.

Here's the next question we need to ask: Why must we live by faith? The answer is because satan shoots his fiery darts as introduced in our text. What are these fiery darts of the wicked one? In verse 16, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." As many years as I've taught the Bible, and I've studied this passage, looked into it, and debated with people that know the Word of God, I find it significant and interesting that Paul doesn't actually name what the fiery darts are. I just wanted to point that out to you in all honesty. Sometimes preachers will just jump right into the application, "Here's what they are," but if the Bible doesn't say, I don't think we can be absolutely dogmatic. I believe that we're dealing with satan, his attacks, and his assaults. The context lends itself to that. We can pull from other verses to know when satan attacks us, but in all honesty we need to realize that Paul doesn't really delineate. He doesn't break it down. I wish he would have. It would have been so awesome.

One of the first questions I'm going to ask Paul when I meet him in heaven is what were the fiery darts? I just wish he would've written that down there but, of course, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit evidently the Lord felt like it wasn't important for him to break it down, but let me mention a few. By the way, the list could go on and on and on and on and on. I read a whole bunch of commentaries. Every one of them gave 8-12 things, and the list was different as to what the fiery darts were. I've kind of compacted it into five things that I want to make mention of that in my mind and in my own life I think are so important.

First, there is the dart of doubt—the devil's dart of doubt (if you want to write that down.) Satan wants you to doubt God's Person, God's power, and God's promises. If there's anything the devil wants to do is to interject doubt into your heart and into your mind about God and who He

is. How often satan will come and want us to question whether or not God even exists. You know, almost every Christian has this somewhat crisis experience in their own life when satan begins to attack and say to them, "You know, there really isn't a God. This is all just a big bunch of hoopla. There is no reality there. You're fooling yourself. You're deceiving yourself. God doesn't really exist. God isn't really there, and everyone is just fooling themselves." There have been so many people that have professed to love the Lord and follow the Lord and have been believers, yet they sometimes fall away or they apostatize. Whether or not they were truly born again, God knows their hearts (I don't), but satan wants us to doubt God's existence. The Bible says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." You can break that down—he wants us to doubt God's Word as well. That's one of the primary darts and attacks that satan will bring against the believer.

In Genesis 3, right after Adam and Eve were created there in the Garden of Eden, the first temptation comes where satan appears in the form of a serpent. Do you know what the first words were recorded out of the mouth of the devil? He said, "Did God really say that you can't eat of every tree of this garden?" The first thing satan, as recorded in the Bible, said was, "You sure God really said that?" I believe that set the stage that satan's number one assault is on the validity, the reliability, the inspiration, infallibility, the historicity of the Word of God. Many times Christians will begin to doubt the Bible, "Is it really God's Word? Is it really inerrant and infallible? Is it really given by inspiration of God?" I believe that when those doubts come we should educate ourselves and understand reasons to believe the Bible is the Word of God, but there is always going to be a point in time when you must accept it by faith. How much evidence is it going to take for you to be convinced the Bible is the Word of God? Satan is going to do all he can to attack you.

I was actually reading J. Vernon McGee on this very subject today. He said (when he was in seminary getting trained for the ministry) he had a crisis experience in his life of doubting the Bible was the Word of God. A professor, who was really intellectual, a really smart guy began to sow seeds of doubt in his mind as to whether the Bible really was the Word of God. At that time, Dr. McGee, as a young man, said, "Lord, if this isn't Your Word and is not given by inspiration, it's not really the Word of God, I don't want to go into the ministry. I don't want to be preaching Your Word." Can you imagine if that would've happened? What a loss that would've been? Then he came to realize, through the influence of another individual and as God gave him confirmation, that he was being attacked by the enemy to have those doubts on God's Word. He came to a point where he said, "I'm going to believe and I'm going to accept by faith that this book is God's Word, and I'm going to preach it as God's Word."

Did you know that Billy Graham has testified so many times that he had a crisis point in his life where he was actually doubting and questioning whether the Bible was the Word of God? He made a conscious decision, by faith, he actually just held up the shield of faith and said, "I made this decision that I'm going to believe the Bible is the Word of God. I'm going to stand on it as true, and I'm going to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ." Look what happened through the ministry of Dr. Billy Graham. Thank God that he used that shield of faith! We need to do the same. When satan comes with his darts of doubt, we need to lift our shield high and protect

ourselves and our minds against these doubts, these flaming arrows of doubt, that come.

Or, maybe he wants you to question God's love. "Well, if God really loved you why are you sick? If God really loved you then why aren't you married? If God really loved you why are your kids falling away from God? If God really loved you why did your spouse die? If God really loved you why did you have this cancer or this horrible accident?" Those are the points where satan is shooting his flaming arrows at us wanting us to question God's Person, His love, or God's goodness. "If God is really good then why are you going through this?" Maybe he's tempting you with darts of doubt to question God's power to heal, to help, to save, or God's promises. God has given us exceedingly great and precious promises in His Word, and we need to believe and accept them as true.

One of my favorite New Testament stories is when Jesus healed Jairus' daughter. We have three daughters. I'm so blessed to have three girls, and they're such a joy to my wife and me. I preached from that passage so many times. It is believed that Jairus' daughter was about 12 years old, and when Jesus leaned over that little girl He said, "Little lamb, arise." This little 12-year-old...I can't imagine one of my daughters at 12 dying and how devastating that must be. When Jairus is trying to get Jesus, there is one scene in the story where Jairus is trying to get Jesus to come to his house to pray for his daughter. Jairus wasn't aware yet that his daughter had died. He was still kind of urgent, like "You must come!" Someone stopped Him, and there was a woman with the issue of blood that kept Jesus from going. He was stopped and delayed. Jairus was so urgent. It was in that one point that before they had gotten into the house that Jesus turned to Jairus and said, "Fear not, only believe." I love that! "Don't be afraid, trust Me. Don't be afraid, just believe. Just have faith." When they got to the house, she was dead. Jesus dismissed everyone, just the mother, father, and the three disciples, Peter, James, and John were there. He leaned over the little girl and said, "Little lamb, arise." He took her by the hand and she sat up. He brought her back to life and gave her to her parents. I love the statement that Jesus made, "Don't be afraid, only believe." Jairus had to rest in His promises no differently than we have to rest in God's promises. Someone said, "Never doubt in the dark what God has spoken in the light."

Here's the second dart you can write down. It's the dart of discouragement. This is one of satan's most well-worn tools. He has many flaming arrows in his quiver marked discouragement, and he will shoot them right into your heart! You need to recognize that and hold up that shield of faith. There's the Old Testament story of Elijah. Elijah had been called to Mount Carmel. He saw the fire come down and consume the sacrifice, and they slew all the prophets of Baal. He thought Israel was going to repent and turn back to God. They didn't. Many times discouragement comes from disappointed hopes. You have expectations, "I thought this door would open." "I thought my husband would get saved." "I thought this would happen," or "I thought I'd have this ministry," and the door shuts instead of opening. He kind of hit the slough of despond, that's when he took off running and hid out in the desert under a tree. He began to pray. He prayed, "Lord, I just want you to kill me." Can you imagine a prayer like that? You say, "Wow! That's what I prayed last night!" Can you imagine, "Well, I just come right now, in Jesus name, would You just kill me?!" There are times that we could get there.

We're just, "Lord, I'm so discouraged right now. I'm just in this deep, dark pit and I don't even want to live anymore."

I know that I'm opening up a sensitive area where people talk about chemical imbalance and chemical depression and all of those kinds of things, but I will say this. I believe that there are times that the child of God walks in darkness, and there are times when we don't sense His presence, we don't hear His voice, we don't sense the joy of the Lord, and there's just a cloud over us right then. At times like that you have to "trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths." (NKJV) Those are such important times that you just hold up that shield of faith, I believe in God! I believe in His Word! I believe in His promises! I know He loves me! I know He's taking care of me! I don't understand my circumstances, but I'm going to trust You, God! I'm not going to listen to this voice that's telling me that You've abandoned and forsaken me! There are so many times that the child of God walks in darkness, and I always encourage people to just wait. The clouds will blow away, the sun will shine again, and God will speak to you, but you just have to be patient and wait and trust in the Lord. That's what God did for Elijah. God came to him and gave him a nap and let him eat something. Sometimes you just need to go to bed and get a good nap! The angels showed up and made him a little cake—Angel food cake. They told him to eat, encouraged him, and he prayed. That's when the Bible says Elijah heard the still small voice. It's just that still small voice when God finally just speaks to you and your heart just responds with gratefulness and joy!

I would call dart number 3 (and I'm sharing these darts specifically, as I said, the list could be diverse and quite long, but I'm sharing these with you because these are darts that have been fired at me many times over the years) the dart of depression. You have discouragement, which sometimes is hard to distinguish from depression, but you get to the point where you feel like there is no purpose, you don't want to live, and life is meaningless. David got that way in the Psalms. He got discouraged. All the emotions that David went through, he talked about in the Psalms. Even Paul the apostle, the great apostle Paul himself, talks about that we were cast down but not forsaken, we were in despair. He said, "At one point we even despaired of life itself," but he realized that God was in control. You've got to recognize those as darts from the devil.

Fourthly is the dart of disobedience. Satan wants you to disobey God and take things into your own hands, rebel against God. Maybe your walking in doubt and discouragement and darkness and Satan will come to you and say, "God isn't taking care of you, so you're just going to have to do what you want to do, how you want to do it, and just do what you want to do. Just disregard God's Word and go off on your own." Again, you're not trusting in the Lord with all your heart and acknowledging Him in all of your ways.

I would call dart number 5 the dart of fear. We've all experienced times of fear, of being afraid. The Psalmist says, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." There's another verse that says, "I will trust in You and not be afraid," that's even better! There are times that we're filled with fear. We're afraid we're going to get sick. We're afraid we're going to lose our job. We're afraid

that our marriages are going to fail or our kids are going to go way crazy. We're filled with fear. Over and over and over and over in the Bible God said to different individuals, "Fear not." Do you know when God actually says, "Fear not," you know why He says that? Because they were afraid. It's not like, "Who me? God, what are you talking about? I'm not afraid." If God said, "Fear not," it's because they were afraid. God said that to Abraham who is actually held up as one of the greatest examples of a man of faith in the Bible. He was Mr. Faith is who he was! When you look up "faith" in the dictionary, it's going to have a picture of Abraham right there. That's Mr. Faith. Abraham had his lapses of faith and his times of fear so He said, "Fear not, Abram. I'm your shield and your exceeding great reward. I'm going to take care of you."

The answer to all of these darts of doubt and fear and discouragement and maybe disappointment—he can shoot an arrow of anger or unforgiveness or greed or lust. Here's one of the challenges (again, a moment of honesty with you from the pulpit); that is, the enemy of the believer is the world, the flesh, and the devil. Given there are three in the mix, it's sometimes hard to discern: Is this me, my flesh, or is it the devil? Is it me lusting, sinful wicked thoughts? Have you ever been in prayer and all of the sudden POW a perverted thought comes into your brain? You're thinking, Where did that come from? Well, nine times out of ten it comes from the devil, or the devil uses your own flesh to give you these perverted thoughts. You need to lift your shield of faith and resist those thoughts. The Bible says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." You don't entertain those thoughts and go, Ooo yeah! That's pretty good! Keep it coming, devil, that's awesome! You have to resist those thoughts by faith. If someone hurts or wrongs you and the devil says, "Don't forgive them. You don't need them anymore. Don't even talk to them. Just cut them off!" in bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness; those can be fiery darts that satan shoots at you, and you have to stand by faith and trust God.

I love what Paul says in verse 16, "Above all," in addition to these...now faith won't keep the darts from coming, but they will give you victory over them. Proverbs 30:5 says, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him." Guess what this shield is? It's God! The shield of faith is God, and you're trusting in God in every area of your life—health, circumstances, job, calling, career, profession, marriage—everything! If God doesn't open a door that you want opened, or God shuts a door, or you're in the hospital, or you lose something, or are going through a time of difficulty, you must trust in God! Most of the people that come to me for prayer or counseling, that's all I can say. It's "Look, you're just going to have to trust God. What other option is there? Trust in the Lord." We need to hold tight to the shield and we need to trust God's Person, trust God's promises—in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,"—and trust God's providential care. I believe with all my heart that if we are God's people, all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. I may not know why this seeming tragedy or difficulty has come into your life but I know that God will use it for your good and His glory, but it's going to take faith to get victory in that. Trust His providential care and trust His power.

That book of Habakkuk, where it says, "The just shall live by faith," it also says this, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail,

and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls,” that’s a pretty dismal look. The prophet went on to say this, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God...,” or Jehovah God, “...is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.” Amen? Even though there’s no money in the bank, the car is not running, we’re losing our job, our home, and our health—I just thought I’d encourage you all tonight—yet will I joy and I will rejoice in my God, that God is the strength of my life! Amen? I will trust in God, that He makes my feet like hinds’ feet, using the image there of a deer’s back legs and the strength of the deer that can leap. God’s going to give you strength and joy and victory. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Let’s hold tight to that shield of faith.