

The Shield Of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

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We're studying the book of Ephesians on Wednesday night, and we've seen that Ephesians comes in three categories: we started with the wealth of the believer, then moved to the walk of the believer, now we're in the warfare of the believer. We're slowing down and taking an in-depth look at the spiritual warfare. Look at Ephesians 6:12. Paul said, "For 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," so we are in a warfare. If you're a Christian, you're in a warfare with the devil whether you like it or not. The "...weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God," so we want to put on the armor that God has provided to be able "to stand against the wiles," notice verse 11, "of the devil." Notice he also is powerful and wicked, verse 12; so he's wily, powerful, and wicked. The word "wiles" means his schemes or his plans. He's scheming on how to destroy your faith in God.

We looked at the subject of the armor in the area of the belt of truth and saw that we are to put on the breastplate of righteousness, verse 14. Then, we saw the shoes or sandals of peace, so we're to be "truthing it," we're to be putting on that imputed and imparted righteousness, and then we're to be walking in the peace of God sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The fourth piece of armor or equipment that we must put on is found in verse 16. Look at it with me. Paul says, "Above all," that phrase could possibly be translated "in addition to all," or "addition to all," or "in all things," and I'll explain the difference, "...taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all," not some but all, "the fiery darts of the wicked," one.

The question tonight is: What is this piece of armor known as the shield of faith? There were two basic kinds of shields that the Roman soldiers had. There was what was called the smaller round shield that was actually only about 2 feet in diameter and had straps on the back. It was kind of like a normal little shield that we think of. They would use this for close hand-to-hand combat. The foot soldiers could use it because they would be free to move around and protect themselves against swords and that kind of thing. It was a smaller round shield.

The Greek word that Paul uses in this passage for shield is actually a word that defines a larger type of shield, a second kind of shield. It was actually an oblong or rectangular shield that was about 4-1/2 feet tall and about 2 feet wide. It was a larger shield. It's interesting, the Greek word translated here speaks of this 2 foot wide, 4-1/2 feet tall shield where we actually get the English word "door" from. It looked like a door. It was rounded a little bit. This shield actually was made out of two heavy pieces of wood, they put linen over it, and it was covered with leather. The edges were actually covered with metal and steel. On the sides of the shield were latches so that soldiers could latch their shields together, crouch down, and be protected. It would actually form a human wall. The archers would come behind these shields and shoot into the army that was approaching. They could actually latch their shields together and form a long wall and go into battle. It's not the little round shield used by the foot soldiers but was a

wall of soldiers that would stand.

The leather was sometimes dipped in oil, and some Roman soldiers would soak it in water. We're going to read about the fiery darts, so if they were shooting arrows that were tipped with pitch and a flame, they would actually hit the shield and sink into this leather that was treated and would extinguish the fiery darts that were sent to them in battle. Paul is describing this kind of shield.

Paul's idea in verse 16, he says, "...wherewith ye shall be able to quench all," or all of "the fiery darts of the wicked." The "wicked," of course, is a reference to verse 11, the devil. He's referring to the evil one or the wicked one, and Paul talked about doing all that we need to do with the armor so that we can stand in the evil day, that is, the day of Satan's attack upon us.

For the Christian, the shield represents faith. Notice it's "the shield of faith," or I like the idea of the shield which is faith. It's not a faith shield, it's a shield which is represented by faith. The point there is that we're to stand in faith.

Now, the question needs to be asked now: What kind of faith? If he says that we're to take up the shield which is faith, we need to ask the question about what kind of faith. When you come to the subject of faith, it is so vast that it's impossible to touch every facet or aspect of it. It's like trying to capture the Pacific Ocean in a cup—it can't happen. I always like it when I see the little videos or the movies when people see the ocean for the first time. I grew up in California and have seen the ocean since I was a little baby. It's never really been surprising to me, I still love it. But thinking about people who for the first time see the ocean, it just blows their minds. That's the way I feel when I come to the subject of faith. Running through from Genesis all the way to Revelation is the theme of trusting God, believing God, having faith in God. The Bible actually says in several places, "Have faith in God."

Let me break down for you the three kinds of faith that we see basically in Scripture. There might be some who would argue that there are different facets of faith more than this, but basically, fundamentally, it comes in three areas and is really important for you to understand. First of all, there's what's called saving faith. We're familiar with that when we come to Christ and believe in Him for salvation. In Ephesians 2:8-9, you know the verse, right? You hear me quote it all the time. I think almost every sermon I ever preach I quote this verse. It says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves," by the way, "that not of yourselves" is salvation. It's not the faith, it's salvation. "...it," that is, your salvation, "is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast." In order to be saved, in order to be born again, in order to have our sins forgiven and have eternal life, you must believe, you must trust, you must put your faith in God. All of those in the sense of salvation are synonyms. We trust the Lord and are saved, we believe and put our faith in Jesus Christ and we are saved, and even in John's gospel, whoever "...received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 3:16, "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." It takes faith to be saved.

I said all that to tell you that's not the kind of faith he's talking about. I'm just telling you what kind of faith there is in the Bible. That's not the faith he's telling us to take up. He's speaking to believers here. He's talking about our life as a Christian, so he's not talking about salvation faith. It's interesting though that John Paton, missionary to the South Pacific, when he was trying to translate the Bible into the native language of these South Pacific islanders, they didn't have a word for "believe," so he'd come to John 3:16 and was really stumped on how to translate this. He said that one of the natives came into his hut where he was working on his translation and was exhausted from a hike through the mountains and laid on his cot and said, "It's so great to lay on your cot and to put my full weight on the cot." A light went on in his mind and realized, "That's my word!" Whoever puts their full weight on Jesus shall not perish but have everlasting life. That's what it means. It means to put your whole life in His hands, trusting Him and His work on the cross for your salvation.

The second kind of faith that's talked about in the Bible is "the faith" referred to many places, but Jude 3. It's one of my favorite verses in the Bible. It says, "...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once," and for all, "delivered unto the saints." When you read it in your King James or English Bible, it often will just say for faith, but it's "the faith," talking about the body of truth that we believe. The first faith is your faith in Jesus to save you, the second faith is what you believe as far as "the faith," the doctrine or body of belief of Christianity. This is what we are to "earnestly contend for," we're to defend. It's what we believe.

Some Christians have different views and beliefs, but there are views that are biblical that are what we call Orthodox Christian beliefs that you have to hold those beliefs to have Christianity. Technically, it's possible that you could be saved and have wrong ideas about truth or the Bible, but to have Christian doctrine, to have Orthodox Christianity, you must have "the faith." I still want to do a series on Sunday morning on "the faith" and go over all the main doctrines of the Bible. Just a few of them real quickly is that there's one God. Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, is actually monotheistic. Christians in their doctrine believe that one God is triune. We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, not three gods, one God in three Persons. That's Christianity. What I'm saying is that if you reject that, you don't have Orthodox Christianity. A cult would be marked by not believing in the Trinity or denying the triune nature of God. They deny the three Persons in One.

Then, part of "the faith" is to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, born of a virgin—you have to believe in the virgin birth to have Christian orthodoxy. You have to believe in the substitutionary death—that He died on the cross, took our place. You have to believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you pull out the resurrection from "the faith," it all crumbles, you have no faith. You have to have His incarnation, His crucifixion, and His resurrection. Those are all doctrines of "the faith."

Another important one, I just touched it, is that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Any deviation from that is not Orthodox Christianity. Those are just a few essentials of Christian belief. I also have the conviction that Orthodox Christianity has the view that the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God. Anything less is not what the Bible

teaches about the Scriptures, and that it is sufficient, that it's clear, and that it's God's Word. The list could go on and on, and we're not going to look at that because, secondly, that's not the kind of faith he's talking about. Why are you laughing? You say, "Well, why don't you get to what kind of faith he's talking about since it's our topic," and this is what he's talking about and why it's so vast.

Paul is talking about personal faith or trust in God. He's talking about our personal, subjective, individual faith and trust in God. If just a little faith will take your soul to Heaven, a lot of faith will bring Heaven to your soul right now to earth. He's talking about the sanctification faith, the growing faith, the faith that develops and grows. When you first become a Christian, you're a baby believer and your faith is small; and through trials and testings, through learning the Scriptures and learning to trust Him and seeing Him prove Himself strong, your faith, confidence, and trust grows as you walk with the Lord.

Write down some verses that talk about this kind of faith. Proverbs 3:5-8 says, "Trust in the LORD," there's our faith, "with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," right? That's what it means to put on the shield of faith—trusting in the Lord with all your heart, not leaning on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledging Him, "God lead me, guide me," and He'll make your paths straight. Proverbs 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 "navel" there actually has the idea of nerves. I like that concept because it means that you won't be freaking out, nervous or upset, stressing out, biting your fingernails, worrying and fretting. "It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones," it will strengthen you. That kind of trust in the Lord with all your heart brings peace, calm, and strength to the child of God in all the storms of life, all the difficulties of life, all the dark places that you have to walk through.

We all know as Christians that we walk through dark valleys, right? Read Psalm 23. He talks about walking "...through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me," in deepest darkness. I will not fear because You are with me, "...thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." That's the shield of faith. That's going through trials in life and not being afraid because faith and fear are mutually exclusive. Faith drives out fear from the human heart, so if you're afraid, it's because you're not trusting in the Lord.

Write down Hebrews 11:6. It says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him," so everything is about faith, trusting God. If you're going to please God, you have to walk by faith, live by faith, and trust the Lord by faith. It is the shield of faith that Paul is taking about in our text. It's our faith and our trust in God.

I wasn't planning on getting into this, I just kind of put it in a little marginal spot on my notes, a little afterthought, a footnote. It's just a reminder that this is not what some preach today, that is, a faith in faith. In the faith movement or the positive confession movement, the kind of overemphasis on faith, which I think is so overemphasized it's not even biblical, they teach that faith is a force and if you have enough faith, you can be rich, healthy, and prosper through faith.

That's not the kind of faith we're talking about. Faith is not a force, faith is in an object. Here's a super important principle about faith: Faith is only as good as the object it's placed in. If you put your faith in money, what do you get? What money can give. If you put your faith in man, what do you get? You get what man can give. If you put your faith in government, what do you get? Zero. If you put your faith in God, what do you get? What God can do, and what does the Bible say? All things are possible with God. Amen? So, why wouldn't you want to trust Him?

We exercise faith all the time in so many areas. It's funny. We exercise faith when we get in our car, approach an intersection, and put our foot on the brake by faith. I've seen some of the cars you drive, it takes a lot of faith to drive those suckers. You start your car by faith. You open a can of beans and eat out of a can of beans by faith. Who knows what's lurking there? Just thought I'd encourage you. You're sitting on a pew in a building right now by faith that the pew will hold you and the roof won't fall in. You turn on a faucet by faith. We exercise faith. You get in an elevator by faith. When you get in the elevator, you don't climb up there and check the cable to make sure it's working right and put some weight in it first and check it out, you just jump in. You get in airplanes by faith. You do all kinds of things by faith. The Bible says, "Have faith in God," and you say, "Oh no, no, no, I couldn't do that. I can't do that." Has He ever proved Himself unfaithful? He's faithful, isn't He? He's trustworthy, isn't He? He's dependable. The object of our faith is God, and it is also His Word. That's so very important in this context—faith in God, faith in His Word, faith in His promises—as I'll talk about more in just a moment.

Habakkuk 2:4 is one of the greatest—many feel the greatest—verse on faith in the entire Bible; that is, "...the just shall live by his faith." This verse is quoted in three places in the New Testament. It's from Habakkuk 2:4, but it's quoted in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews. It's interesting, in those three books of the New Testament where it's quoted, there are three sections to this verse: the just, shall live, by faith. In Romans the theme is the just; in Galatians the theme is shall live; and in Hebrews the theme is by faith—"the just shall live by faith." This was the verse that started the fire burning in the heart of Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer, and realized that he was saved by faith—faith alone, in Christ alone, by the grace of God alone. We are saved by faith, then we go on to live by faith.

Write down Hebrews 11:34, referring to the great hall of faith. By the way, Hebrews 11 is the greatest chapter in the Bible on the subject of faith. That's another series I want to do is preach through Hebrews 11—all the great men and women who lived and conquered by faith. It says, "...out of weakness were made strong," just lifting that phrase from Hebrews 11:34. If you want to be a strong Christian, "...then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." You need to feed on God's Word, and out of your weakness God will make you strong. It goes on to describe all of the great feats, accomplishments, and things that they did by their faith in God. What a glorious chapter on faith that is!

Write down 1 John 5:4 where it says, "...and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." As believers, we war against the world, the flesh, and the devil, but in this case our faith helps us to become victorious over the world, our faith helps us to be victorious over the flesh, and it also helps us to gain victory over the devil—our three enemies.

Why must we live by faith? If the just shall live by faith, why? Of course, the answer in our text is because Satan shoots his fiery darts, the darts of the devil or arrows that have flaming tips like the Roman soldiers would encounter with their swords. The answer is because those darts come from the devil, and we must resist and extinguish them. We must walk by faith with this “shield” so to speak, in order to destroy, “...to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,” one. We are to stand against these darts from the devil.

Something that has fascinated me for many years, that is, the text does not specify what the darts are. When I get to Heaven, one of the first questions I’m going to ask Paul, “What are the darts? Why didn’t you tell us what the darts were?” He tells us they are fiery darts, but he doesn’t tell us what they were. So, anything we say the darts were, it’s speculation; but we can be pretty, pretty sure at some of the darts Satan uses. In the context, we are dealing with attacks of the enemy—he’s wily, powerful, and wicked. Any of these darts are going to come in this category in the context of what Paul’s talking about, but he doesn’t give us a list of them. Sometimes I wonder if the reason there’s not a list there is because then we would limit it to the list not realizing that there’s many different ways these darts come to us individually, and remember that the devil is wily—he knows your weaknesses and will capitalize on that and attack you. He’ll shoot a fiery dart at you in the area of your weakness.

Let me give you a few possibilities. Even though I just said we don’t know what they are, I’m going to tell you what I think they are, at least some of them. Probably in the context here, and this is not exhaustive, he uses some of the darts that he likes to shoot at me, so I’ll share them and I think that some of them you’ll find true in your own life. The first is the dart of doubt—he gets us to doubt God’s Person, he gets us to doubt God’s power, he gets us to to doubt God’s promises, he gets us to doubt God’s providential care in our lives. He doesn’t want us to live by faith. He doesn’t want us to believe, trust, or put our faith in God. We have to learn to trust in God. The more you acquaint yourself with God and walk with Him in faith, your faith, like a muscle, will be strengthened and grow. By the way, trials and troubles are food for your faith. If you pray and ask God, “Give me stronger faith,” buckle your seatbelt, storms are coming, trouble and trials will come. If you want to grow in the Lord, the only way you can grow is through tribulation, persecution, and difficulties. You don’t grow on the mountaintops, you grow down in the valleys where the fruit is grown.

Sometimes we are tempted: Is God real? Is there really a God? Am I really saved? These are darts of doubt that Satan loves to shoot at God’s people. Is the Bible really God’s Word? Remember in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve had sinned in the Garden of Eden, it was the devil that came in the form of a serpent and spoke to Eve saying, “Did God really say that? Did God really say that you couldn’t eat of any fruit in the Garden of Eden?” He got the woman, Eve, to begin to doubt God’s Word. One of the points of attack of the devil is to attack the Bible, the Scriptures, the Word of God. That’s his number one place of attack, “Did God really say that? Is the Bible really true? Is it trustworthy? Is it historically reliable? Is it really the Word of God?” If he can get you doubting the authority of Scripture, he knocks your foundation right out from underneath you.

I find it interesting that both J. Vernon McGee and Billy Graham, when they were just starting out in their public ministries, had a crisis of faith where they began to doubt whether the Bible was truly the Word of God. They both have equal testimonies. I love the stories of J. Vernon McGee was in seminary and had a very intelligent professor in his seminary class who began to sow doubt in J. Vernon's heart that the Bible was trustworthy—it wasn't inerrant, it had errors, it wasn't reliable, it wasn't true, it wasn't historically accurate. He said he had to get alone with God, pray, and really seek the Lord. He said he finally had to come to a point in his life where he realized there's good evidence for believing the Bible is the Word of God. Yes, there are issues that we can't answer and don't understand, but he said, "I had to come to the point where I said, 'God, I'm going to believe Your Word is true, I'm going to preach it as being true, and I'm going to follow You into the ministry,'" and God used and blessed him in a wonderful way.

Billy Graham has the same testimony. Perhaps you've heard him give it many times. When he was a young pastor, and launching then into his evangelistic work with Youth For Christ, that he came under the influence of a liberal preacher that began to say, "No, the Bible is not true. It's not really the Word of God," and weaken his faith. He was actually up here in the San Bernardino mountains at Forest Home. He said he went out into the woods one night and laid his Bible on a stump. He got on his knees under a moonlit night in the mountains and said, "Lord, I need to know whether or not this Book is true, whether it's reliable, and I can't preach or serve You if I don't believe this Book is true and this gospel isn't the power of God." God really spoke to his heart. He said, "I decided," and this is the point, you decide. You make a commitment based on the evidence you have, by faith, that you believe this is God's Word, and he stepped out and went out to preach the Bible as being true, the Word of God. The rest is history, right? how God used that man.

I love to think of Billy Graham in that passage in Romans where it says that the preaching of the gospel is the power of God to salvation and how many lives were changed with the simple preaching of the Word of God and still are being changed today through simply preaching God's Word.

There are times when I'm preaching the gospel, and maybe like this last Sunday I'm preaching to over three thousand people, I look out over the crowd and think, I'm preaching the cross, His death, His resurrection, but I'm believing and knowing that there's power in the gospel that the Holy Spirit can take the Word of God and convict, convert, and change a life for the glory of God. You can't really preach the gospel unless you believe this Book is the Word of God. It comes to a point...and I encourage every Christian to do what you need to do to read the evidences and the support of the Bible being the Word of God, but eventually you have to make a decision that you believe God's Word is true and then that's where you stand. You're standing on the Word of God. It's the solid rock of Scripture. After many years of being a pastor and being a Christian, I am absolutely convinced the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God, and if you build your life upon it, you're like the wise man who built his house upon the rock—the winds come, the rains beat, the floods beat on that house, but it will stand because it was built upon the rock, Jesus Christ. Don't doubt God's Word. Don't doubt God's Person.

Satan wants us to doubt the love of God, the goodness of God, we can speak about all those things, "God doesn't love you," or "God isn't good," "If God loves you and God is good, then why did He let this happen to you?" "Why did He let this tragedy come into your life?" "Why did He let your loved one get cancer?" "Why did He let you lose your job?" Satan will capitalize on that and take that trial, which is designed to make your faith stronger, and try to get you to doubt God's love, God's goodness, or God's power to heal or God's power to help or God's promises.

One of my favorite stories in the gospel is when Jesus went to the home of Jairus and raised his twelve-year-old daughter from the dead. My wife and I raised three daughters, and I thank the Lord for my girls. They're such a blessing! Over the years, whenever I would preach the story of Jairus' daughter, I would think about my girls and about a dad and his daughters and how hard it would be to lose your twelve-year-old daughter. She was dying and Jairus went to the crowds and found Jesus. He said, "Please come to my house," and as they were on their way to the house, the woman who had the issue of blood reached out and touched the garment of Jesus and He stopped to minister to that woman. I think of Jairus saying, "No, no, no. Come now. Don't wait. We can come back to this lady later," you know, and the delay there. They actually were just delayed and someone came through the crowd and told Jairus, "Don't trouble the Master, your daughter is dead." Again, your twelve-year-old daughter is dead.

Do you know what Jesus said to Jairus at that moment? He said, "Don't be afraid, only believe." Isn't that awesome? "Don't be afraid, only believe." All Jesus did was spoke to him. What did Jairus have to do? Believe His Word. All the way from that point back to the house, Don't be afraid, believe My Word. Don't be afraid, believe My Word. That's kind of like how we go through life. We could be freaking out, we could be fretting, we could be going crazy, these fiery darts of doubt and fear, and yet the Word of the Lord says, "Don't be afraid, only believe." How marvelous that is!

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead He said, "Don't be afraid, only believe, and you'll see the glory of God." Someone said, "Never doubt in the dark what God has spoken in the light." I love John 14 when Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled," neither let it be afraid, "ye believe in God, believe also in me," so we need to trust Him.

Let's rip through these other five or six that I have. There's the dart of discouragement. That's a flaming arrow that Satan loves to shoot at us, discouragement. I think in Satan's arsenal of tools that he uses against God's people, and especially does he like to use it against God's servants, "Well, I thought more would happen. I thought God would use me in a greater way," and "We didn't see what I hoped God would do," or "We're disappointed," and we have unfulfilled expectations. Maybe not even serving the Lord, but just in our marriage or in raising our family or in our life, "I really thought I would have this going on in my life by this time," and I get discouraged.

David was discouraged many times and talked about that in the Scriptures. Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." We get weary, we get discouraged, we want to give up, we want to "throw in the towel." I remember a

couple of years ago I was watching an old historic black and white boxing match with my son. I've always heard the expression, "throw in the towel," but I never knew what it meant. These guys were boxing in this boxing arena, and this big towel comes flying into the ring, and then I said, "Hey! There it is, 'throw in the towel.'" One of the managers wanted to stop the fight, so he throws in the towel. That's what we want to do, we want to "throw in the towel." We're in the battle, we're in the fight, and we want to "throw in the towel" or we want to run out of the ring or we want to give up. Don't be weary. Someone said, "Don't quit. It's always too soon to quit," so we get depressed. Write down the Scripture in Galatians 6:9.

I also think of Elijah the Prophet after he had the contest on Mount Carmel with the prophets of Baal. Do you know what happened to Elijah? He got discouraged, and he went and hid under a juniper tree, a little bush, and asked God to kill him. Think about that. He just saw God bring fire down from Heaven and the prophets of Baal all destroyed, but he thought Israel would repent and they didn't, so his expectations weren't fulfilled and he just got discouraged and wanted to give up. He starts to pray, "Lord, I come to You right now. Would You just kill me?" That's pretty radical, right? "I just don't want to live anymore. Just take me out right now." Elijah eventually just went and lay down and God gave him a nap. I love the story, too, he went to bed. Sometimes, you know, when you get discouraged, just go take a nap, and then He gave him a cake to eat. It was angel food cake. That's what angels always make. Then, He spoke to him in a still small voice and encouraged his heart.

I'm always telling people, "Just be patient. Sooner or later the clouds will blow away. You just have to trust in the Lord and walk by faith, not by feeling and not by sight." That's the dart of discouragement. Closely related to that is the dart of depression. Paul was cast down many times and wanted even to despair of life. David said in the Psalms, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great Prince of Preachers, had many times of depression and discouragement where he didn't want to continue to preach.

Fourthly, there is the dart of disobedience—flat out temptation where Satan tempts you to step out of the will of God or to disobey God or to break God's Word—so Satan tempts you to disobey God's Word.

Fifthly, the dart of fear. This is why so many times in the Bible they say that at least 360 times in the Bible God says, "Fear not," "Fear not," "Fear not, for I am with thee." "Fear not, do not be dismayed, for I am thy God." He wants us to trust in Him. Abraham was a man of faith. If you looked up faith in a dictionary, you would have a picture of Abraham right there. He was Mr. Faith, but Abraham had times when he was afraid and God had to say to Abraham, "Don't be afraid."

I threw a sixth dart, and the list could go on, but tonight I threw the sixth dart in the dart of confusion. In 1 Corinthians 14:33, it says, "For God is not the author of confusion." Satan wants to bring confusion into your life and into your heart, so we need to trust in the Lord. That shield of faith will help us conquer these fiery darts, and the list could go on of lust, anger, jealousy, fear. Again, remember, we have the world, we have the flesh, and we have the devil,

and sometimes it's hard to distinguish which is which, "Is this the devil? Is this my flesh?" Sometimes you're praying, and you're in the Spirit and then POOOF! The devil shoots a dart of discouragement or fear or greed or anger or lust into your mind. The Bible says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee," so resist him by doing that—stand in faith.

The answer in all the darts the devil sends us is faith. Look at verse 16 of our text where it says, "Above all." Now, "above all" doesn't mean more important than the other pieces of armor, it means in addition to all the armor. So, along with the armor, we must walk by faith. Another possible rendering, and I like this idea, is that "above all" is referring to in all things, so in everything we do with the belt, with the breastplate of righteousness, the feet with the shoes of peace, we have to do all of those, including by faith. Faith has to be the element that operates every aspect of the armor. Faith will not keep the darts from coming, but it will give us victory over them.

Remember when Jesus was sleeping in the boat in the storm and the disciples woke Him up freaking out? "Don't You care that we perish?" That's what we do in the midst of a storm, and Jesus rebuked them and said, "O ye of little faith," and then spoke to the wind and the waves and there was the great calm, and they worshiped Him.

Proverbs 30:5 says, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him." I love that concept. If you put your trust in God, He becomes your shield. We're reading about the shield of faith, so God becomes our shield as we put our faith and our trust in Him. In every facet and aspect of your life, we are to take up the shield of faith. We're to trust God's Person, we're to trust God's promises, we're to trust God's providence. Romans 8:28, "And we know," there's faith, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," right? How do we know that? By faith. Faith is trusting in God, so we trust His providential care and we trust His power, His ability. There's nothing too hard for God.

Now, I quoted the Scripture from Habakkuk, "...the just shall live by his faith," but it's interesting, and you can maybe flip there if you want to real quickly. Habakkuk 3:17-19 as the book concludes, it's a book about faith. It says in verse 17, "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: 18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. 19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places." What a great conclusion to that book of Habakkuk. There's no animals in the stall, there's no fruit on the vine, there's nothing to be happy about in the world around me, but I will rejoice and joy in my God. All that comes by faith, and what it did was strengthen the prophet so he says, "...he will make my feet like hinds' feet," that's the strength of the back legs of a goat, "and he will make me to walk upon mine high places," by faith. What a blessing! A little faith will get your soul to Heaven, but a lot of faith will bring Heaven right down to your soul right now. Amen? Let's pray.