

Armour of God 4 message 2020

Shield of faith

Introduction

As we progress thru this series of the Armour of God the bible emphasizes the full armour, not just part of it. The Armour of God is essential to having an effective and powerful victorious Christian walk with God in this life. The key here is in THIS life. After we pass into the Arms of God and go to Heaven, the armour is not needed anymore. It is needed now because God says we need it and He is the commander who we report to as His family. Today we want to shine the light on the shield of Faith.

Ephesians 6:10-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

2 Corinthians 10:1-5 New International Version (NIV)

10 By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! ² I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. ³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

There are many analogies to the armour of God by looking at armour in a physical way and we will be looking into that.

Physical shield

In our world we live in, when Paul the apostle was talking about this piece of armour, the believers could easily look at those Roman soldiers walking by and draw comparisons quickly.

Everyone knows a soldier needs a shield. Can you imagine a soldier in Jesus' day going into battle without a shield? That would be utterly foolish because there is sword warfare everywhere in the battlefield. It is personal because you are face to face with the enemy. The soldier needs the shield so he can ward off the attack of the enemy and at the same time take advantage of the enemy's move and fight back. The opponent always exposes some area of himself when he thrusts forward with a spear or sword. The one defending with a shield needs to be looking where the vulnerability is and take advantage of it in response. A great deal of the effectiveness of a soldier is based on how he thinks the enemy might move or attack and then respond with counter measures that make his opponent exposed to attack. The shield allows a soldier to defend while not feeling weak or vulnerable.

Spiritually, there are a few comparisons.

First the battle is personal and so the shield is essential throughout the battle. The devil will target YOU. It is constantly necessary to defend against the enemy's attacks. The enemy The Devil is always trying to attack us, not just at certain times. He uses doubt as a flaming arrow to attack us. Whenever you pray, He attacks with doubt to make you lose the ability to get answers to your prayers. He may try to delay the answer coming so you will be tempted to doubt and lose as he did in Daniel 10:13 when Michael the archangel helped Gabriel get a message to Daniel. The devil may try to make you think the request is too big for God to answer so that you will doubt and lose. He may use other people's experiences where things didn't go as planned to make you doubt by encouraging you to think yours will be the same. He may try to make you think the answer has to be a certain way to be answered. That it has to be yes and not no. This way if it doesn't happen as you want it to happen, you are tempted to doubt.

DOUBT, DOUBT, DOUBT, WATCH OUT FOR THE DEVIL'S TACTICS.

In our life in Christ Jesus, we need the shield of Faith. It is faith in Christ that gives us the defense against the attacks of the Devil which include doubt. The shield also allows us to probe in determining the weaknesses the Devil shows so we can fight back. The Lord Jesus can cause us to see what the enemy is really trying to do and then we can respond wisely before falling for the devil's ways.

We talked last week about the battle in our mind and how the helmet of salvation helps with that. Here with the shield of Faith, it is highly effective to have the helmet of salvation protecting our mind so we can think wisely of how to fight back against the enemy's attacks of doubt and win with counter measures with the sword of the Spirit.

The shield of faith is a strong solid indestructible spiritual element that extinguishes all the enemy's attacks of doubt. The arrows are intended to cause doubt.

Why is doubt such an issue?

James 1:5-7 New International Version (NIV)

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

The enemy wants to make sure we don't get anything from God in order to increase doubt and make us wander from God, thinking He does not care. This will make him win.

Doubt will keep us from answers to our prayers. THAT IS SERIOUS. Doubt turns our shields into mush or make them like cardboard. Would we go into battle with a cardboard shield? Certainly not. We would have to expect to lose every time.

Doubt gets us interpreting answers to our prayers based on physical factors and human effort.

Matthew 8:26

He replied, “You of little **faith**, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

Luke 8:25

“Where is your **faith**?” he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement, they asked one another, “Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.”

Doubt stops miracles from happening.

Matthew 13:58

And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of **faith**.

When is it tempting to doubt?

- When we want something so much that we don't allow Him to answer as He wishes and go with our own ideas
- When we use our fleshly mind of desires to indicate what God's answer should look like.
- When we want it on our timing, not His
- When we haven't really gotten to know the Lord very well in reading the bible and praying to find out what God wants.
- When we measure our lives in worldly terms

How to put it on

Romans 10:14-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

¹⁶ But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷ Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

We need to read and read again what God says about who He is and what He can do as our faith is to be founded on His work and power, not ours. Our reliance must be on the fact that His power is at work in us and thru us it makes us able to repel enemy attacks. If the enemy can make you doubt God's power, he can stop you and prevent what God wants to do thru you.

We need to spend time with the lord in prayer and meditation so we can get to know Jesus and His will for our lives.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

How do we use the shield in a defensive role

The effectiveness is tied to our mind and heart again. Have we renewed our minds to believe we can defend effectively with our shield of faith? If we doubt, we are not living in faith. We know the arrows of doubt are fiery and destructive. We are more powerful than they thru Jesus Christ.

They can cause damage if allowed to get thru as we know with Thomas not believing Jesus had risen and in the following verses:

John 20:24-29 New International Version (NIV)

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

When our relationship with Jesus has become close and deeply meaningful, our ability to believe Him and to put our faith and trust in Him becomes easier to do and will reap great dividends if we invest in our

relationship with Him. You don't get close friends without investing time and it is no different with the Lord Jesus.

What does faith do?

- It opens the door to miracles, answers and righteousness
- It can move mountains of troubles

Matthew 17:20

He replied, "Because you have so little **faith**. Truly I tell you, if you have **faith** as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

- It causes us to please God

Hebrews 11:6 New International Version (NIV)

⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

- We become more obedient to Christ

Romans 1:5

Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from **faith** for his name's sake.

- We can endure troubles and become acceptable to Christ

James 1:2-4 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

²Consider it all joy, my brothers *and sisters*, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have *its* perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- Thru faith we gain the righteousness of Christ and live by it

Romans 1:17

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by **faith** from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by **faith**."

Conclusion

The devil is waging war against us and all that Christ wants to do. We need all the armour. We need the shield to wage war against the Devil's tactic of Doubt. Doubt can be a big reason for unanswered prayer. Jesus can help us win over doubt if we are willing to go to Him for help and spend time with Him. Using this shield of faith is to be a lifestyle not a momentary occurrence.

2 Corinthians 5:7 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight.

NOT BY DOUBT.

Faith is the building blocks we use to build our lives in Christ Jesus. Doubt tears the building down.

The question we all have every day is, Will we believe Jesus or the devil. Who will we listen to? Who are you listening to today, right now? Do we want answers? If yes, which I think we all would want, then we need to get out the full armour and put it on. The war is upon us, but we can win regardless of what the enemy throws at us if we use God's armour. Use it and win or keep it packed up and lose. That is essentially what our choices are. Let's be energized by knowing we can win and that by using what God has provided for our help, we can overcome any tactic the devil can throw at us INCLUDING DOUBT. Amen.