

A Living Trust

Ephesians 6:16

Turn with me this morning to the book of Ephesians. We will be continuing on in our study of the Armor of God. We have been looking at the elements of our relationship with God that bring to us a sense of victory. We have looked at truth, God's righteousness, and peace that comes from the Good News of Jesus.

The first three elements of the armor of God is that it is dependent upon the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed to us the truth in who we are, how sinful we have become, and our desperate need for his saving work on the cross.

Jesus then takes his righteousness (his right standing with God) and gives it or even transfers it from himself to us. That is why when God looks at us he doesn't see our sin, he sees the righteousness of his Son. And then Jesus shows us that because he has given us his righteousness, we live at peace with God as our ally not our enemy. God walks with us through each event in our day by our side, helping us and even standing up for us. The first three elements of the armor dependent upon Jesus Christ and what he has already done for us.

Instead of simply resting in who Jesus Christ is and his work on our behalf, however, I want to look at the elements of the armor that call us to be active – things that we are to do and pursue. This morning I want to look at the shield of faith. Read with me this morning **Ephesians 6:13-17**:

13 Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. 14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. 16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.* 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Scripture tells us that fiery arrows are aimed at us by the devil. It reminds us that there will be times in our lives when we will have to come to grips with the frailty of faithfulness and that we will question the reality of God and His Son Jesus Christ. There will come a time when we will question all that scripture and truth tell us about our position in Christ and will ask the question, "Who do we think we are?"

Have any of us here this morning ever come to a point when we have not only questioned God, but our Christianity as well? Everyone of us here have gone through times when we could have very easily walked away and done our own thing. We could have ignored reality and lived for the temporary. In my own life there have been times when I would like nothing more than to give up – moving back to the US, chasing the American dream, loosing a child in between Grace and Harrison, seeing my mom struggle especially after

having served God on the mission field for many years – these things could have easily done me in. Like fiery darts they come and wear us down. We become so consumed with the battle that we forget to look forward to the victory.

Have any of us battled with our thought life? Have we struggled with immoral, wrong, hateful, jealous, and demeaning thoughts that have caused us to question our Christianity? We think “How can a Christian think this way? Maybe I’m not even saved?” when in reality everyday we are constantly bombarded with the fiery darts of the enemy.

Satan always seems to attack in our thoughts and in our position in Jesus Christ. He tries all that he can to get us to question God and question the reality of the circumstance. He does all that he can to raise doubt, guilt and fear. And these are the things that distant us from the heart of God and his plan for a full life.

How are we to deal with these attacks? Paul speaks about the shield of faith.

In the day that Paul wrote about these words we know that the roman soldier carried a shield that was large enough to cover the whole body. And I think it is safe to say that just as the shield covered the entire body and other parts of the armor, **the shield of faith covers truth, righteousness, and peace.** Faith is the glue that holds it all together. When we talk about faith we aren’t merely talking about belief, but Faith is a confident assurances and dependence upon God.

Faith is a “living trust” in the trustworthiness of God. When truth is being attacked, my hands hold firmly to my trust in God. When my righteousness is being questioned my hands hold firmly to my trust in God. And when my peace with God is turning into fear my hands hold firmly to my trust in God. Faith is the defense for all of the defenses.

Faith is acting upon belief. Faith is decision, action, and resolution. Faith is saying, “Yes, I believe Christ is the truth. He is my righteousness, he is my peace. **Faith is the using the words “therefore” turning my belief into faith.** Doubt, however, is the attack of our faith. In fact, if you have doubts then that proves that you have faith in something somewhere. **Doubt is the proof of the reality of faith.**

Faith is what motivates us to counter attack the arrows of the enemy instead of buying into them, thus causing us to live in a façade of life. **James 4:7** tells us:

7 So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Faith doesn’t sit down and take it, it gets up and resists – you refuse to give up but you press through. Resist and the enemy will flee away, use your shield it will stop the arrows. In fact, in the King James Version **Ephesians 6:17** tells us:

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

The attacks of the enemy will be ineffective, non-threatening, powerless. It is not just an attitude of defense but also of attack. **Instead of becoming victims in life, we are to become victors in life.**

We read of such victors in the book of Hebrews in Chapter 11 – the great Hall of Fame of Faith. They didn't allow the circumstances of life, the attacks of the enemy (the lies and feelings of worthlessness) to come and deter them from trusting God, even when they didn't understand.

There are going to come times in our lives, when we don't understand all that things that are happening to us, when we don't like the struggle, or when it seems like everything is crashing in around us, when we will be challenged to through in the towel, when our greatest need is to hang on to the shield even more tightly than we did before. Peter said in **1 Peter 1:7**:

7 These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold.

When you have to stand up for what you believe, when you have to live everyday of your life modeling that your faith is real and that you truly do trust God, when you are faced with the most difficult circumstances and you know that you know that the easy way out isn't what God wants from you and you choose the hard way because you trust that God will walk by your side each moment, that is when you know that your faith is real and genuine.

That's when you know it isn't something that you put on only when it is convenient or nice, but that it is a part of you, it is something that has grown within you, and you will never be the same again. **James 1:3** Jesus' brother writes:

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*

Eventually our trust is no longer on things, on wealth, on promotion, on fame, on power, or anything else this world has to offer, the only thing you NEED is God – perfect, complete faith in nothing else but God. When God has worked in my life, as he has proven himself faithful each time, as he has remained by my side, that is to change the way I live and whom I trust. Jesus has everything I need. God has given me everything I have.

I need to develop a habit of going to him first every time, to get his input every time, to ask him what he wants every time. That is what faith does. **Faith even steps out of our comfort zone and contends in prayer, fasting, in waiting on God, in remaining silent enough to hear his voice.**

The world fuels an unholy trinity – **1 John 2:16** tells us:

16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions.

The shield of faith however, extinguishes the flames. Faith focuses on the eternal pleasure of Heaven rather than the counterfeit pleasures of the present; it blinds the unclean eye that lusts after pornography or wealth; and it deadens the pride of life that covets praise from men more than praise from God. **The eye of faith looks at life with eternity in mind and keeps its focus on Jesus Christ.**

Faith is what keeps us strong and able to stand in the midst of any battle, not because we are such incredible and powerful people, but because we know one who is. We know where to go and what to do when those times come and that God is our source.

In a series of messages that I gave while we were going through the book of Hebrews, I was able to take the Faith Hall of Fame in Hebrews 11 and extract 21 characteristics of faith. As men and women trusted God they had a perspective that kept them going, that kept them secure especially when attacks were happening around them. I want to read this list and I want you to think of step of faith do you need to take today. Take one or two and apply them to your life:

- 1. Faith will go the extra mile to please God**
- 2. Faith always searches for a closer connection with God**
- 3. Faith steps beyond human ability, human reasoning, and human effort**
- 4. Faith takes God at his word and does as it is told.**
- 5. Faith doesn't just pursue a commandment, but also a promise.**
- 6. Faith causes one to become helplessly dependent upon God.**
- 7. Faith keeps an eternal and heavenly perspective and value system.**
- 8. Faith doesn't depend upon reality but finds its confidence in the possibilities.**
- 9. Faith is eager for the reward of heaven.**
- 10. Faith puts full confidence and trust in God, even when it doesn't make sense.**
- 11. Faith anticipates God's provision.**
- 12. Faith believes that all that God says is true.**
- 13. Faith looks beyond death and the grave.**
- 14. Faith looks at the potential of what God can do through people.**
- 15. Faith helps us look beyond the world's value system to see the eternal values of God's kingdom.**
- 16. Faith is not intimidated by circumstances or man but keeps focus on God's ability.**
- 17. Faith takes God at his word and obeys in order that God's mercy and grace may be given.**
- 18. Faith believes that in the midst of impossible circumstances, God provides a way when there seems to be no way.**
- 19. Faith looks beyond fear**
- 20. Faith fears God (respect, honor, obedience) more than man.**

- 21. At times faith requires that we do things that don't make sense, or that go contrary to typical reasoning.**
- 22. Faith always gives God the credit He deserves**

It is time for God's church to hold strongly to our faith that keeps us safe from any attack that tries to influence our thoughts or position in Christ. We, here today, find ourselves at a time when the enemy has done enough and we need to take our shield of faith and advance against our enemies tactics and believe that **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE** in Christ who has made us victorious. Let us advance with his truth, his righteousness and his peace that scripture says, "surpasses all understanding, and that will guard our hearts."

Let's Pray!