

The Armor of God – The Shield of Faith

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Battle Ready

Text: Ephesians 6:16

When the shield of the Roman soldier was not in use it would rest as he marched on the loin belt or the belt of truth. The belt is representative of the Word of God. Our faith is vitally **connected** to the Word of God. **Romans 10:17** If we fail to give the Word of God priority in our life it is only a matter of time before our faith will begin to dwindle and fade. The presence or absence of faith in our life is **determined** by the presence or absence of God's Word in our life. Where there is no Word there is no faith and where there is no faith there is no Word.

While the Roman soldier's shield is dependent on where he would position it, our shield is determined by the **complete** covering that is provided by God. (I envision our shield of faith like a force field.) **Psalm 85:13, Psalm 140:7 Psalm 91:4-5, Psalm 139:5 (AMP)** This is why it is possible to walk **in** faith and to live by faith. In the natural, a Roman soldier's shield could obstruct his view, this is not so for those who live by faith. **2 Corinthians 5:7**

The Roman soldier had two types of shields one for battle and the other for parades and public ceremonies. The aspis was for **decoration**. It was small, round and beautiful. It would never be taken into battle. The shield that was taken into battle was much larger and carried the scars of battle. In the Greek, the word 'shield' was also the word used for a **door**. It was wide and long. It was big enough to completely cover a man. It is important enough that God has given each of us enough faith to keep us completely **covered**. **Romans 12:3**

The shield was made of several **layers** of leather that were woven so tight that they became as strong as steel. The shield was tough and durable. This is how our faith is. The enemy can repeatedly come against it violently again and again and it still holds.

The Soldier had to take good care of their shield. To keep the leather in excellent condition it needed to be **maintained**. To keep the shield from becoming cracked and brittle each morning a soldier would take a small vial of oil and rub the shield with it to keep it soft and pliable. This kept it from cracking under pressure. Because the shield represents our faith, this tells us that our faith requires frequent **anointings** of the Holy Spirit. Oil represents the Holy Spirit throughout the Word of God.

Without a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit's power in our lives our faith will become stiff and brittle. All of the people that God used received an **anointing** for their work of service. Our faith ensures that we have received the anointing of the power of God in our life. To anoint means to smear, **rub** or cover. When David or any of the prophets and priests were anointed for their office, they were not just touched with oil but had oil **poured** all over them until they were saturated with it. **Psalm 92:10, Psalm 133:2** The anointing was sign of what God was doing on the inside. A king or a priest was no one just because they wore a crown or put on the vestment, God had to make them one on the inside. **Acts 1:8, 1 John 2:20 (AMP)**

Just like a shield needed regular daily anointings of the application of oil so does our faith. **Ephesians 5:18** We are to be filled and to keep on being filled with the Spirit of God.

When we say that something is anointed, we say that the hand of God is upon that person or ministry. The presence of the Holy Spirit tells us that God's hand is upon the person. We can and need to come before God each day for a fresh anointing.

Before the application of the oil a soldier would dip their shield in a tub of water until it was completely saturated. This saturation would quench or extinguish the flaming arrows of the enemy on impact. Many people's faith catches fire because it is not saturated with water. In the Bible, water symbolizes the Word of God. For faith to be faith we must not just be in the Word, but we must have the Word in us. **Ephesians 5:26** You must spend enough time in the Word that the Word has time to get in you. It has to soak in. A Word saturated faith will always extinguish the devil's attacks.

We are to take up the Shield of Faith above all. This idea of 'above all' does not mean that faith is more important than all the rest of the armor. In the Greek 'above all' is 'epi-pasin', it means over all, or over everything or out in front of all or covering all. Like a shield our faith is to be out front. Our faith is a covering. So, this word describes position not importance. Our best offense is a good defense.

We are to take up the Shield. This means that our faith can be laid down or picked up. The choice is ours to make. To go forward without faith is to leave ourselves dangerously exposed.

1 Timothy 1:19

The purpose of the Shield of Faith is to quench all the fiery darts or arrows of the enemy. Faith gives us the ability to extinguish all of the enemy's attacks. **Ephesians 6:16 (AMP)** The words 'shall be able' comes from the word 'dunamis' in the Greek. This verse could be translated, 'by the use of this shield you will have explosive, dynamic power....'

1 Peter 1:4-5 There is a connection between the power of God and the operation of faith in our lives. When the power of God and the faith of the believer come together, they become a shield to the believer.

There were three types of arrows used by the military in New Testament times:

- Normal plain arrows shot from a bow
- Arrows that were dipped in tar, set on fire and shot through the air.
- Arrows that contained combustible fluids that burst into flames on impact.

The last arrow did not look very impressive, but after contact they carried an extra surprise. These arrows were not used for normal engagement but against a fortified position. The enemy didn't need to hit the target directly they just needed to be lobbed over the walls and outer defenses. They weren't meant to pierce the heart. They were meant to get through defenses and then cause their harm. The power wasn't in the piercing but in the fire. The aim is our emotions and passions and to set them on fire. To turn anger to rage, attraction to lust, to stir up unbelief, worry, anxiety, fear so that things burn in us out of control.

We must deal with every crack in our faith and the unseen areas of our mind so that there are no open doors for the enemy to enter our shield. **1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 10:5**

Remember these are the arrows of the wicked one. The word 'wicked' means evil, pain, sorrow and vicious. Faith protects us from all the pain and sorrow our enemy fires at us.