

# Finishing Well

Lesson #20

Take Up The Shield Of Faith

June 8, 2022

Martin Luther, the great Reformer, was battling it out with Satan. The spiritual battle was so real that Luther picked up an ink well full of black ink and threw it and it splattered against a white wall. He refused to paint the wall. It was a reminder of the fierceness of the spiritual battle against the fiery darts of the evil one.

Satan, the Prince of the power of the air, [Eph. 2:2] is an intelligent, cunning being who commands an army of evil spirits at war against God, His holy angels and His saints.

"His silent army of demon invaders swirls through the air.

Those infernal warriors of the Kingdom Of Darkness lurk all around us."

Satan's target is my mind. His weapon is lies. His purpose is to make me ignorant of God's will.

My #1 defense: The Word of God: Fill my mind with His Word, Believe It, Act Like It Is True  
In Eph. 6, Paul pictures the believer in the heat of battle. The air is thick with flaming arrows that have been dipped in pitch and set on fire. The initial pain will end up turning into a much greater pain if we catch on fire. Satan's goal is to cause chaos and fear.

It's a life and death situation. How will the believer survive?

Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul clearly defines the spiritual war in which we are engaged. He warns us that apart from utilizing the weapons God has provided for us, we are hopelessly underpowered.

Eph. 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

- The shield of faith is the primary defense against *ALL the fiery darts of the wicked one.*
- HOPE comes from believing the promises of God.

Promise: Extinguish Every Flaming Dart Of The Devil

Wherewith ye shall be able: Greek word = *dunamis* > denotes *explosive dynamic power*

- *Above all, taking the shield of faith, by which you will be dynamically empowered...*
- Supernatural empowerment that occurs when a believer uses his shield of faith.
- The shield of faith becomes dynamically and supernaturally empowered to act as an impenetrable wall of defense against the enemy's tactics.
- *In other words, faith is a shield to the believer! [Renner]*

The shield of faith is so powerful that it makes you fortified, invulnerable, and armed to the teeth! It equips you to hold an ironclad position.

Fiery darts = *belos* > an arrow with its tip wrapped with fabric soaked in flammable fluids so it would burn with hot and angry flames

Fire-bearing arrows were to inflict damage on fortified places.

If an army had fortified its position so that the enemy could not easily break in to destroy it, then the enemy would revert to using the long deadly arrows of fire.

When the arrow hit its target, burning pitch would fly in every direction which could set the hair, skin and clothing of the soldiers on fire.

If they hit a crack in the armor, the pitch would drip inside, burning the soldier badly.

Sometimes the tar or pitch would spread out on the shield causing it to flame brilliantly, often causing the soldier holding the shield to drop it and run in fear, opening themselves up to other forms of attack. If they had just stayed behind their shield, as scary as it might have been, many would have remained safe.

### Satan's Fiery Darts

Satan is an intelligent being who knows how to shoot his flaming arrows at my vulnerable places. The "flaming arrows of the evil one" are no ordinary temptations.

They seem to suddenly come from nowhere to "pierce, penetrate and torment the soul."

Sometimes his attacks on your faith in the Lord, your obedience and devotion to the Lord, come from places you never expected.

Sometimes Satan's fiery darts come one at a time, like sniper fire from afar. Other times, they come in quickly without warning and fall in a heavy barrage like a storm of arrows falling from the sky. When they hit, they are painful and destructive, causing great devastation in our lives.

Some of his most effective fiery darts are:

- Fiery Dart of Doubt      Fiery Dart of Fear      Fiery Dart of Lust
- Fiery Dart of Lies      Fiery Dart of Apathy      Fiery Dart of Pride

Satan's Darts are directed at:

- Truth      He will work to have you doubt God and the truth of His Word
- Righteousness      He will work to move you away from the path of Biblical righteousness
- Gospel of Peace      He will work to attack your peace OF God.
- Faith      If he can get through your shield of faith, he will attempt to destroy the faith that builds the shield.

### Quench Or Extinguish Fiery Darts

sbennumi = to douse or extinguish by drowning in water

Note: Before Roman soldiers went out to battle, they purposely soaked their shields in water until they were water-saturated. If the shield was water-soaked, the flames would be extinguished even if the arrow penetrated its heavily saturated surface. [Renner]

Promise: The shield of faith causes the flaming darts to lose their fire and their force. The shield snuffs out the flame of the fiery darts so that when they strike the shield, the shield does not burn but remains intact and able to defend us on the field of battle.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones "Faith means the ability to apply quickly what we believe so as to repel everything the devil does or attempts to do to us."

I Pet. 5:8-9a Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast [firm] in the faith,...

- Stay behind the shield of faith. Move out from behind it and you will be a casualty.

Interesting Note: Water is mentioned a total of 722 times in the Bible, more often than faith, hope, prayer, and worship. It was vitally important to soak the shield in water before going into battle. The water would quench, or put out, the flames of the arrows dipped in pitch.

We are to Soak in the Word

Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Eph. 5:26 That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,

- Word of God is likened to water.

James 1:21b receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.

Key Point: As I regularly submit myself to God's Word, I soak my faith with His Word.

When my faith becomes Word-soaked, it becomes so heavily inundated with the water of God's Word that even if a fiery dart pierces my shield, the huge amount of God's Word in me will extinguish the flames and put out a potentially damaging situation. [Renner]

H.B. Charles: Spiritual victory is not so much about learning to fight the enemy but learning how to submit to the authority of the Lord.

Key Point: My obedience, my surrender, my submission is my greatest weapon in defeating the one who is the prince of darkness that lives around me.

You cannot experience Divine strength without submitting to Divine authority.

- To live in spiritual weakness is to live in spiritual rebellion. WOW!
- Self-sufficiency in spiritual struggles is spiritual suicide.

At the moment I bow and submit to Jesus Christ and commit to obey His Word, I become a fortress against the enemy. My weapon is my submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith,... Taking: analambano= to take up, raise up

Dr. Lloyd-Jones: Paul referred to other pieces of the armor of God as things to "have."

- Having was the verb: having your loins, having your feet, having on the breastplate
- Idea of the things that are permanent in your walk. Long-range preparation for battle
  - There would be a lull in the battle.
  - The soldier might rest, but he would not take off his breastplate, his belt and shoes.

But when the battle heated up, he would take up his shield, take his helmet and his sword.

- These are for immediate readiness in the heat of the battle.

The action now changes to "take."

- The first 3 pieces of armor are fixed firmly to the body, but the shield must be taken up.
- When the arrows start flying, you must take up the shield of faith, pull on the helmet of salvation and grab the sword of the Spirit.

It's like watching a baseball player who sits on the bench. He doesn't take his uniform off. His uniform and his sliding and knee pads stay on. His baseball spikes are on. But when it comes time to bat, he puts his helmet on, and puts a bat in his hand - Why? Because he has been prepared, but now he takes the weapons of his warfare.

Note: The equipment to participate in the game is available to all the players. It is the responsibility of each player to grab the equipment and use them. No one forces him to do so.

Eph. 6:16 Above all, taking the Shield of Faith:

Spartan soldier going off to war. His mother would say, "Return either with your shield or on your shield." It was a great dishonor for a Spartan soldier to lay down his shield in battle. They were to live with their shield as their protection or die with their shield as their coffin. If you are going to be victorious in spiritual warfare, you must learn in all circumstances how to take up the shield of faith with which you are enabled to quench all the fiery darts of Satan.

Question: Are you familiar with an Impala? They can jump 10' high and 30' in distance. Yet they will stay captured behind a 3' wall.

They will not jump unless they see where they will land. Faith is not faith if you can see it.

I am protected from the enemy's destructive, flaming arrows by trusting & counting on God.

Tony Evans: Faith is acting like God is telling the truth.

For example, when you go through a rough time, the enemy will often fire a flaming arrow that sounds something like this ... "God certainly must not love you, look at what just happened. Will the arrow penetrate your armor? Will the flaming tar seep into the cracks and burn you? The real issue is, will you trust God?"

Ps. 27:13-14 I would have lost heart [fainted], unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. <sup>14</sup> Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD. {David's HOPE kept him from quitting.}

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- Faith is based on indisputable truth and is real.
- Substance is concrete. Evidence is solid proof.
- Therefore, faith is not an emotion based on feelings. It is based on reality.
- Faith is trusting in something or someone you don't see.
- It's trusting in God even when you don't understand how it's going to work out.
- It's counting on God even when you don't know why things are happening.
- Faith in God opens your mind to what you see as impossible, but God can easily do.
- No matter what we face, faith always goes before us and helps us advance against the enemy.

H.B. Charles: IN ALL circumstances and situations, take up the shield of faith. Faith shields you when you live out what you believe when your faith is tested. Extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one..

You don't get victory by admiring the shield...oh, thank God I've got a shield.

Victory comes by taking up the shield.

Faith isn't just about what you know...it is about what you do.

You never know how deep your roots are until the wind starts blowing.

You never know how strong your anchor is until the storm starts raging.

Heb. 6:19a Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,

"The Anchor holds though the ship is battered, The Anchor holds though its sails are torn.

I've fallen on my knees as I faced the raging seas. The Anchor holds in spite of the storm."

Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

➤ It is our faith, not needs, that moves God.

➤ Faith is taking God at His Word and acting like I believe it.

No matter what we face, faith always goes before us & helps us advance against the enemy.

Rom. 8:24-25 For we are saved [rescued; delivered out of] by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

- We must persevere to the end because of the HOPE of what is to come.

Consider: Though it is based on solid evidence, that doesn't mean faith comes naturally or easily.

Paul's point: You don't hope for what you already have. Faith involves a huge element of trust.

"We must examine the evidence and see that God has proved Himself to be unchanging and consistent, and then we must firmly believe that He will fulfill His promises to us."

- Our faith is only as good as the object of that faith. When our faith is in Jesus Christ, and God the Father, our faith is in Someone Who cannot fail.
- Thus, the faith of the Christian has power, because the object of our faith is all-powerful. True Christian faith never fails because the object of our faith never fails!

II Cor. 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

The Bible is full of stories of believers who were in overwhelming circumstances, where they despaired of life itself. They cried out to God and trusted in Him. In many cases, He delivered them from death. In other cases, He sustained them as they died in faith. whether they were delivered or whether they died, they believed God and His sure Word.

Heb. 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

- Hope in the unseen promises is a consistent theme in those who took up the shield of faith.

- Faith in God is the essential shield that quenches the arrows of the evil one.

The Shield Of Faith Protects The Whole Person & The Armor

Faith Protects:	Head	Enables us to have confidence in our knowledge of God
	Heart	Enables us to remember our eternal reward
	Arm	Enables us to gain strength to do God's will
	Foot	Enables us stand firm and not be misled

Dan. 3:17-18 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

<sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Job 27:3-4 All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

<sup>4</sup> My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Shield Of Faith in Peter's Life: How Peter resisted Satan devouring him: BY FAITH

Context Of John 21: Jesus' 3<sup>rd</sup> appearance to the disciples after the resurrection: Disciples went fishing all night and had caught nothing. They see a man on the shore the next morning but did not recognize Jesus. He told them to cast the net on the right side and the catch was bountiful. They ate with the Lord. Jesus asks Peter 3 times, "Lovest Thou Me? Feed my sheep." Then Jesus laid a lifelong burden on Peter.

John 21:18 "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." [NASB]

Jesus told Peter he was going to die, and He implied how he was going to die. Peter knew he was going to go through an un-willing form of death. We all know that Peter died a martyr.

John 21:19 Now He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. And after saying this, He said to him, "Follow Me [walk the same path of life that I have walked]!

Note: We know from Eusebius' book of Church history and Foxe's book of martyrs, that Peter was led out to be crucified. He said, I don't want to be crucified like Jesus was, would you crucify me upside down?

- Peter had his hands stretched and he was taken where he didn't wish to go.

John 21:19 b Jesus "said to him, 'Follow me.'

- Jesus made two choices for Peter to live by. Either to follow Him or not.
- Jesus said, you're going to die an awful, death, which would glorify God.
- Are you going to follow me? Which means go by faith which negates fear.
- OR are you going to follow your way because you fear that event?

The shield of faith is constantly one of two choices we have in life.

Matt. 4:1-11 Jesus completely decimated the devil with three obscure verses from Deut. 8. Satan is felled when we by faith believe the Word of God.

Choice #1: We follow Him by listening to Him in His Word, believing what He said, and acting on it [act like what God says is true]. It's walking in the Spirit.

When we received Jesus Christ by faith, we start paddling against the stream and it gets really hard. We go against the world, and we deny our own flesh.

In the canoe with me as I'm paddling is a traitor! My flesh who doesn't want to paddle with me. It's always hard to take the word of God to resist the devil and my own fleshly desires.

Crowe: It takes a strong fish to swim against the current. Only the dead ones go with the flow.

Choice #2 Live by Fear

If I don't take up The Shield of Faith, I will doubt what God says. Immediately that doubt opens a way for Satan to devour me. He will keep feeding me more lies. Then I will end up doubting God's word, which is the only remedy to all of my prayers, the only source of hope.

Fear is a default setting. We do nothing. We just float along.

If you're not doing anything, Satan is winning. If you're not actively, aggressively, by choice, volitionally going into, daily feeding your soul God's Word, which allows you to hear His voice, to know Him and to follow Him, then you're floating.

Whenever you float, the current takes you away from God. That's the choice, every day.

- Faith going against the world, my flesh, and the devil
- Fear doing nothing, paralyzed, floating

Note: God's Word says "Fear Not" 365 times. Fear is the opposite of faith.

The shield of faith is standing with God and believing His Word which opens the way to defeat the attack and the fiery darts.

Peter had been hunted down, arrested and imprisoned. Think of being led out to execution.

When Peter was on death row, he was a target for the devil. Jesus had said to Peter that he would die a death he didn't want to die. They will stretch out your arms and take you where you don't want to go. History confirms Peter asked to be crucified upside down.

What do you see in Peter's life?

Eph. 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Key Point: The shield of faith is trusting God's Word. Believe what God says and act on it.

Question: What did Peter learn something after Jesus told him he would have an un-willing and horrific death?

I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a Living Hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- My life is to be a living picture of hope in God.
- I KNOW God is working everything together for my good to conform me to the image of Jesus Christ.
- God is actively, supernaturally, sovereignly orchestrating every event. Live in hope!

I Pet. 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you,

In II Peter, he is writing his very last words. He will become a prisoner of the emperor until he was executed.

II Pet. 1:10-11 Therefore, believers, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you [be sure that your behavior reflects and confirms your relationship with God]; for by doing these things [actively developing these virtues], you will never stumble [in your spiritual growth]; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

II Pet. 1:12-13 Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you *already* know them and are established in the truth which is held firmly in your grasp. I think it right, as long as I am in this earthly tent, to inspire you by reminding you, knowing that the laying aside of this earthly tent of mine is imminent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

He believed Jesus' words in John 14:2-3 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

I Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

It doesn't matter how they kill me. I have a reservation waiting. He believed God's Word. He acted as though he believed it. It became a shield of faith.

#### Two Views Of Peter Walking Out To Be Crucified

1. Roman Soldiers: Saw an old, weathered, leather-skinned fisherman in his sixties
2. God's View
  - A faithful disciple who still had his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. God's peace was a part of him as he walked peacefully to his death.
  - His waist was girded and truth was keeping and guarding his mind.
  - He had on his breastplate of righteousness.  
He was justified and had submitted to God's process of sanctification.
  - See his shield of faith. It was deeply scarred revealing the barrage of Satan's fiery darts. How could the Lord do this to you after being with Him on the mount of transfiguration? Oh, I remember, you are the one who denied him.  
Satan was shooting fiery darts of doubt, fear and despair.
  - Look! Peter had taken up his shield of faith.
  - It protected his mind, his will and his emotions.

Spurgeon told of a pastor who was sent to see an old lady. He thought he would give her some precious promises from the Word of God. Taking her Bible and turning to one, he saw written in the margin "P" and he asked, "What does this mean?" "That means precious, sir," she replied. Further down he saw "T and P" and he asked what those letters meant.

"That," she said, "Means tried and proved, for I have tried and proved it."