

Ephesians 6:16 *Above all* [Most importantly], *taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts* [flaming arrows] *of the wicked* [devil].

1. Introduction:

a. In Christian spiritual battle, Satan targets our faith; that God is in control of every situation

i. Satan targeted Peter's faith

Luke 22:31-32 *And the Lord* [Jesus] *said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted* [when you return to faith in Jesus after you have been sifted], *strengthen thy brethren.*

- Peter tried to prevent Jesus from going to Jerusalem to die (Matthew 16:21-23)
- Peter denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:34-61)
- But Jesus loved & prayed for Peter through all these times.

ii. Paul instructs Christians to fight the good fight of faith

1 Timothy 6:12 ***Fight the good fight of faith***, *lay hold on* [be sure you have] *eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession* [and have shown everyone your true faith] *before many witnesses.*

b. Salvation is when person says to Jesus, "I believe you."

Romans 10:9-10 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves* [and it's not something you can do for yourself]: *it is the gift of God:*

c. Satan continues to attack Christian faith

i. Christians live by faith

2 Corinthians 5:7 *For we* [Christians] *walk by faith, not by sight:*

- ii. Just persons shall live by continuing faith

Habakkuk 2:4 *Behold, his [the wicked man] soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but **the just shall live by his faith.***

Romans 1:17 *For therein [For in the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, "**The just shall live by faith.**"*

- d. **Three essential reasons** for the shield of faith

2. Reason One: The Preeminence of Faith

- a. Faith permits examination: "*Above all [Most importantly], taking the shield of faith...*"

- b. Faith pleases God

- i. Satan wants worship & adoration reserved for God alone

- ii. Carnal Christians please Satan

1 Corinthians 3:3 *For ye [Corinthian church members] are yet carnal ["in the flesh"]: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife [fighting], and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as [unsaved] men?*

- iii. God requires faith to come to Him

Hebrews 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is [that He really exists], and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

- iv. God uses faith as a starting point for His greater works. Peter believed Jesus' word after fishing all night without catching anything

Luke 5:4-5 *Now when he [Jesus] had left [finished] speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep [of the Sea of Galilee], and let down your nets for a draught [catch of fish]. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled [worked] all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*

- v. Roman centurion believed that Jesus only had to speak the word in order to heal his servant

Mat 8:8, 10 *The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof [come into my house]: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. ... When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily [Truthfully] I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

c. Faith protects Christian

- i. A shield protects a soldier's vital organs (chest & stomach). In another Bible verse the vital organs are also protected:

1 Thessalonians 5:8 *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, **putting on the breastplate of faith** and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.*

- ii. Satan wants to steal a Christian's love away from God

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep [guard] thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

John 14:1 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me [Jesus].*

- iii. Wise man puts his heart in his strong dominant hand, usually the right hand

Ecclesiastes 10:2 ***A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.***

3. Reason Two Pressure Against Faith

- a. "...*the fiery darts* [flaming arrows] *of the wicked* [Satan]."

b. Destruction of faith

- i. Satan wants to destroy every Christian's faith

- ii. Fiery darts of doubt, or contradictions, or other thought tricks. Satan tricked Eve into doubting the certainty of God's Word

Gen 3:1, 4 *Now the serpent [Satan] was more subtile than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, "**Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?**" ... And the serpent said unto the woman, "**Ye shall not surely die...**"*

- iii. Fiery darts of human philosophy such as empiricism (only trust your 5 senses: see, touch, taste, smell, hear with ears). But there is more in this world such as God, love, ethics (morals), etc. A spirit cannot be sensed empirically, but that does not make it any less real.

John 4:24 ***God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

- iv. Scripture (Bible) says Christian can **know** God & His promises

1 John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that **ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.***

Job 19:25-27 *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after [I have finished living in] my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins [ability to control myself] be consumed within me.*

2 Timothy 1:12 *For the which cause` [because God gave me this job to do] I [Paul] also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for **I know whom I have believed**, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him [my soul & spirit] against that day.*

c. Duration of faith

- i. Disciples ask Jesus for more faith. By this they didn't ask for more faith, but that the faith they had would endure the problems they would face in the future.

Luke 17:5 *And the apostles said unto the Lord, **Increase our faith.***

- ii. Jesus answers with faith as a grain of mustard seed

Luke 17:6 *And the Lord said, **If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed**, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*

Matthew 17:20 *And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, **If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed**, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

- iii. Christian needs continuing faith during difficult times – example of Peter when he first showed great faith (he got out of the boat during a storm and walked on the water toward Jesus), then showed little faith (he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the storm around him, then began to sink in the water)

Mathew 14:29-31 *And he [Jesus] said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, **he walked on the water**, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, **he was afraid; and beginning to sink**, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?*

- iv. Jesus is called the author & the finisher of our faith

Hebrews 12:2 *Looking unto **Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- v. Living, enduring faith that lasts entire Christian life

James 2:22, 26 *Seest thou [Please understand] how faith wrought [combined] with his [Abraham's] works, and by works was faith made perfect [complete, fully developed]? ... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

4. Reason Three Power of Faith

- a. "...ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts..."

- b. Infallibility of faith

- i. Guarantee to quench all the fiery darts, to overcome this attack

1 John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and **this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.***

- ii. Look at these works of faith

Creation: Hebrews 11:3 *Through faith we understand that the worlds [universe] were framed [created] by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear [were not made of something that existed beforehand].*

Delivered out of great trials: Hebrews 11:32-33 *And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: **Who through faith** subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,*

- c. Inclusiveness of faith

- i. Quench all fire darts from Satan – even our own unbelief

Mark 9:23-24 *Jesus said unto him [a father whose daughter was near death], If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; **help thou mine unbelief.***

- ii. Believe in the faithful God who makes every temptation bearable

1 Corinthians 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but **God is faithful, who will not suffer** [allow] **you to be tempted above that ye are able;** but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

5. Conclusion

- d. Question for all Christians to consider – will Jesus find the faithful?

Luke 18:8 *I tell you that he [God] will avenge them [people who are persecuted and cheated] speedily. Nevertheless **when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?***

- e. Jesus' question here implies that in the last days, Christians will live in difficult times to believe God