

Shield Yourself!

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of shielding oneself with the whole armor of God, as described in Ephesians 6, to stand against the schemes of the devil. It highlights the spiritual battle believers face, the need to identify components of the armor, and the reality of spiritual resistance and warfare. The speaker urges the audience to put on the shield of faith to extinguish the fiery darts of the evil one, emphasizing the power of faith in overcoming temptations and trials.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10, Ephesians 6:16, Mark 9:24, Psalm 139:23, Hebrews 13:5

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Faith as Protection"

Description

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Transcript

Well, I'd like to have you turn your attention this afternoon to Ephesians chapter 6, verse 10, title of my message, Shield Yourself. Got that? Shield yourself. Or we could put a King James twist on it, shield thyself.

Ephesians chapter 6. We are making our way through this very close to the end of this series. Let's pray before we read. Father, I pray that you would give me words to say, not like a scribe just reading my notes, but Lord, something with power, something that would help these folks, something that would be real, something that would seem to pulsate with, resonate with Your voice.

We're dealing with Your Word. You're the God who tells us that Your Word is living. Lord, I pray that because I want to preach Your Word, I want to preach what's on the pages of this book.

I'm not wanting to be innovative. I'm not wanting to invent my own thing. I want to say to these brethren what You would have me to say, and I pray that You'd help me to say it in a way that they would feel it, and hear it, and see it, and understand it, and live it.

Lord, I pray for help for all of us in this hour. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Okay, verse 10, Ephesians 6. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. We're not passive.

We have to do this. We have to put this on. We need to identify the components of this armor, and we have to be diligent to make sure that we are adorned with it.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Again, we walk by faith, not by sight. Faith has to do with the confidence of things that are not seen.

You don't see demons, but they're here. I mean, I was alluding to the fact that I received a phone call last night. Something was wrong with the man, and I mean spiritually wrong.

And then to get from this other man, to get four calls in the middle of the night. We're dealing with more than flesh and blood. Oftentimes, people are disturbed, and they're not right in their minds, because things are happening, especially when it comes to spiritual resistance.

There is a spiritual realm out there. There is a devil who seeks to damn. There is a devil who deceived our first mother and father.

And he means to do that to us. He would like to see this church scattered. He's evil, and he shows no mercy.

If you've ever seen a war movie, or there's about to be a battle, and somebody says, show no mercy, because you will be shown none. Well, that's the kind of battle that we're in. You know, you see, I see that when the Germans, I don't know how it was, I don't know exactly what the flavor was between the British and the Germans.

But I do see that between the Americans and the Germans, there was a degree of mercy shown. They didn't always treat each other in the most barbaric manner. Now, if you were a Jew, that might have been different.

But listen, we're in the kind of warfare, you will be shown no mercy. These are fallen angels, and they delight to see you suffer. They would do nothing more than delight to see you burning in the fires of hell.

This is the kind of enemy. And they are going to do everything to try to see to it that the most majority of mankind as possible will be thrown into that hellfire with them. That's what they want.

They love to see you in misery. They love to see you suffer. They love to see you in pain.

Here they are. And we need to take up the whole armor of God. Verse 13, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand firm.

Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. And here we are. This is the text for today.

The ESV reads this way. In all circumstances, if you've got the King James Bible, I know some of you do with the New King James, it says above all, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish the fiery darts or the flaming darts of the evil one. So here's the thing.

What do you see in verse 10? I'll tell you what I see. 10. I know 16 is what we're dealing with.

Look at 10. What do you see there? I see the energy, the strength, the might, the vigor, of God's potency and power. That's what I see there.

What do you see at the end of verse 16? I see the evil one. Flaming darts of the evil one. The question is, where do we fit into this? Me, weak, pathetic, backward, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it kind of guy.

I mean, right? We're all made of the same stuff. We feel that. Where are we? You see the question? This is one of the vital questions of Christianity.

How do I tap the power of God? I see it here. It's there. And I see the enemy.

An enemy that's far greater than us. But the question is always this. I mean, there is the kind of power that created the universe with a word.

But how do I access that when I'm doing battle with an angel who is probably, of all God's created beings, is the most powerful of all, and he wants to destroy me. This is serious stuff. I got to get to that power.

And that's, of course, what we see. God is mighty beyond all comprehension. How do we get the intensity, the vitality of that coursing through myself? And then the thing is, I can't see any of it.

I don't see God. I don't see Christ. I don't see the Spirit.

And I don't see these demons. And, you know, people in the world, they think the whole thing's make-believe. It's a fake.

Why? Because they live by sight, not by faith. And they basically go based on what they can see. And they can't see any of this.

But I'll tell you, if you're a Christian, you feel this. This is real. How do we do this? I mean, that's where the armor of God comes in.

God-powerful. That's what this armor is. You see, you want to get that power to flow through you, you got to put the armor on, because that's how he dispatches the power to the believer.

There's a divine electricity in this armor. We can't rely on ourselves. Our own willpower or anything else.

So here it is. In all circumstances, there is, I mean, I'm not going to bore you with this, but how do you get above all in the King James or the New King James? And you get in all circumstances. Or one translation says, in every situation.

Or the New American Standard says, in addition to this. There is some questioning. But I'll tell you this.

Whether it's in every circumstance or above all, it's important. Because if it's every circumstance or every situation, that means you don't want to be without this ever. And if it's above all, it means it's more important than anything else you've heard about up till now.

And so the reality is, whichever, this is important. Now, the shield. Let's think about the shield.

Have you ever, have you seen a picture of a Roman shield? Obviously, throughout history, there's different types of shields. And even among the Roman soldiers, they had different types. But the one that I'm impressed with, and I've actually seen, there's something Joshua, my son, and I would delight to watch.

It's a movie called *The Eagle*. And it's actually a movie that takes you back in time to when the Romans controlled Britain. And of course, if you watch them fight, there's a place where they come out of their fort and they're attacking the local people.

Actually, some of their folks have been taken. But they basically do this tortoise move. Have you ever seen that? Where they, basically what you have is the front line of the soldiers, they hold their shields up to the front.

These were called scutum, these shields. And they were semi-circular. They formed around the body.

They had a place for the hand in the middle. They basically went from about the nose all the way down to below the knee. The men in the front line, they would come out in rank and order.

And the guys in front would have their shields standing up vertically. And then the guys behind would bring theirs up either on the side or up overhead. It depends if you were going to be dealing with somebody that was going to be trying to jump on top of you or shoot arrows down or throw spears down on top of you.

But it was these shields. Something very interesting about these shields, you can actually look up online, you can see where these kind of formations, they get guys that dress the part today and they basically show you how it was done. The interesting thing is when they brought these shields up and they would bring, the shields would be about this wide and circular and they would kind of wrap around the body.

When they would bring those things up to this height and they had their helmet on, the only unprotected part you could see at least from the top of their head down to about shin level was the eyes. That's all you could see. The rest was entirely covered.

You had the helmet covering on top and of course sometimes they had the thing down the middle and just the eyes right above that shield. Shields. You think about a shield.

Any enemy trying to fire an object at that shield, you can see it. When these guys put those things up around them, I was thinking how do you even combat that? I mean if you basically had, we're dealing with fiery darts. We're dealing with bow and arrow.

So if I've got, and I've bow hunted before. I owned a bow. I've got some idea.

Look what we've got today are compound bows. They can hurdle those arrows. Back then that was not what they had.

They had basic recurve bows and they didn't have the same kind of drawstring. If you're going to try to put an arrow, what do you got? The guy's basically covered up with his shield. That's the idea.

That's what Paul's hitting at here. You want to cover yourself. I mean you got a man behind the shield and all you can really see is his eyeballs.

Unless you're a really good shot, you can put one right through his eyeball. Or maybe you hit him in the shin. The fact is we're not just dealing with arrows here.

We're dealing with fiery arrows. Now that's something that we've seen throughout history as well. Arrow dipped in flammable solution and fired.

What's the idea? What's the picture? The picture is if you've got the shield and you put up the shield and somebody shoots an arrow that has this substance on it that's on fire. The thing is shot at you. It hits the shield and what? That's it.

The thing's finished. It's over. You see what I mean? I mean you hold up the shield and your breastplate.

We dealt with that. It doesn't even come into play. Why not? Because the shield.

Because the shield took the arrow. The arrow hit the shield. The whole thing's quenched.

It's all over. It doesn't go any further than that. That's basically the picture here.

You hold up the shield and that's fiery arrow. Can't get close to you. So I want to think about these fiery darts or fiery arrows.

Flaming arrows. Fire. Obviously warfare.

Fire has been used throughout history. Whether it's been a flaming arrow or whether it's been. You probably had a good deal of incendiary bombs dropped here in Manchester, haven't you? Probably nobody was alive at that time.

Anybody alive at that time? Who do we have here? Anybody alive during World War II? I don't think so. Anyway. Can you think of anybody know what napalm is? Probably.

Used in the Vietnam War. Perhaps in Korea. Flamethrowers.

Those were used quite a bit in World War II. I mean the reality is fire has often been used to try to destroy, to cause death. I mean such, you know what? Such weapons are especially effective where you have flammable material.

They dropped the incendiary bombs on some cities. And I know the Americans did that to the Germans. I mean you get some of those old cities and they just went up.

And the devil, you know what he recognizes? Christian, you and I have some very flammable material in this flesh. And he knows it. He's trying to get those flaming arrows in there.

He knows we've got some very readily combustible materials about us. And he's got flaming arrows in his arsenal that burst into flame. Here's the issue.

You and I are made up of combustible material. You do not want that flame, that fiery arrow to get to you. And the devil is trying to get it to you.

And there's a way to block it. And that's what we're finding out. Now again, brethren, I want to stress this.

I have to keep going back. This is up here. This is in the mind.

These fiery arrows, they come here. And the whole place where the shield goes up, it happens here. I mean, we can talk.

We can look at the allegory. We can look at the analogy here. We can see the picture.

We can picture a Roman soldier. We can picture a shield in the hand. But we've got to recognize the devil, literally, this is reality.

Even though we can't see it, there's a devil we can't see. But he fires something at us into the brain, into the mind. It comes at us in thoughts, or dreams, or suggestions, or impressions, or some kind of desire, or images that pop into some memory that comes back.

These thoughts burst upon us. The devil, how does he do it? I don't know. Somehow he conveys these fiery darts to us.

He shoots them at us. How do they come? By his whispers, by his voice. You know what he's done? He's designed these suggestions to come into us and explode into flame.

That's what we're getting here. Fiery darts. Anything that tends... We talk about inflamed with lust, or inflamed with anger, or envy, or jealousy.

That's terminology. The idea of flame, inflamed, passion. That's the idea.

He shoots thoughts that are meant to catch fire. He's trying to light a match. Only it's not just a match, it's these darts that he shoots at us.

They come at us. The picture here, we've got the flesh, and we've got mortal bodies. And the reality is, as much as we may be redeemed as Christians, the thing is we know full well there is an aspect to us, we're told not to cater to this flesh.

We're not to give opportunity to this flesh. And yet the devil is constantly trying to get the flesh all worked up, because he knows this. He knows he's been very effective at it.

All you have to do is look through history, you take a good man like David, what do you think happens? He goes out, he ought to be at war, and he's out lounging around on the deck up top of his palace, and he sees a beautiful woman, and bang, there it is. I mean, that's the kind of stuff that happens. People fly into a rage.

People do things that suddenly there's consequences for, for the rest of their life. You have to remember what he's trying to do. He's trying to bring us down.

He's trying to destroy us. He's trying to destroy our reputation. He's trying to damn us.

And he knows he has this arsenal, some kind of lust, some kind of inordinate desire, some kind of thought towards some temptation or doubt. It's not just lust. He'll throw thoughts at us that are blasphemous towards God.

He'll throw thoughts that you shouldn't trust him. You ought to doubt him. God's somehow bad.

God is against you. God is, I mean, questions rise up in your mind. You find God questionable.

Can I really believe his promise? It's those kind of thoughts. It's some kind of high thoughts of self pride or anxiety or just some fear. He wants you to be afraid.

He'll throw some thought at you that just produces a fear. He's wanting to shake us. He wants, listen, he's very real and the apostle knows it.

What he says is, this is where you have to hold up the shield. And this is a shield of faith. That's what we're dealing with.

So the fiery arrow, instead of piercing you and exploding into flame, lighting up, causing you damage, causing you defeat. What happens? The arrow bursts upon the shield and you're protected. And the things finish there and then and it goes no further.

And listen, the thing is, I was thinking of a group of us down in Middleton walking around. You see the yonder Christian over there? See if we really had eyes of faith to see. He ought to have a shield.

He ought to be walking around armed. This shield, it's very real. But see, it's up here.

Now, I love the imagery of Bunyan. He says, Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I'm come out on purpose to withstand you. Apollyon against Christian.

I am void of fear in this matter. Prepare yourself to die, for I swear by my infernal den, you shall go no further. Here will I spill your soul.

Oh, those words right there. I think of those often when I think of Pilgrim's Progress. The devil saying that, I will spill your soul.

That's what he wants to do. With that, he threw a flaming dart at his breast. Now, I recognize this isn't scripture, but Bunyan had great insights here.

Pilgrim's Progress. He threw a flaming dart at his breast, but Christian had a shield in his hand with which he caught it. And so prevented the danger of that.

That's the idea. He prevented it. It's over and done.

At least, that flaming dart. Apollyon made at him, throwing darts as thick as hail. Now, we could go on with the battle, but Bunyan ends with a little bit of poetry here.

This is what he says. A more unequal match can hardly be. Christian must fight an angel, but you see, the valiant man, by handling sword and shield, doth make him, though a dragon, quit the field.

And that's the issue. We're empowered. We can defeat angels.

We can defeat dragons. We can make them quit the field. Now, this is a shield.

We have to think about this. This is a shield of faith. We've got to break past the allegory.

We need to grasp this for what it actually is in practice. It's a shield of faith. Faith.

Faith. It's got to do with what we believe. Do you see what this is? It means, you know what? It means that when we go out in this world, even right here in the church, we know that we're not sheltered within these

walls.

There's no sacred place in this world where the devil can't get to. And the thing is, what this means is you've got to believe something. This is the capacity to take what you believe and block what the devil wants you to believe.

It's the capacity to apply that particular truth that's necessary and relevant in any given encounter with the devil. You hold up your faith and the dart strikes and it's extinguished. It doesn't get to you.

And you have to consider this. There is nothing at all, not a single arrow in the devil's quiver, forged in the dens of hell, not a single fiery dart that God has not provided you something to so equip yourself with to form that shield, to block that arrow. You need to recognize that.

Every suggestion, every impression, every temptation has that God has provided us something so to create this shield of faith with whatever he might fling at us, or sling at us, or hurl at us, or launch at us, or heave at us, propel at us. And believe me, this is going to keep happening until you die. He's going to throw these things.

Sometimes they're going to be thick as hail. Sometimes you'll quit the field. But I'll tell you this, even when he quits the field, even when you resist him and he flees from you, it's only for a time.

He's coming back. And you will not get away from this. I remember sitting with a couple of pastors and we got talking about the thing with lust.

And I think the oldest pastor there was in his mid-60s. And we were talking about this, three of us. And this guy had somebody in his church that was in his 90s.

And he said, yeah, I asked this member of my church in his 90s whether it ever ends, the battle with lust. And he said it doesn't. And I think I know well enough Ruby's dad, 92 years old, there's struggles.

See, the thing you have to recognize is these fiery darts are going to come the rest of your life. You're never going to get away from it. Not in this life.

The only protection is to pass off into glory. This is very real. We've got to be armed for it.

You don't want to be foolish about this. There is a battle. You behold our Lord.

Behold the Lord Jesus Christ when he's tempted by the devil. The devil flung his fiery darts at him, straight at his breast. What were they? Suggestion to independence, not to trust his father, the suggestion to pride, suggestion to presumption, to ease, to riches, to greed.

But our Lord's not left grasping. You ever notice that the Lord instantaneously quoted Deuteronomy? And I often think about that because I think, Christian, Christian, he's being an example for us. You see what he did? You see, he went to Deuteronomy chapter 6 twice and chapter 8 once, and he produced such a shield for his faith to find substance in, that he quenched that fiery dart immediately and at once, and it found no place in him.

And you know what? Jesus didn't just like a schoolboy. You ever see somebody, they memorize something? It was, it's their assignment, and so they've got to memorize it. Remember the movie on Martin Luther, watching that.

They were reciting all of it, and he said to them, now slow down. He said, I don't want you just to be able to recite it. I want you to know what it is you're reciting.

I want you to think about it. See, this is the kind of thing, Jesus didn't just memorize this as a kid, and he could spout it out, or like some magic spell, he could just produce the right text. Do you realize what's happening? Faith.

He believed it. His weight was on these truths. You know, one of the things I often ask myself is, show me the Christian, the typical Christian, who's even ready to produce a text from Deuteronomy, to go to battle with the devil with.

Brethren, one of the things is, I'm afraid I see this. Some, brethren, I'm going to tell you, I don't know where everybody is with this. Oftentimes, I assume that the people that I'm seeking to minister to are in the Word of God, much more than sometimes, to my consternation, I find out is actually true.

Brethren, what does it take to actually get to the place where you have sufficiently thought about a passage from Deuteronomy, and actually meditated on it sufficiently enough to recognize how it applies to your life, how it applies to certain situations in temptation, where you could actually produce a text from Deuteronomy, whereby you could create such a sufficient shield to protect yourself from such a fiery dart, that that text from Deuteronomy would very accurately, specifically answer to you. And I'm afraid, I'm afraid. You can read the books, we can know the Puritans, we can do many... Brethren, I'll tell you this, the most important thing is not to know what Whitfield preached, or know what Flavel preached, or Sibbes, or it doesn't matter how good they get, to know what John Piper has to say, or what Paul Washer says.

Brethren, the truth is, we've got to know the Word of God. And I find that oftentimes, professing Christians are woefully ignorant of Scripture, and do not read Scripture, and know their Bibles. And brethren, I can tell you, that even I've had times in my own life, where I've recognized, you know what? I need to know my Bible better.

I'm woefully... I mean, I can remember as a very young preacher, maybe 20 years ago, 15 years ago, just recognizing, you know what? I need to know the argument of texts like Galatians, and I need to know the argument of Romans. Not just be able to proof text. And yes, you can read the Bible end to end, but brethren, that is not sufficient.

You actually have to know what this means to your life. You have to know what God is saying. Faith... Brethren, let me ask you this.

Faith. Faith. Where does faith come from? Can anybody answer that? Where does true saving faith come from? Faith.

Faith. Comes from... Where? Hearing the Word of God. Faith comes from hearing, hearing the Word of Christ.

That's what we find in Scripture. And I just want to stay here for a moment, really emphasize this. Listen, the faith that empowers... You do recognize that we could do our typical Middleton outreach, and we can walk around, and we can ask people, do you believe? You see that guy on the phone last night was saying, I'm saved.

I'm not a Christian, but I'm saved. And you're saying, I don't believe in your God. I believe in this God.

We found people yesterday, I believe in the Nordic gods. You know, just believing something is not the faith that creates the shield that protects you from the devil. Everybody believes something.

That isn't it. You see, our faith has to be in the Word of God. Our faith has to be in the truth.

And you know, the thing is, Jesus himself said, you think you have eternal life in here, but the scriptures, they speak about me. Listen, one of the things you need to recognize is this isn't just about finding doctrine. Some people study their Bible because they're very scholastic, they're academic.

They want to know that, they want to be able to argue about, you know, limited atonement. Brethren, I'll tell you this. The fact is that the scriptures are truth, but they're not just any old truth.

They're truth about the person of God. They're truth about Christ. You see what's happening? We have to believe things about Christ.

We have to believe things about the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit that we are willing to rest our whole life on, to be able to put our whole weight on. That's the issue here. That's what faith is all about.

Faith is the idea that I have a conviction about something that I can't see necessarily with these eyes. But let me tell you something. You will never have true faith that is a worthwhile shield if you don't first get in Scripture and second know it.

Do you recognize you cannot believe what you don't know? This is what Scripture says. Scripture says, how will they believe unless what? Unless they've heard. You will never believe in the Christ of Scripture until you've heard of Him.

Now that may come from preaching. That may come from your own reading in Scripture. But brethren, you've got to have that.

If you're going to have the kind of shield that you're going to put up and actually protect yourself from the devil, you better be in Scripture. You better know it. Listen, knowing.

You've got to have the proposition. A proposition is basically just something to be considered. So you have a truth that's set before you concerning God in Scripture.

You have a promise that's made to you. You see, that proposition is put to you. Now you're either going to believe it or you're not going to believe it.

And true faith, true faith, you put your whole weight on it. It's like, I believe what this says. And it matters.

It affects your life. It's something that, brethren, what's going to extinguish the blasphemous thoughts when they come? The unbelieving thoughts. The wicked thoughts.

The lustful suggestions. It's not just any faith. It's the faith that comes by hearing the Word.

It's based on obtaining a knowledge. It's where you wrestle through what it actually means. Like you're reading Deuteronomy 6 or 8 like Jesus obviously did and you're thinking about what does it mean? I know what this means.

I know how this applies to my life. I believe this. This matters.

This is God speaking. There's a lot of things God could have told us about. But God tells us the things that we need to know about in this book that have to do with salvation and have to do with making it to the end and with waging warfare against the devil.

You've got to consider what does it mean? I mean, man doesn't live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. You see, that's one of the things he quoted from Deuteronomy. When you look at these things, we're not supposed to put the Lord our God to the test.

No, you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve. You see, he very quickly went there. You see, we have to stop long enough.

Like you can't just do devotions where it's like, well, you know, I'm doing the McShane plan and I've got to get through those four chapters today. Bang, bang, bang, bang. Four checks.

And you get to the end. You know what? You're far better off reading one verse not getting away from the McShane plan and do the one verse. If you can take that one verse, know it, look at it, study it, meditate upon it, and actually believe it to where you put your weight on it.

Like, I know that truth and I'm staying there. Brethren, do you know that this truth has to do with the God that we trust, that we believe in? That's what we're talking, when we put up the shield of faith, our faith, have you ever heard, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? I mean, where is this faith directed? Truly I say to you, I love these verses. Jesus said, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do.

Why would I bring that up right here? Because it's powerful! The works that I do, you will do. Why? Because you believe. Or you get something like this, these signs will accompany those who believe in my name.

They will cast out demons. I mean, you want power against the devil, power against the demons? They believe in his name. Now hear me, when the devil hurls these horrid suggestions, lustful, prideful, fiery attacks, blasts you with unbelieving thoughts or doubts or fears, it's, it's, what do you know about God? That's it.

Did you notice that? When Jesus says, we don't live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds. You know, when he talked about not putting God to the test, when he talks about the Lord God only, should we say, do you notice all of those have to do with his father? You see this, this is where we're at. What, what, when the devil's attacking me, what is it that I know about God? What is it I know about his son? What does I know about his spirit? That's the real issue.

What do I know about him? Have you ever read this? The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous man runs into it and safe. I mean, we've got to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

We've got to know something about his power. The name, brethren, I'll tell you this, the name of the Lord is enough. Often, often that's enough of the truth.

I know, I know something about him. I know something about the fact that, that his name, there's a, it's a strong tower. When we're attacked, we hardly know what to do.

We barely know how to raise the shield. Our arms feel weak. We feel you've never been there.

You feel dry. You feel out of it. You feel backward.

You feel defeated. You feel weak. You feel helpless.

You feel like I can't, I can't do this. And the devil's upon you. He's on your back.

You feel overwhelmed. Well, here it is. We run into the Lord, the name of the Lord.

And what happens? We're saved. I mean, he saves us completely. I mean, think of this verse.

They conquered him, the devil, by the blood of the lamb. I mean, what does that mean? How do you, how do you conquer the devil by the blood of the lamb? You better know something about it. You better know what was achieved by it.

You better know what it means. Blood, the blood of the lamb. What does it mean? It means he died.

He shed his blood. It means it was spilled. It means his life was spilled in place of us.

It's got to, listen, that blood has everything to do with a substitutionary atonement. But you've got to know that. You see, that's what protects us.

When the devil's flinging these arrows at us, we recognize the blood. I mean, we defeat him. When we're attacked, when we feel low, we run into the name of the Lord and all he is.

Almost too weak to hold up the shield, but we look to him. And what happened? Our eyes, they're upon him. We look at him.

We see his glory. We see his power. We see his might.

We see his promises. And he's telling us, look, I'll be with you. And I'm not going to leave you to the devil.

And I'll never forsake you. I will be there for you. I'm not going to leave you orphans.

I'm going to give you the Spirit. I mean, he says, you believe in my name. You look to me.

You'll do powers. You'll cast out demons. You'll undo this devil.

I mean, we find all sorts of promises. They're all over. One, listen, the one who runs into the name of the Lord, the name of the Lord, he never does so in vain.

People that cry out, I mean, didn't we sing it in one of the songs? I mean, we're never going to be ashamed. Stricken, smitten, and afflicted. You saw it there.

None are going to be ashamed. I mean, if he looks to Christ, he's going to find that his arm is all of a sudden empowered and the shield is real. And it actually does protect.

But you need to know, brethren, you will never believe on the Lord unless you have a knowledge, unless you've heard. We've got to, it's not just to the lost out in the world. It's like, well, you know, if they don't hear about Christ, they'll never be able to believe in him.

But I'm going to say within the church, listen, if you don't know about him, you will never believe in him. Not like you ought to. Not like you ought to be able to put up that shield in the way that you ought to know.

There needs to be hearing. There needs to be a knowledge. Faith apart from the word is what? Somebody's saying dead.

Look, that's works. Faith apart from the word is just like an unbeliever. It's like they believe all sorts of things, but what do they believe? What do they know? There's no substance.

It's got to come from this book, folks. It's not enough to simply be able to quote the text. And you know, the devil, the devil can quote scripture.

The devil quoted scripture to the Lord Jesus Christ. Brethren, listen, we live in a culture. Our electronic devices, when you see the way things are now, even the way movies are, the way TV is, the way advertising is, the way the internet is, it's got to hold people's attention.

And the more that they're designing it all to hold people's attention, it's got to be faster. It's got to be more explosive. It's got to be somehow more gripping.

The fact is that we have people that are gripped with attention deficit syndrome. I mean, kids, you've got to have all this explosive stuff and it's got to be moving all the time. Things have to happen fast.

More and more our young people can't read. The idea of young people sitting down and reading a book. See, I grew up before the internet was here.

When I was young, I loved to read. Even young people that could sit down and read the Chronicles of Narnia or the Lord of the Rings or something. Children can't do it any day.

They have to sit down and watch the movie. They can't read. Why? You can't hold their attention.

What happens in the schools today? They've got to put them all on drugs because why? They're bouncing off the walls. Nobody can hold their attention. Teachers can't hold their attention.

You know, I used to have to cross the road from the street. I'd look out my front window to this elementary school, primary school over there, and the kids, they come out to recess, bang, bang all the time through the day. Why? Because they've got to play all the time.

Why do they have so much energy? They can't hardly concentrate anymore. And it happens in the church. What happens in the church? They bring in the clowns.

They bring in the comedians. I was watching something on Phil Johnson. He was talking about one guy that was dressed up with a great big dollar bill.

He said there was another guy that was acting out the second coming who they floated in coming down on a line. It's like, yeah, you have to do these ridiculous things today. You've got these Christian little snippets and short sermons.

Why? Because people can't pay attention. Brethren, I'll tell you this. There were times when people would sit and they would listen for hours, not just one hour.

They would listen for hours to sermons where you're preaching the actual Word of God. And it's being shoveled into the people's minds to give consideration to people that can sit down and read the Word of God. Brethren, where does that happen today? Everybody's got the stage and the jokes and everything's

dumbed down.

You can't hardly talk anymore to people. People can't understand things. They just can't hold their attention.

You've got to have fire and you've got to have smoke and you've got to have all this kind of stuff. And people have devotions. I have a feeling that if we really went around and said, look, tell me before God, be honest before God.

And the thing is, most people are going to over-assume how much they actually spend time in devotions during the time. They actually, even honestly speaking, are going to over-exaggerate, not under-exaggerate. And the thing is, if we really went around, even the people in this room, how many times are folks being given to actually being in the Word of God? People want quick fixes, folks, but there isn't one.

Listen, let me tell you something. If you want to win this battle to the end against cosmic powers, then I'll tell you this, spend the rest of your time renewing your mind in the Word of God. And look, I'll tell you this, the men and women, like when you start speaking to somebody and somebody obviously, like they know the Word of God, not just because they've recited it, but memorized it, just by rote, just by script, you encounter people that can quote Scripture to deal with problems in your life.

When you have temptations, they know where to go in the Bible. You know how that happened? It happened because somewhere along the line, they studied this book and they kept studying it and they kept studying it and they kept studying it. You realize we all come into the world in the same place.

We all come into this world with a blank slate as far as our understanding. You do recognize that if people have an idea about the Word of God, it's been because they have spent the time in the Word to deal with what it says, what it means, what they believe about it. They started in the same place as everybody else did.

And anything they have, they've learned. And I would say this, brethren, cling to the Word of God as though your very life depends upon it because it actually does. And if you're going to have any sort of faith that you're going to look... One of the problems that people flounder with the temptations and the fiery darts of the devil is because they really don't know the Word of God.

They've got some of these very basic things, but when it really comes down to it, they flounder around and they don't know how to fight the battle because they don't really know what they believe. You know, you get ridiculous things. You get people walking around.

You know, it's a very charismatic thing to walk around and say, I bind the devil. Where do you find that in the Bible? Is that how we fight? Bind the devil? That's not the way we fight. The way we fight is because we know something about our God and we know something about what He's promised, something about His power, something about His immovableness, something about His passion for His people, something about what He is to His people, His trust to His people, His trustworthiness to His people.

You've got to know something about that. And listen, even if you are a great avid, whoever it may be, maybe you love the Reformers, maybe you love the Puritans, maybe you've got your favorite scholars today, the theologians, maybe you love Robert Raymond and systematic theology or Grudem or whoever it may be. I'll tell you this, they were born children at one time too.

And the only way they got to where they are is they sucked up this book. You've got to live in this book. Listen, this is a time, this is a day and an age where everybody carries around a phone and everything's so quick.

You know, you've got to communicate very quick. In some ways it's useful. But brethren, I'll tell you this, if you're going to really survive in this, you better get your face out of your computer and out of your phone and off the TV screen and get it in this book.

You've got to do it, brethren. There's no substitute for it. If you really want to fight this battle, you need to be men and women that are really giving yourself to some real sound daily devotions in this book.

And like I say, don't let it just be check mark the McShane reading plan. You need to sit down and stop sometimes and really say, I can't go any further. I'm not going any further with it.

Here's a verse. I'm going to sit here. I'm going to soak this in.

I need to know this. Here's something that seems fresh to me. Brethren, let me tell you something.

There are some people in this room, one of the things is specific attacks. People want quick fixes. But if you want to win this battle against cosmic powers, it's got to be far more than that.

Spend the rest of your life renewing your mind in this thing. And I'm going to tell you something. Lust.

Let's just be very specific on this. Let's be real. There's flammable matter in the Christian, especially young Christians.

Lust, sexual temptation, desire for emotional and physical stimulation, intimacy. One of the devil's most fiery darts is it comes in right at this place. He shoots it at Christians.

He puts a person before us. He puts images in our mind. He puts dreams in our mind.

There can be memories there, thoughts. It's strong. It's hot.

It's a flammable mixture. The desire can be strong. The internet, the mouse, it's right there at your fingertip.

To shield the brother or sister, we've got to know how to deal with this. We've got to have something going on. We can't just walk around binding Satan like the charismatics that are all confused and don't hardly know their Bible.

That's not what we need. Listen, you know what we need? If you really struggle with this area, you need to go to the Word of God and you need to find out 20 verses. You need to find out examples of how you actually fight this battle.

You need to lay your weight on it. You need to not only know it, you need to actually believe it. Let's think for a moment.

There's Joseph. You remember Joseph? One of the sons of Israel. His brothers sold him into slavery.

And so what happens to him? Well, you know what happened to him. Potiphar, his wife, Potiphar's wife. We recognize that Joseph was a handsome man.

And undoubtedly, Potiphar, he was high up in the court. He undoubtedly had a very beautiful wife. And she came along and she threw herself at Joseph.

Have you ever thought about what happened there? He said, how can I commit this thing? How can I do this? How can I commit this great wickedness in the sight of God? Now, I want you to think about something. I mean, we need to be very real here. Do you know what he was really saying? How can I do this to God? See, if you've ever just stopped and you've said this, my God is real.

See, this is what Joseph did. He said, God is real. And you know what? Sin is primarily against him.

He's my God. And he recognized, how can I do this to him? Because what I'll do, is I'll just ruin and wreck my own relationship with God. How can I do this? How? Up with the shield.

I'm not going to do this. I am not going to devastate. I mean, I can run away.

She can grab my cloak. Potiphar could have me killed. I put in prison, whatever.

I am not doing this. I'm not in a disgrace and dishonor. And he knew, he believed something about the committing of sin.

He knew it would be against God. That's what he said. It would devastate his relationship.

Do any of you fear that? You see, there's many texts that could go to on lust. But just let me ask you this. Before you click on that pornographic image, before you fail, before you falter, are you really ready to sacrifice your relationship with God? I mean, have you ever read Don't Quench the Spirit? Don't Grieve the Spirit? Do you really believe that there's any reality to that? Let me just tell you something.

When David, David fell, he did fall. And you know what he said in Psalm 51? He said the same thing that Joseph said. Joseph said, how can I do this great wickedness against God? He knew it was against him.

When David did it, he recognized right away against you and you only. Have I committed this thing? And if you've ever read that Psalm 51, do you know what he says? He says, let me hear joy and gladness. Do you know why he would say that? Because his joy had been taken away and all the gladness had been taken away.

You know what else he says? The bones that you have broken rejoice. That's what happens. You want your bones broken in a spiritual sense? You just play with this.

You know what else he says? Cast me not away from your presence. Why would he say that? Because that's how he felt after this. You want to go into a season of darkness? Just grieve the Spirit of God.

Just count your relationship with him a casual thing and just click on the pornography. You think that little bit of gratification is going to end up being something slight that God looks over? Don't you dare think so. Don't cheat.

Don't deal with your relationship with God in such a cheap manner. You know what he says? Take not your Holy Spirit from me. We could immediately say, well, you know, we have a better developed theology in the New Testament.

Oh, just get to the place where you feel like God has taken the Holy Spirit from you. Just go fail and fall into lust. Let it go.

Or Psalm 32, which is very similar to 51. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. Day and night your hand was heavy upon me.

My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. You see, we've got to learn how to live. You've got to learn how to put up that... How do you prevent this thing, this fiery dart, from bursting forth into something that inflames the passions within you? You better be thinking about certain truths.

It can be all the way over from, you know what? You better be gouging out that eye or you're going to go to hell. There's serious warnings. You better be equipped there.

But I would take you to the other. I would take you to the song of Solomon, where you have a picture of a husband and a wife. The bride, the groom.

You have this picture of Christ and His church. And He comes and He says, Let me in, my dove. He's calling to her.

And what happens? She's delayed. She's distracted. She gets to the door and He's gone.

You want to do something in your life to all of a sudden find Christ gone from the door? You just play with sin. And see what it does to your relationship with Him. I mean, look, we better wake up.

There better be faith there. We can look at the pleasures. And you think of Moses.

I had a brother read from Hebrews chapter 11. That is a chapter of faith. You want to talk about men and women that held up the shield of faith? Here it is.

They were tried. You think about Noah. Really? Seriously? There's a flood coming that's going to wipe out the whole world.

Never seen anything like that. You want me to build a ship over years? Can you imagine how they talked to him? How they ridiculed him? Can you imagine how the devil was right there whispering to him? Noah, you are an idiot. And yet, what did he do? His eyes looked beyond what he could see.

We often get that way in this life. We get to where we begin to get these suggestions from the devil that, you know what? Come play with sin. Come play with the pleasures.

What happened to Moses? Listen to this. By faith Moses, when he was growing up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

Did you catch that? By faith. You see, what does faith do? Faith is the conviction of things not seen. That's what's happening.

By faith. You see, faith sees that which the unbeliever can't see. It's that conviction.

Faith sees through what? All the pomp. All the show. All the glitz.

The glamour of it all. The things that are seen. What are they? They're just tinsel.

They're fluff. It's like cotton balls. I mean, hold up the shield like Moses did here.

And what is it? We read this. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Let's hold it up against those fiery darts.

That's what you see. They'll be dashed. All the pieces against that shield come to nothing.

Moses, listen. Moses could have been the chief man in the court of Pharaoh. He was raised by the daughter of Pharaoh.

We recognize this. Undoubtedly, the father was already gone. But he could have been chief guy.

He was brought up in... What do you find? Moses could have been chief man. Pleasures of sin could have all been his. But by faith, you know what he did? He saw through it all.

What did he see? He saw these pleasures don't last. You know, that's the kind of shield you want to put up. The devil comes along and he says, you need to be trying out the world.

You need to be trying out the pleasures. You need to be trying out the money. You need to be trying out the success.

But you know what he did? He looked through it all. And the shield of faith came up. He looked through it all.

See, this is what faith does. It looks beyond. It's able to see through it all and recognize, ah, these things are all for a season.

They're only passing away. Faith not only sees things as they are. Faith can see into the future.

That's what it says, right? It's the hope. Or it's the assurance of things that are hoped for. It's not only that we can see things now the way they are.

We can see into the future. You know what Moses can see? Moses can actually see that all the wealth of Egypt, all of it, he could have had it. It was all there to be had.

But what? He was able to look upon and say, ah, I see an eternal weight of glory. You know what faith can do? Track it. Track it out.

You know what faith does? Faith can go up and it can look at that person on their deathbed. You know the person I mean? The person that traded Christ for all the pleasures in this world that promised them so much pleasure. They can look there on that deathbed, those who have traded it all, so that they could have their little thing in this world, all those pleasures that promised so much gratification.

That's what faith can do. It can see that. It can see all those things that leave that person just an exhausted wreck.

They're on their deathbed. They're dying. There's no comfort.

There's no hope. They traded it all in. Just exhausted, hopeless wreck of humanity.

You ever seen that? I stood at the side of my aunt as she died in the last just throes of horrific cancer and her pain and she was losing her sanity and losing her mind laying on that bed in that hospital and she traded it all away. You see that's what faith can do. It can look at all of it and say no way, physically, mentally, spiritual, just a wreck of humanity.

Why? They bought into the lies of sin. Do you have the ability from this book to be able to look at it all and say like Moses did? No way am I selling out for it. Because even though there's pleasure in that it's only for a season and I see where it leads to and I see where people end up on their deathbed.

I'm not going, I don't want to go there. No way. I'm not trading it for it.

I will suffer with the people of God because I count that as greater wealth than all of the stuff in the world. That's what faith does. Brethren you've better know this from the Word of God because these are the temptations.

To sell out for the pleasures, to sell out for the things, to sell out for houses and for money and success and give yourself to this world. Brethren it could be anger, it could be all sorts of things that get thrown at us. Faith that sees through all of it.

We believe in things that are not seen. This is the question to you. Do you believe something? Do you believe in something that actually equips you with a shield? Do you see it? Do you see the rewards of all of it? The eternal weight of all of this.

Brethren I'll tell you this. You know where you're vulnerable. I don't know exactly where all of you are vulnerable.

I mean there may be some places where we're all likely to be tempted. But I know this. The devil, he knows us and he's watching us and he's studying us.

And you know what? You may be weak. You may be more weak than where I am. I may be more weak.

There may be special places where the devil likes to try to take each one of us out. You need to know where you're weak. And I would just say this.

Wherever you find yourself weak, you need to equip yourself. You need to know the very truths that are going to help you survive when those temptations come. I mean there are some of us.

There may be certain places in our life where certain temptations of the devil, they come with such inflaming power that we can barely resist them. But you need to be able to run into this tower, the name of the Lord which is this tower. And find your shelter there.

And find help there. And find a place of rescue. Brother, we need to just come back all the time to this reality.

Let your faith find in the Scriptures this God who's loving kindness. I mean we find this. It was because of His mercy.

Because of the great love with which He loved us. We need to, you know the devil's going to come along and tell that. We've got a hard God.

He's, you don't want to follow Him. He's mean. He's ruthless.

He doesn't answer your prayers. He's a taskmaster. But what you want to do is you want to constantly be putting that shield of faith up.

It protects you from this. You need to really be thinking about what the truth is and be able to lean on it. Because I'll tell you this.

You haven't been promised a flowery bed of ease in this lifetime. You have not been promised that there won't be difficulties and pain and suffering and sorrow. You haven't been promised that.

But what you've been promised is a God who says that He'll be faithful with you. I can remember. Brethren, I can remember.

My dad died. My dad wanted me to preach his funeral. I was getting ready to jump on an airplane and fly up to Michigan and preach my dad's funeral that evening.

And you know what? My brother had specifically taken some things that my dad had indicated that I was supposed to inherit. My brother took them. Do you know that morning before I jumped on that airplane, I came across that text in Hebrews chapter 13.

Basically, what God promises there is He says, You don't have to love money. Why? Because I'll never leave you or forsake you. And you know, God just had it where that morning, that text was one of the places I was reading.

I mean, I felt an absolute supernatural, just joy. Doesn't matter if my brother takes it all. I've got the Lord.

I mean, that's a shield that the devil just can't get to you through. He's mine. God saved me.

I mean, He's poured out His love for me. He says He's never going to leave me or forsake me. I mean, if I've got Him, it doesn't matter what I have or don't have.

I mean, everything else is so insignificant to that. But I'll tell you when the temptation comes, you better have some confidence in that. You better have some confidence that that relationship that you have with the Lord is actually worth keeping and more precious than anything else.

That's what will carry you through. Brethren, you better live in this book. This is where you find those truths.

This is where you find those examples. This is where you find what your faith needs to find the foundation and the substance and shield of faith. May God help us to be so armed.

Father, I pray that You would indeed help us. I pray in Christ's name, Amen. You're dismissed.

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