

Suit Up with the Shield of Faith

Week 5

Ice Breaker

We don't like to feel vulnerable. What are some things we "protect"? How do we shield or protect the things that are valuable to us?

Take It In

Review today's video

As we continue our study on Suit Up we will be looking at Ephesians 6:16

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one....

In this passage four words present themselves for our consideration

- Shield – protection
- Faith – source of that protection
- Darts – why we need that protection
- All – living in that protection continually

Talk It Over

Read – Shields

Genesis 15:1; Psalm 3:3; Psalm 91:4; Proverbs 30:5; 1 Kings 10:16-17

Discuss – What are the traits of this shield as described in these verses as compared to the shield Solomon used to decorate his summer palace?

Read – Faith

Hebrews 11:1-6; Romans 4:16-22; 1 Corinthians 2:3-5

Discuss – How do you define the word "faith"? What does faith mean to you?

Read More on Faith

Romans 5:2; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Peter 1:21; 1 John 5:4

Discuss – Think of the word faith in the verses above. It would appear to be both a one-time "gift" as well as something that grows. Faith both connects us to the promises of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. How do we live with a continually increasing awareness of those promises freely given to us?

What does faith as a shield look like to you?

Read – Darts

Ephesians 6:16; 1 Peter 5:8-10

Discuss

Compare what Paul says about the tactics of our enemy with what Peter has to say about them. While they use different metaphors, what do these two passages have in common?

Fiery darts hitting us would really hurt! Sadly, lies of the evil one aren't always as obvious as a flaming projectile. Sometimes they are disguised as small, subtle doubts. What are some beliefs about yourself or God, that either you struggle with or you have seen others struggle with, that would undermine faith?

Darts are meant to chip away at our faith. Discuss those things that chip away at faith.

How does living in a faith community assist in extinguishing the flaming darts that come against us?

Live It Out

Read – All

Ephesians 6:16

Discuss – Paul tells the church that we should wield the shield of faith, “In all circumstances. Are there any circumstances that are not included in the word “all”? Likewise, Paul says that the shield of faith can quench “all the flaming darts of the evil one.” Are there any flaming darts that are not include in “all the flaming darts”? What gives us the certainty to make such a claim?

The great assault on our faith is the flaming darts of lies and smoldering embers of doubt that you are not enough. God has given us all things through his Son, and our identity is firmly planted in Christ alone. May you rise up to claim his identity as your own. You are a child of God, beloved and set apart to advance God's Kingdom. To fight the lies of the devil and all his empty promises. Take courage as you walk in newness of life, a soldier, ready to stand your ground.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the armor of God the gift of your son, Jesus Christ. Help strengthen our faith, and keep us steadfast in your promises that build faith in us. Amen.

Something Extra

The Shields of Solomon

Read

1 Kings 10:14-17 – Solomon making showy shields

2 Samuel 8:3-7 – Idea to do this from (pagan king)

1 Kings 14:21-27 – Shields being taken away

Discuss

Monuments to human pride, these shields would not last long in Judah's possession, as Shishak king of Egypt would relieve Rehoboam of them not long after his father Solomon's death. In his pitiable pride, Rehoboam would replace them with shields of bronze, a much less lustrous, and far less valuable material (1 Kings 14:25-27).

- How might we contrast these ornamental shields with the metaphorical shield of God's protection?
- On the one hand, might the shields of Solomon – quite literal and fashioned from one of the most prized metals to humanity – represent the ineffectiveness of trusting in our own strength and glory?
- On the other hand, note the theme of Scripture, particularly the Psalm, wherein God is spoken of as our shield (cf. Psalm 3:3). Whereas golden shields by their very nature attract our gaze, the shield of God's protection is unseen.
- Which of them – Solomon's Golden Shields or the Shields of Psalms – offers the greater protection? Which of them is not subject to theft or being carted off as the spoils of war.