

Devotional for April 23, 2021 - Shield of Faith



Scripture:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious

joy, for you are receiving the goal of your *faith*, the salvation of your souls.” – 1

Peter 1: 3-9

Little Gabriela is five years old. Gabriela's two older brothers like to play with her and chase her. And though she likes playing with her brothers, she is really half-scared when they are chasing her. So her daddy tells her, "Gaby, you go get your brothers because Daddy is going to chase them with you." Gabriela gets a big smile of total confidence and then turns and chases her brothers with both confidence and vigor. Why confidence and vigor? She knows her daddy is right behind her.

The funny thing is, the boys don't notice Gabriela chasing them. They only see their big Dad going after them and *they* are now running half-scared. Gabriela doesn't think about this. She is just as excited as can be now that the tables are turned. She is the one doing the chasing and so is full of joy because *her daddy is with her*.

Isn't this exactly how it is with our Heavenly Father? When we take refuge in Him, we have full confidence to enter any battle knowing He is right there with us. He is the reason for our confidence and success. Even though we are the ones running to win, the battle belongs to Him. The

question becomes, in all circumstances, when we are facing any trial large or small, *Do we know who is our refuge and strength? Do we carry our shield of faith?*

Picture yourself in the heat of battle. The air is thick with flaming arrows dipped in pitch and set on fire. It's a life and death situation. How will you survive? Paul's answer is (Eph. 6:16), "In addition to all, take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." When the enemy attacks, believers are to trust in God and His sure promises to block and quench the flaming arrows.

The Bible tells us that the shield of faith enables us to quench the fiery darts of the enemy. Those darts are things like lies and temptations. Lies: You're not good enough. God doesn't care about you. You need to do more to earn your way to Heaven. Lies like that. Temptations: It's okay to do this if no one ever finds out. You can read any book you want, you can watch any show you want, you're an adult, you're free. Go ahead and spread that rumour – it could be true! Temptations like that.

When we notice that the enemy is getting us to doubt God in some area, we need to go to the Word of God and get God's truth on that matter.

We need to meditate on those scriptures in order to grow stronger in our faith.

Here are three things to remember.

1. We have an enemy.

There is an evil enemy that is seeking to destroy you. Satan is the evil one, a hideously malevolent power who is relentlessly opposed to God and to God's people. He is not just an impersonal force for evil in the world, but rather an intelligent, cunning personal evil spirit who commands an army of evil spirits at war against God, His holy angels, and His saints.

He shoots flaming arrows at us, like the temptations that are common to us all:

- It may be the temptation to pride and selfishness that we all battle every day.
- It may be lies about our relationship with God (you're not good enough... you call yourself a Christian?)

So, we have an enemy – but we also have protection.

2. The shield of faith is our protection.

To take up the shield of faith means actively trusting in the living God and His Word. THE SHIELD PROTECTS US AS WE TAKE REFUGE BEHIND IT.

Roman soldiers had large shields, about four feet high by two and a half feet wide, that they hid behind while advancing against the enemy. They were made of wood, covered with leather, and bound with iron.

The soldiers would stand shield to shield, forming a wall of protection against the enemy's flaming arrows. As long as they were behind their shields, they were protected. If they moved out from behind the shield, they could suffer painful or fatal wounds. One soldier reported having over 200 enemy arrows in his shield after an intense battle! So the shield was essential for survival!

We have an enemy, but we have protection and besides that - we are not alone.

3. Taking up the shield of faith implies that we are not in the fight alone.

As we just noted, a Roman army moved ahead by the soldiers putting their shields side by side, forming a wall of defense. While each soldier had to hold his own shield, the strength came by doing it with all the others.

So while each believer must take up the shield of faith individually, we do it together with others who are trusting God in the battle. You'll be stronger in the battle if you know that your brothers and sisters down the line are fending off the enemy's arrows by their shields. We must stand together and pray for one another, so that we can encourage one another in the fight of faith.

*A shield won't do much good if it's hangin' by your side,
Keep the shield of faith before you if you want to stay alive.*

Praying on the Armour, by Wendy Blight

Heavenly Father, today we pray on Your Armour.

- Father, gird us with the Belt of Truth. We believe that Your Word is truth, and it is that truth that sets us free. We choose to believe Your

truth and reject the lies of the evil one. We STAND centered and strong against his temptations, deception, schemes and accusations.

- Father, cover our hearts with the Breastplate of Righteousness. Thank You that Jesus defeated the power of sin and death at the cross, and it no longer has power over us. You have forgiven us of me of our sin and clothed us with Your righteousness. We STAND on that gift!
- Father, we put on the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace. Make me/us ready to march into any battle set before us. Fill us with Your peace. We choose to be an instrument of that peace, to always forgive and not harbour bitterness, anger and unforgiveness in our hearts. We STAND ready to live out and give an account for the faith we have in You today.
- Father, we hold up the Shield of Faith. We trust and believe Your Word that You are the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Great I AM. We trust You to meet all our needs. We reject the spirit of fear and we STAND in the spirit of Your power, love and a sound mind.

- Strengthen us with Your Helmet of Salvation. We are Your blood-bought daughters/sons, saved children of God. You have given us the Mind of Christ so that we can STAND against the culture and the lies of the evil one.
- Finally, we take up the Sword of the Spirit. We arm ourselves with Your Word. We hide Your Word in our hearts. We choose to believe Your truth over Satan's lies. We choose this day to STAND on Your living and active Word.
- Thank You, Father, for Your mighty weapons. Thank You that You have already won this battle. Thank You that we can do all things through Your Son, Jesus, who strengthens us. Today we surrender all battles to You.