

GROWING IN GRACE

“...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 (NIV)

THE SHIELD OF FAITH: HOW TO SURVIVE WHEN ATTACKED *Series: Dressing for Success: Standing Strong in an Evil Day (Part 5)*

R. Michael Oney, Ph.D.

Senior Pastor

November 6th, 2011

Ephesians 6:10-16 (NIV) 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breast-plate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

A. The focus of today’s message is on the shield of faith.

B. Note the fundamentals in this passage:

1. We are to be strong in the Lord.
2. We are to put on the armor that God provides in order to be both protected and effective.
3. We will struggle with demonic forces in this life.

Ephesians 6:16 (NIV) In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

C. Note 3 key truths in this verse:

1. Our attack is from “the evil one” which in the Greek is *ponēros*, and carries the idea that Satan is always in a malicious mode of operation, and never content to be evil in and of himself.
2. The arrows are lit on fire and designed to do great damage.
3. The shield of faith is a piece of the soldier’s equipment that is able to extinguish *all* the arrows that are thrown against us.

I. EMBRACING THE SHIELD OF FAITH MEANS THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT GOD WORKS THROUGH OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

- A. Sometimes God will deliver us *from* our circumstances, and often God will deliver us *through* our circumstances.

Romans 8:28 (NIV) And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose.

- B. One of the qualities of a seasoned believer is the ability to move from a battle season to a season of investment in others.

1 Thessalonians 2:2 (NIV) We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition.

II. EMBRACING THE SHIELD OF FAITH MEANS THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT GOD IS MORE THAN ENOUGH

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NIV) 7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- A. There is a secret that many do not understand about the grace of God: God's grace works best apart from natural ability.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV) 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

1. Weakness (astheneiais) in verse 9 literally means an inability to perform.
2. Sufficient (arkeō) in verse 9 literally means an ability that cannot fail.

- B. Know that God protects His power in the weaknesses of our lives, even when we don't understand the reason behind what has happened or is happening.

APPLICATION:

- A. The shield of faith is embraced in our lives by understanding:

1. God works through any and every circumstance that touches our lives.
2. When God is all I have, He is all that I need.