

DON'T IGNORE THE SHIELD OF FAITH

JAMIE MCNAB

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We have been looking at faith. THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. It is not an optional extra.

We saw that we are to FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH — which suggests that there are enemies. We looked at some of them — counterfeits — “look alikes” ... but they will let us down. FEELINGS — MENTAL ASSENT — DEAD FAITH — PRESUMPTUOUSNESS — TRADITION.

We will continue with the topic today. Let's look at an associated feature.

Ephesians 6:10-17

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. *(You need armour if you are in a battle)*

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. *(We are in a battle)*

13 Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Another description of a fight — warfare.

One of the key items — the SHIELD OF FAITH. “ABOVE ALL” — use the shield of faith.

We can quench or nullify the flaming spears or missiles of the devil.

If we don't have faith as a protective shield ... we're in danger. We've lost some key protection.

Flaming arrows such as ... doubt ... despondency ... presumptuousness ... self-pity ... walking by sight ... impatient — lots of arrows. ☺

We've mentioned the importance of knowing God's Word — accurately.

FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING AND HEARING — THE WORD OF GOD.

Satan's first temptation in the garden was: "Has God really said?" Casting doubt on the Word of God.

We do HAVE TO CHOOSE TO BELIEVE!

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

11 **"For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.**

12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'

13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'

14 **But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.**

15 **"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,**

16 **in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.**

17 **But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,**

18 **I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.**

19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

The Word is in your mouth and in your heart — 2 places.

YOU CHOOSE!!

- Faith over fear
- Belief over doubt
- Faith over physical senses

Romans 10:5-10

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.” (Choose)

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down from above)

7 or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

8 But what does it say? **“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach):**

9 that **if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

10 **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

Remember — the context was to choose! Choose to believe!

Romans 10:13-17

13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”

17 **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

Faith comes by hearing and hearing and hearing and hearing — THE WORD OF GOD.

It’s not necessarily a faith problem that we have — more of a Word problem!
If we are not hearing much Word — then it’s not much of a surprise if we don’t have much faith?

2 Corinthians 5:7

7 **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**

This is a deliberate choice — a decision. A decision not to go by sight. He chose to walk by faith — trusting God.

Hebrews 11:1

1 **Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

This is the definition of faith. The evidence of things not seen ... but real.

The tendency is for us to believe only what we can see or feel — or only what makes logical sense to our brains.

THE EYE OF FAITH sees more! Things not seen — yet provided for in the Word.

FAITH IS ALWAYS BASED ON THE WORD.

George Mueller: “Faith is the assurance that the things which God said in His Word are true! And that God will act according to what He has said in His Word. This assurance, this reliance on God’s Word, this confidence, is FAITH!”

A common saying is” “Seeing is believing”. That is not always valid!

John 20:19-20

19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, **Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”**

20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

John 20:24-25

24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 **The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”**

So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

Quite a statement — “I don’t believe you!”

John 20:26-29

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, **“Peace to you!”**

27 Then He said to Thomas, **“Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”**

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Thomas said: “Unless I see!” Jesus reprimanded him.

We shouldn’t be sceptical — slow to believe the Word of God — always demanding hard evidence.

(Thomas had heard Jesus’ prophecies many times).

Luke 24:13-27

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 **So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.**

16 **But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.**

17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "**The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet** mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

25 **Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

27 **And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**

We ought to be quick to believe. It may mean a deliberate choice — walk by sight — or believe the Word?

Romans 4:16

16 **Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham,** who is the father of us all.

Romans 4:18-21

18 **who, contrary to hope, in hope believed,** so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."

19 **And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.**

20 **He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith,** giving glory to God,

21 **and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.**

Abraham considered not his own body — the physical circumstances — what he can see.

He did not waver (KJV: staggered not). Greek: DIAKRINO ... to separate ... to judge ... to decide — not to be in two minds. CHOOSE!

James 1:5-8

5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**

6 **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.**

7 **For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;**

8 **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

Verse 6: Doubts = “wavering” in the KJV = DIAKRINO. Not in two minds. No flip-flopping.

CHOOSE! TO BELIEVE!

1 John 5:14-15

14 **Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.**

15 **And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.**

We know we have ... even though we may not see.

FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE — CONFIDENCE.

How do we know God's will? He wrote it in the Bible! Hence the need to spend good time in the Word.

Five minutes a day won't cut it. George Müller used to read the Bible through 4 times per year.

(Incidentally ... Mr Müller stated emphatically that he did not have “the gift” of faith — as per 1 Corinthians 12. He just had “ordinary” faith — like you and I can).

1 John 5:1-5

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

2 **By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.**

3 **For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

4 **For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.**

5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

We are to overcome the world — by our faith. It gives us the victory.

We are not supposed to be losers — tossed around by worldly circumstances. We've read the end of the Book — we win!

If we don't live by faith ... we are likely to miss out on many potential blessings.

Mark 6:1-6

1 Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him.

2 **And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!**

3 **Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they were offended at Him.**

4 But Jesus said to them, **“A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.”**

5 **Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.**

6 **And He marveled because of their unbelief.** Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

It was Jesus' will to heal — to do great things — to do mighty works! But He could not because of their unbelief.

Unbelief can stop God's will!

Matthew 21:18-22

18 **Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry.**

19 **And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again."** Immediately the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

21 **So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.**

22 **And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."**

Faith ... don't doubt. Whatever things — all things — you will receive if you ask in prayer — believing.

One of the fiery darts is doubt — "Has God really said?"

Doubt will nullify our faith.

So ... we need the shield of faith. Choosing to believe the Word ... "considering not" our surroundings.

We're always in battle. We need the shield every day. The devil's never "on holiday."

Hebrews 10:35-39

35 **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.**

36 **For you have need of endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37 "For yet a little while,

And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

38 **Now the just shall live by faith;**

But if anyone draws back,

My soul has no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, **but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**

LIVE BY FAITH — A WAY OF LIFE.

We have to be alert to the danger of living merely by sight. It may be natural — but it's not sufficient!

Our shield of faith is important. And so is God's Word. Faith cometh by hearing.

So no escaping the importance of getting deep into God's Word.

George Müller read the bible 4 times per year. He was known as an Apostle of Faith.

How are we doing? And what are we going to do about it? And when are we going to start?