

**Hurst Green**

**16<sup>th</sup> Sep 2018**

**Eph 6 16**

**The shield of faith**

***Ephesians 6:16 (ANIV)***

<sup>16</sup> *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

Well that's it then. We have the shield of faith – this defeats all the attempts by the devil.

We cannot be touched – we have the victory.

There is nothing too big the shield of faith cannot defeat it.

There is no niggler too small that the shield of faith cannot defeat it.

So why is life not like that?

Well the simple reason is that we do not believe God.

We do not believe this scripture.

We decide the shield cannot work in whatever situation we are facing and lo and behold it does not work.

We let the devil in – we see the devil as bigger than God and so we let him defeat us.

Stupid really but that is what we do.

We have the victory and we give away the battle.

Give away enough battles and the victory does not seem very real and the devil gradually gets us back into our box of sin and slavery and the awesome reality of our salvation and the power of God in our lives becomes nothing and we are no different to the world.

After twelve years standing here expounding scriptures to encourage and teach you let me give you one message.

If you only ever remember one sermon, one message, make it this one.

If you will take what I am about to say and make it a reality in your life then your life will be transformed and you will walk as a victorious Christian able to see the victory and live the life Christ designed for you.

As it says in Timothy

***2 Timothy 2:22 (ANIV)***

<sup>22</sup> *Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

Pursue faith – active words again – this message is not for you if you want to sit back and try to have a lazy Christianity that means you do not have to do anything – you do not have to be a Christian you can just blend in

That is not what we see in the bible – it is not what we see where we see God at work. There we see Christians getting up and being Christians by believing God.

We see them calling on the Lord out of a pure hearts

This is not difficult because again we do to have to purify our hearts – God does that.

We have to guard it for from it springs life itself But God purifies us.

We have to pursue faith – I cannot count the number of times I have pointed out to you the active words that surround our faith.

There is active that comes from the fact that our faith should be touching lives as James tells us

**James 2:20 (ANIV)**

<sup>20</sup> *You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?*

But there is also active in our faith and many aspects of that are in the bible: draw near to God; pursue faith; self-control; be holy; Love the brotherhood; humble yourself and many others.

And then believing Philippians

**Philippians 3:9 (ANIV)**

<sup>9</sup> *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

That word faith comes up and here it is having faith that God has made us righteous.

This is another area we defeat ourselves by not simply believing what God is telling us.

Come on Church – if God is telling us something why will you not believe it? Why would you prefer to listen to the devil telling you how downtrodden you are rather than listening to God tell you that you are his son whom he loves and on whom is lavishing his presents and presence.

As Philippians says – *be found in him*

I know which one I like and I know which one is true and I know which one I want to walk in for the rest of my life.

So let us look at this shield and see where our problems come from and defeat those problems this morning so that you can lift your head and walk in the victory that God has given you.

**Ephesians 6:16 (ANIV)**

<sup>16</sup> *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

## **In addition**

Now note that the shield is in addition to all the other armour – we cannot simply take the shield because we need to have girded ourselves with the truth, righteousness, salvation and to carry the sword.

It seems obvious but it needs to be real

This is an area we do not claim our full victory. We tend to cherry pick and decide which bits we will pick up and when and then we are surprised when the devil sneaks around and hits us where we are not prepared.

That leads us into that downward cycle that the evil one wants us to believe in.

Well he got me there – therefore I am vulnerable and all this does not work the way it says on the tin.

Then we get hit again and we head off to join the church of “The we are not able” rather than sticking with what God has told us – **we are well able**. We are the Church of the well able because we are the Church that moves protected by the power of God and moving in that love and power.

We need to be full gospel Christians – taking up all that God has said and promised so that we are rounded Characters knowing we have the victory and that **ALL** the flaming arrows of the evil one not will be defeated but have already been defeated.

We must stop allowing the devil into part of our lives – that is not the Christianity we should be living.

Our entire lives are to be lived under God’s rule because we have decided to believe in him and we have the victory – not will have but we have the victory.

Wherever we go the Kingdom of God touches earth and great things happen.

Do you believe that?

Do you want to believe it?

Do you want it to be a reality in your life?

If you do this verse and this message is for you and should change you forever!

## **Take up**

Now this is the crunch – this whole shield things starts with us having to do something – we have to take up this shield.

And this is where our beliefs have to meet reality.

What we tend to do is view this shield not as one all-purpose shield but we see a row of shields each able to do part of the job.

And over there at the end of the line is that big shield – you know the one; the one this verse talks about that can do it all.

Now we defeat ourselves again.

We don't believe we can manage that shield.

That shield is for the super heroes of our faith. The Billy Grahams, those at the Kings Arms in Bedford, you know the leaders of those churches where we actual see some small miracles such as healing.

So we are offered the big shield – the one that will extinguish all the arrows but we decide we cannot cope with that and so we go for a smaller one – one we feel we can manage and we wonder why some of the arrows get round it and strike home.

But perhaps with training and more time we might manage a bigger shield but we are not ready yet – we are the Church of the not able – we are not able to manage those big shields and so we cannot apply this in our life.

That diminishes our confidence and tomorrow we pick up an even smaller shield and we have another downward spiral.

Why will we not believe what God has told us?

Why will we not believe his promises?

He has offered us a shield that can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one and we turn down the offer!

We are bears of very little brain.

And it comes down to this next word -

## **Faith**

Now this is an easy one that we make difficult

Hebrews tells us what faith is

### ***Hebrews 11:1 (ANIV)***

<sup>1</sup> *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

Faith is that belief that what you have been told and what you have experienced are true.

You cannot prove it; you cannot show it to someone but you believe it. You are sure of our hope in heaven and absolutely convinced it is true. That is faith.

Now faith links with the shield

### ***1 Peter 1:5 (ANIV)***

<sup>5</sup> *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.*

That faith of yours, that shield of faith means that you are shielded by God's power.

Now think about what that means for your faith.

By your faith you are shielded by the **most powerful** being in the universe and his power is able to overcome all the schemes of the evil one for he has already won the victory through the cross.

The evil one is defeated and is trying to take down as many as he can but he knows he cannot win.

The trouble is – do we know he cannot win?

Do we have faith that the victory lies with our God? Sure and certain faith!

Or do we have nagging doubts – if we do why?

Well all too often it is because we sign up to the church of the “we are not worthy”.

Well let me tell you – you are not worthy but God doesn’t mind.

To him you, personally, individually are the most precious thing in the universe.

He wants to cradle you in his arms and tell you how much he loves you. He wants to be the father you need in your life.

He wants to shield you through his power until the coming of the salvation that will be complete on that last day.

He wants the kingdom of God to touch earth through you.

He wants you to pick up the shield of faith because faith does not come in sizes.

Remember faith like a mustard seed!

Faith is the original one size fits all

So it comes back down to that simple question – who do we want to believe – God or the evil one?

Believe one and you are all powerful simply because God chooses to put his power in you; choose the other and you are all weak because the power has been drained from you.

## **Extinguish**

And having that power drained from you is a pity because it turns you from super hero to super zero all because you will not believe God and what he has promised

It is not about how super charged you are; how many hours prayer you put in each day; how many verses you can quote from the bible; how many difficult questions you can answer.

It is all about faith and picking up the shield of faith because it extinguishes all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

We could spend weeks talking about faith but all that will ever give us is a head knowledge of the subject and God wants a heart knowledge because faith cannot be proved except in action.

Faith in action obeys the commands of God and shows his love in the world for it is there that heaven touches earth.

Faith extinguishes **all** the arrows.

Note it does not just reduce them; it does not change the effect; it does not make it more bearable.

It extinguishes them; puts them out completely; it is as if they had never been.

Many things come from faith and the bible has many verses about what faith will develop in you but it can do all these things because the flaming arrows have been extinguished.

How much do you want the annoying and troubling flaming arrows of the evil removed from your life – pick up the shield of faith and use it in addition to the whole armour of God.

And finally note and remember; write on your heart; inscribe it on your fridge do whatever you have to do ensure that you remember that word

## **All**

This is where the evil one is back trying to get you to choose the smaller shields and so lay yourself open.

The shield of faith extinguishes all the flaming arrows.

There is not one that can get through the shield of faith.

This does not mean that life will be a walk in the park and we are told we will still suffer for our faith but we will not be subject to the continual barrage of flaming arrows.

And we have to be on our guard

### ***1 Timothy 4:1 (ANIV)***

*<sup>1</sup> The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.*

They do not abandon a church; a community; a way of life. They go deeper than that and they abandon their faith. Elsewhere it warns us that they will maintain the outward appearance of godliness while only accepting teaching they like

There will be some who lay down that deepest protection and lay down the shield of faith and follow spirits and demons.

Please, please, please do not go down that road.

Take up your shield of faith and use it every day; all day for your own good and the good of all of those around you.

Many of you have people you need to set the example to – they need to see your shield of faith at work and need to ask you about it.

How will they ever see it if you have left it in a storeroom somewhere?

The shield works best when it is in use. It can look pretty up against the wall but it is much better when it is scarred and battleworn for then it has been doing its job and allowing you to do yours.

Are you prepared to change your life and take up this message? To stop believing the evil one and turn instead to the one perfect and all powerful God who is calling you to take up the armour.

To take up the shield and accept his protection so that you can be even more effective in the world?

Think on these things!!