

THE FIFTH PART OF THE MESSAGE ON THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR:

1. **BELT OF TRUTH (Eph. 6:14)**—Put on the belt of truth (*aletheia*) to stand against the schemes of the devil
2. **BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Eph. 6:14)**—Put on the breastplate of righteousness to stand against the schemes of the devil
3. **SHOES FOR YOUR FEET, HAVING PUT ON THE READINESS GIVEN BY THE GOSPEL OF PEACE (Eph. 6:15)**—Put on the gospel of peace to stand against the schemes of the devil
4. **THE SHIELD OF FAITH (Eph. 6:16)**—"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one"—Put on the shield of faith to stand against the schemes of the devil
 - ❖ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [NIV]
 - ❖ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. [NLT]

A. WHAT IS FAITH?

John Paton (1824-1907), Scottish Christian missionary for 49 years to the former cannibals in the South Sea Islands. He was translating the Bible for a South Seas Island tribe, he discovered that they had no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary's house, collapsed in a large chair and said, "It's good to rest my whole weight on this chair." "That's it," said Paton. "I'll translate faith as 'resting one's whole weight on God.'"

B. THE POWER OF FAITH IN GOD

- ❖ **John 7:38**, "Whoever **believes in me (present continuous tense)**, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"

- ❖ **Mark 11:24**, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, **believe** that you have received it, and it will be yours."
- ❖ **Mark 4:40**, He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? **Have you still no faith?**"
- ❖ **John 11:40**, Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that **if you believed** you would see the glory of God."
- ❖ **Mark 9:23**, And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible for one **who believes.**"
- ❖ **Luke 8:50**, "Do not fear; **only believe.**"
- ❖ **Matthew 17:20**, He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, **if you have faith** like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you."
- ❖ **Romans 1:17**, "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith (start to finish), as it is written, "The righteous shall live **by faith.**"
- ❖ **Hebrews 10:37-39**, For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall **live by faith**, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those **who have faith** and preserve their souls.
- ❖ **Hebrews 11:1, 6**, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.....And **without faith** it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God **must believe** that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."
- ❖ **Hebrews 11:17-19**, By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." **He considered (had faith) that God was able even to raise him from the dead**, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

- ❖ **Romans 4:20-21**, "No unbelief made him (Abraham) waver concerning the promise of God, but he **grew strong in his faith** as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had."
- ❖ **Romans 14:23**, For whatever does not proceed **from faith** is sin.
- ❖ **Psalms 9:9-10**, "The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know your name **put their trust in you**, for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you."
- ❖ **Psalms 147:10-11**, "His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man, but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those **who hope** in his steadfast love."

C. THE DEVIL'S PRIMARY TARGET

- ❖ **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** [OFFENSE].

John MacArthur: In New Testament times the tips of arrows would often be wrapped in pieces of cloth that had been soaked in pitch. Just before the arrow was shot, the tip would be lighted and the flaming missile would be shot at the enemy troops. The pitch burned fiercely, and on impact it would spatter burning bits for several feet, igniting anything flammable it touched. In addition to piercing their bodies, it could inflict serious burns on enemy soldiers and destroy their clothing and gear.

Note: The devil's primary target is to ruin your FAITH IN GOD by sowing seeds of doubt, flippancy, discouragement, anxiety, and fear.

- ❖ **Genesis 3:1**, He said to the woman, "**Did God actually say**, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"... **Genesis 3:4**, But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die..."

Note: If the devil can tempt a believer to doubt God's Word and His goodness, he has won the victory over him.

Flaming darts of the enemy:

- Questioning the authority of God's Word

- Self-condemnation
- Doubting God’s love and goodness during loss
- Diluting the consequences of sin (sexual immorality is okay)
- Fear in challenging times (providence, security, loss, consequences, death)
- Making critical and bitter towards people, isolating you from the community of God

The Divine Testimony:

- ❖ **Deuteronomy 32:4**, “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.”
- ❖ **Proverbs 30:5**, “Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”

D. CONQUERING THE DEVIL’S ASSAULTS BY FAITH

John MacArthur: The most reliable protection against such flaming missiles was the *thureos* shield, whose covering of metal or leather soaked in water would either deflect or extinguish them.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (The Christian Soldier [Baker], p. 305) says, “Faith here means the ability to apply quickly what we believe so as to repel everything the devil does or attempts to do to us.”

- ❖ **Ephesians 6:14-15**, Stand therefore, having **fastened** on the belt of truth, and having **put on** the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having **put on** the readiness given by the gospel of peace.
- ❖ **Ephesians 6:16**, In all circumstances **take up (ACTIVE DEFENSE)** the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

“In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith”—You cannot live your Christian life without faith even for a moment. You lose faith, you lose the breadth of Christian life. The devil is on work 24/7. And you must put the armor of God 24/7.

- ❖ **I Peter 5:8-9**, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **Resist him, firm in your faith...**”
- ❖ **Ephesians 6:16**, In all circumstances **take up** the shield of faith [DEFENSE], with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one [OFFENSE];

NOTE: Without shield faith, it is impossible to overcome the attacks of the enemy. To take up the shield of faith is to trust in God and in His Word against all the lying temptations of the devil.

Lynn H. Cohick: Without the shield, the soldier stands defenseless against the enemy, and it is only a matter of time before a second or third blow fells him. To drop the shield is to lose the battle. Thus, Paul enjoins believers to stand fast and to keep hold of their shields.

The Pilgrim's Progress is a 1678 Christian allegory written by John Bunyan. The story is all about how a Christian flees from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.

“But it didn’t take long for Christian to be hard pressed, in this Valley of Humiliation. He had only gone a little way before he spotted a foul monster coming across the field to meet him. The monster’s name was Apollyon, which means “destroyer.” Fear filled Christian. His mind raced trying to figure out what to do. Should he go back or stand his ground? As he considered his options he thought about retreating, but he had no armor for his back. If he ran away and turned his back to the monster it might give his foe a greater advantage, making it easier to pierce him with his darts.

So Christian determined to stand his ground and risk confrontation with the enemy. He was out of time, and it was the best thing to do. So he continued on and Apollyon met him. The monster was hideous and clothed with scales like a fish. They were his pride. He also had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly spewed fire and smoke, and his mouth was like the mouth of a lion.

When he came up to Christian, he eyed him with disdain and began to question him. The monster asked, “Where did you come from, and where are you going?” Christian swallowed his fear and said, “I have come from the City of Destruction, which is the place of all evil, and I am going to the city of Zion.”

Then that means you are one of my subjects, for all that country is mine. You see, I am its prince and god.” Apollyon’s eyes narrowed. “So how is it, then, that you have run away from your king? If it wasn’t for my plans for you to serve me more, I would strike you to the ground with one smashing blow right now for such an act.”

Christian stood his ground. “I was indeed born in your dominion, but your service was hard and your wages such as a man cannot live on, for the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). So when I reached adulthood, I did what thoughtful people do; I looked for a way that I might perhaps improve myself.”

Apollyon looked down on Christian with eyes hooded with pride. “No prince worthy of his title releases his subjects easily, and I am no different. I am not ready to let you loose as yet; but since you have complained about your service and wages, let me encourage you to go back home. I personally promise that what our country can afford I will give you.”

Christian shook his head. “I can’t do that. You see, I have already yielded myself to another – even to the King of princes. How can I in all fairness go back with you?”

One side of Apollyon’s thin upper lip curled. “You have done exactly as the proverb says, ‘exchanged a bad for a worse.’ However, it is quite common for those who have professed themselves to be His servants to give Him the slip after a while and return to me. Do this and I promise all will be well.”

Christian stood his ground. “I have given Him my faith and sworn my allegiance to Him. How can I possibly go back on my word and not be hanged as a traitor?”

“Think about it. You did the same to me and yet I am willing to forget about it, if you will turn again and go back to Destruction,” Apollyon responded.

Christian raised his palm toward the monster. “No. What I promised to you happened when I was but an immature youth. Besides that, I regard the Prince, under whose banner I now stand, to be the One able to absolve me of your charges.” He let his hand drop and looked Apollyon directly in the eye. “And yes, He is also able to pardon the things I did in service to you. Besides that, oh destroying Apollyon, to tell you the truth, I like His service, His wages, His servants, His government, His company and country better than yours. So stop trying to change my mind. I am the Lord’s servant, and I have made up my mind to follow Him.”

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Apollyon broke into a furious rage, saying, “I am an enemy to this Prince! I hate His person, His laws, and His people.” He spit the words as if they left a bad taste in his mouth. “I have come out here to purposely oppose you.”

Christian did not back away. He said, “Apollyon, be careful of what you are doing, for I am on the King’s highway, the way of holiness. So watch yourself.”

Apollyon defiantly straddled the entire width of the way blocking Christian’s way. “I am not afraid in this,” the monster hissed. “Prepare to die; for I swear by my infernal den that you will go no further, for here will I spill your soul.” Without warning he hurled a flaming dart at Christian’s breast, but Christian lifted the shield in his hand and deflected it and so avoided the danger.

❖ **Ephesians 6:16**, In all circumstances **take up** the shield of faith [DEFENSE], with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one [OFFENSE];

Sixth part of the Sermon continued next week... (pray, prepare, prevail)