The Shield of Faith

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Date: 23 April 2023

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang. Thank you for joining us.!

Good evening, church family. Like John said, my name is Jamie Plinsky.! And tonight, Joey asked me just to share a little bit about what I've been learning right now in my own life.
And so, the first thing that I thought of when he asked me was just the story of Gideon. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the story, but we start in Judges 6, and Gideon is one of the judges that God appoints for Israel at a time whenever they had no leader and they were all just doing whatever was right in their own eyes.
And the Lord comes to him and says, The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor. And he's like, Who are you talking about? Because he was of the least tribe of Israel.
He was the least in his father's clan. He had no qualifications whatsoever to be a leader for the people. But the Lord chose him. And he was very hesitant, very unwilling.
[1:23] And yet, he still was chosen. And the Lord used him. He had an army of only 300 men to go out against the Midianites. And the Lord gave him the victory. And so, I always love that story because it shows that even in our weakness, God chose his strength.

And even, like Paul writes, that my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness. And so, something that I've just been learning in my life is that even in my weakness, the Lord is strong.
And like 1 Corinthians 1 says, that God uses what is weak in the world to shame the wise. And I just love that reminder of how God uses what is very unexpected, what is very weak and lowly, to do his great work so that he gets all the glory.
And we can't take any credit for that. So, that's just what I've been learning. I wanted to close with a hymn that I just recently found. I'm not going to sing it for you.
I'm sorry. It's called, I Ask the Lord That I Might Grow. And it's by John Newton, who also wrote Amazing Grace. It says, I ask the Lord that I might grow in faith and love and every grace.
[2:35] Might more of his salvation know and seek more earnestly his face. T'was he who taught me thus to pray, and he I trust has answered prayer. But it has been in such a way as almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour, at once he'd answer my request. And by his love's constraining power, subdue my sins and give me rest. Instead of this, he made me feel the hidden evils of my heart, and let the angry powers of hell assault my soul in every part.
Yea, more with his own hand he seemed, intent to aggravate my woe, crossed all the fair designs I schemed, humbled my heart, and laid me low. Lord, why is this? I trembling cried.
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death? Tis in this way the Lord replied. I answer prayer for grace and faith. These inward trials I employ from self and pride to set thee free, and break thy schemes of earthly joy, that thou mayest find that all in me.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I was really hoping you were going to break out into song.
[3:45] I thought that was going to be really cool. If you don't know that hymn, make a note of this and go home and look it up on YouTube tonight. Just type in, I ask the Lord that I might grow.

And you can type in, Together for the Gospel, or you can type in Bob Coughlin, K-A-U-F-L-I-N. Just a really beautiful arrangement of that old hymn.
It'll bless your heart. It'll become a song that you listen to and are encouraged by. I ask the Lord that I might grow and type that in, and T4G or Bob Coughlin, you'll see a great, great arrangement of that.

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It's good to see you back. I've been so thrilled with how many people are coming back to end the Lord's Day and evening worship. So good to have you here. I don't really know if I'm coming or going.
After preaching twice this afternoon, I just finished an hour-long meeting with our Institute Interest Meeting. And I came straight in here. And it's been such a whirlwind of a weekend after the banquet last night and all the things with church today.
[4:53] Our interest meeting, we had 43 men in there from young teenager, other teenagers. Then we had 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, all represented in our interest meeting.

So the Lord is continuing to work. The deadline to sign up for that is a week from tomorrow, May 1st. And so we'll know in about nine days how many people are enrolling.
But we had a really large group there again. You know, you keep kind of wondering every year, have we tapped out? Have we kind of hit everybody that's there? But the Lord's adding so many new people to our church right now.
There's just so many more people to teach and to train. And so it appears that we're going to have another really strong group. We just graduated 27. If we have more than that, this has been our largest class between that and our year one guys.
If we have more than 27 enrolled, they'll join with 51 year two guys. And so we will once again next year or next month have the biggest overall group that we've had.
[6:00] So the work just continues. And it's not a runaway train, but it's moving fast. And so we're doing our best to keep up and thrilled to get to be a part of it.

I'm excited, ladies, for a week from Tuesday. Our next Ladies Night of Theology. I hope that you've got that written down and plan to be here. I hope that you've got that written down and plan to be here. Bring some people with you.
Pray for me as I prepare for that. And tell our ladies this, and I mean it. It's probably the most challenging thing I ever do is teach those nights. For one, it's two straight hours, so just the amount of preparation is a lot.
It's also two hours teaching 400-some-odd ladies that are really hungry and wanting to learn and expecting something good. And so it is a lot of work.
But I'm very excited about it, and so you can be in prayer, if you would, for me as I prepare for that. In two weeks, I'm going to be speaking at a Puritan conference on a Friday and Saturday.
[7:03] So if the Lord brings that to your heart, I would appreciate that. I'll be working this week on trying to get that message wrapped up. I'm going to be speaking on the Puritans and suffering, so I'm working on that.

So lots of great things that's going on that the Lord's allowing us to do. And chief among them is gathering here each Lord's Day in the morning and the evening with God's people.
Today was such a great day as we honored and recognized our graduates. And then just in the Lord's sweet providence to be looking at the text that we looked at that reminds us of the high demands of the gospel.
Our salvation is free. We don't contribute to it. It's all of the Lord. And then in His grace, as He saves us, we offer everything and leave it all to follow Him.
And so I hope that was an encouragement to you today. I'm grateful the Lord had us in that text on our graduation. Let me again say thank you to our students who are here. It's so good to look at and see so many teenagers here on a Sunday night.
[8:12] It's a joy to see you guys here. I'm so thankful for you. Let's go to Ephesians 6 and look at the shield of faith. Verse 10, Ephesians 6 says, It says, That's where we left off last week.

We add another layer tonight. Verse 16, In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.
In the Old Testament, the people of God knew God as their shield. Let me just give you a couple of verses to get that in your minds. Genesis 15, verse 1.
After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision. Fear not, Abram, I am your shield. Psalm 3, 3.
But you, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory and the lifter of my head. Psalm 119, 114, You are my hiding place and my shield.
[10:11] I hope in your word. So in the Old Testament, the people of God saw the Lord as their shield. His promises, His word, His glory was the shield that would protect them.

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They would run to Him, seek refuge in His name, and He was a shield for His people. In the New Testament, the promises of God are revealed to us in the person of Jesus Christ.
He's the revelation that the Old Testament's been pointing to. And so we have a verse like Hebrews 11, 1 that says, Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen.
So in the Old Testament, it was the Lord that was the shield of His people. In the New Testament, it's the person of Christ revealed to us that is the very embodiment of the Lord.
As Colossians says, In Him dwells the Godhead bodily. So we're saved by grace through faith, and our faith in Jesus becomes our shield for the attacks against the evil one.
[11:35] So in the Old Testament, they looked to the Lord as their shield in His promises. In the New Testament, those promises have come to pass in the person of Christ.

And so today, we can say that in Christ, we have the promise of God revealed to us. We trust in Him, and He is our refuge.
Faith, as one man put it, is the means by which we flee to God for our refuge. We run to God through our faith, and He is the shield about us.
So as we've been doing with each of these pieces of armor, let's ask some questions this evening. We'll start where we've always been starting in this series, and that is going back to try to understand what was in Paul's mind when he wrote this, and what would his readers have understood 2,000 years ago.
So here's the first question. What was the shield Paul had in mind? It's important because we want to understand the metaphor. In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith.
[12:50] What's the shield he had in mind? Well, there's a couple of different words that Paul could have used that would be translated for us in English as a shield. There were really two primary shields.

There were a few different variations, but primarily two kinds of shields that were used. One was a small shield. It would have a couple of straps that would go around your forearm.
It would be about two feet in diameter, and they would hold that shield up just around their forearm. You may have seen some pictures of that depicted before.
It's a small shield. It's about two feet, and it's fairly light. You hold it up with one arm, and if someone, for example, were pretty close to you and hurling a rock at you, you would just move your arm and get that two-foot shield in front of you.
That's not the word that he uses here. That's one kind of shield. That's not the shield that he talks about here. It's a different word. Lurios speaks of the larger shield.
[14:06] Quite a bit of a larger shield. It would be as big as four feet long by two and a half feet wide. So picture more of a rectangular shield.

That's the word that he uses here. That's about four feet high and about two and a half feet wide in a rectangle. And the image in your mind should be that of a door.
In fact, our word for door comes from the root of this word. So when he says, in all circumstances, take up the shield of faith, it's not the small little round shield that you would hold with your forearm. It's this big shield, four foot, two and a half feet wide. It would be made up of wood. It would be wrapped around the side.
It would be covered in linen and animal hide. It would then be trimmed with iron and metal. In the middle of it would be this iron ornament.
[15:14] It would be on the outside in the middle of this large shield. And what it was designed to do was absorb the blows of whatever came its way. A large stone being hurled, an arrow being hurled against the soldier there.

The ornament on the outside, this piece of iron would, if you held it correctly, you would absorb that flaming arrow that would come at you. And what the soldiers would do is they would march together in an organized fashion.
And so you would have this big group of soldiers marching essentially in columns called a phylaxis. And what you would do is those that were in the front of the line, they would have this large shield that Paul refers to.
And what you would do is you would take it and you would plant it into the ground. And it would protect the front of the soldier. It would wrap around them. And they were also made to connect together, to stand side by side with other soldiers.

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So if I'm in the front row and we've got all these soldiers behind me, all of us in the front row take this large shield Paul refers to, we put it down, we link them together, and it becomes this impenetrable wall.
[16:34] So the purpose is we're trying to advance and get to a certain spot. We're trying to get our enemy to retreat.

And so they're hurling things at us. And so we march in these columns, in these rows. We set up these four foot by two and a half foot shields, put them together. You get this wall and we absorb all of their ammunition.
And then we pick them up, we move forward, and we advance. And we set up our wall and we absorb their ammunition and we push them back and we advance.
That's the kind of shield he's talking about here. And what would happen is while you set up this wall, they're shooting their arrows at you. And the purpose, the design of this shield is to be able to absorb those arrows.
One historian said it this way, During battles, these great shields would bristle with smoking arrows like roasted porcupines. That's how the shield would work.
[17:42] So why does Paul use this metaphor? Why the shield of faith? Well, let's ask a second question. What is the Christian's shield?

Well, our shield is our faith in Christ. It's abandoning ourself to trust in Jesus. It is taking what we believe about Christ and living it out and applying it in everyday situations of our life.
It's taking what we declare to be true and in our daily normal life, hiding behind that shield.
Letting the shield of the promises of God, of our faith in Christ, protect us against the darts of the evil one. We activate our shield as we trust in the promises of God.
That was true in the Old Testament. That was true in the New Testament. That's true in our day today. Hebrews 11.6 says, Without faith, it is impossible to please Him.
[18:56] We please God by having faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. And as we live out our faith, we are taking up our shield.

Let me show you something interesting. In the Old Testament, they trusted in the promises of God by living by faith.
Make note of Habakkuk 2.4. Behold, His soul is puffed up. It is not upright within Him, but the righteous shall live by His faith.
That's Habakkuk. That's Old Testament. It's not as if the Bible tells us you are saved by the law-keeping in the Old Testament and saved by grace through faith in the New Testament.
You've always been saved by faith. It's always been about grace. And Habakkuk reminds us in the Old Testament that the righteous will live by His faith.
[20:05] We live. We don't retreat. We don't live in trepidation. We don't build bunkers and hide underneath them.

We live. The world's dark, but we live. The world's hard, but we live. And we live by our faith.
In Habakkuk's day, it was by trusting in the promise of God, looking forward by faith to the Redeemer who was promised to come. In the New Testament, after Christ has come, they still lived by faith, but they lived by faith not in the promise that was to come, in the promise that had already been revealed in Christ.
So, in Romans chapter 1, it says, in the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.
Where did Paul get that? Habakkuk. The idea of living by faith is very Pauline. It's very New Testament, but it comes from quoting the Old Testament.
[21:19] Because the people of God have always sought their refuge in God through faith. So, if you read Galatians or Romans or Habakkuk, you will come across this statement that the righteous will live by faith.

By trusting daily in the promise of God. In Habakkuk's day, it was looking forward to the Redeemer promised.
In the New Testament, it's looking back at Christ who has come. In our day today, we are looking back at the cross, and that's where we have our hope and our faith, but we're also looking forward to another promise, namely, that He will come again.
How do you know He will come again? Because He kept His word the first time. So, the Old Testament, they sought God as a refuge by faith. New Testament, they sought God as a refuge in

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Christ by faith.
Today, in the church age, we seek God as our refuge by our faith in Christ, who has already come to pay our sin. And Hebrews 9, 27, is coming again.
[22:35] And we eagerly look forward to His return. He's coming again, not to bring salvation. That's already been accomplished at that point. But to bring judgment on those who have not believed.

But for those who are in Christ, we are more than conquerors with no condemnation we dread. So, it's our faith in the promise of God in which we find our refuge.
And our shield of faith is when you daily apply what you believe about Christ to your life.
So, you take all the promises that are there for you, and you believe them. And you live by them. And you hope in them. And in so doing, you take up your shield of faith. Which brings us to a third question.
[23:38] What does the shield of faith do? What does the shield of faith do? Let me give you two answers. One, it protects us.

Go back to the text again in verse 16. In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.
It protects us. Here's the metaphor that's in Paul's mind. Enemy soldiers, they're going into battle. What they would do in that day is take the tips of their arrows, and they would wrap those arrows in cloth.
They had previously been soaked in pitch. And what they would do then is before they would shoot that arrow, they would light it.
So, what you literally would have is a flaming arrow, a flaming dart being hurled at you. Without a shield, if that dart hits you, you die.
[24:44] But it's not just that. Even if it were to miss you, it's been lit. It's on fire. So, it may miss you, but it lands somewhere nearby.

It's been lit. And it sparks. And now you have a fire. And if the dart didn't kill you, the fire just might. Might. What you would do with the shield then is you would take this shield and put it up in front of you to absorb that flaming dart.
Before they would go out for battle, they would soak the outside of that and the animal hide in water. So, when the flaming dart hit the shield, it would protect them from the arrow and it would extinguish the fire that had been lit.
So, the shield would protect them against the flaming darts. Literally. He uses that metaphor to say by picking up the shield of faith, namely, believing and acting out on the promises of God, that by doing that, we are protected ourselves.
But there's a second thing that the shield of faith does. It not only protects you, it protects others. This is critically important to understand Paul's emphasis here.
[26:09] What you would do, as I mentioned a moment ago, is in Paul's day, you would have all of these soldiers at the front of the army, and not just the front, there would be some in the back as well, but all in the front, for sure, would have these large, four foot tall by two and a half foot wide doors, basically, is what they would look like.

It's a shield. And so, when that flaming dart came by them, it would not only protect them, it would protect those around them. Because, if I'm protected by my shield, it may miss me, or it may deflect it.
But if it deflects it, and it's still alive, and it burns, it may hit the person beside me. So what you've got to do is have a wall of these, essentially, fireproof shields.
That's how you kept your fellow soldiers safe. That's why, if you ever see pictures of this, or drawings of this rendered, what you would see is just this wall of shields.
Because if I'm in front, I've got to deflect the flaming dart, not just to save my life. If I just get out of the way, that dart hits the person beside me, I've just lost him.
[27:30] And if I get out of the way, and that dart hits the person beside me, it's been lit on fire, it catches on, and though only one person took the dart, the fire may take other lives.

So very much, a part of the imagery and the metaphor of this kind of shield is not just protecting your life, it's protecting the life of others.
So, with that understanding of history in mind, go back to the text again. In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one, not just to

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protect you, but to protect those around you.
Now, follow the metaphor. Your faith protects you, and your faith helps protect others. Never forget that the Lord uses the faith of His people to strengthen those around them.
This is so important in the Christian life. And this is so counterculture. Our culture is so much that it's, I'm in it for me, you take care of you, I'll take care of me.
[28:53] I've got my own problems, I don't have time to deal with yours. But that's not the Christian life. The Christian life is very much, I take up my shield of faith, because I want to deflect the enemy's dart from hitting me.

But I also take it up because I want to extinguish the dart so the fire doesn't spread to you. How do you do that? Well, it's one of the reasons why the church sings.
You ever thought of this? When you sing, part of what you're doing is you're putting up a shield. We sing tonight, Christ our hope in life and death.
You declare that. And the person beside you hears you singing. And you may think, well, they think my voice is terrible. No, no, no.
That's why you join all together. What you hear is the whole chorus of the congregation singing. And the emphasis is on what we're singing, not how one individual voice sounds.
[30:00] And so maybe, sitting beside you or standing in front of you is somebody who is sick and someone who has cancer and someone whose body is breaking down.

And when they talk about my hope in life and death, it's not hypothetical. It's today. And they hear you declaring, Christ is our hope in life and in death.
And your faith protects them. It strengthens them. It helps them. We sing a hymn, Great is thy faithfulness.
His mercies are new every morning. And somewhere around you where you're singing is somebody whose life is falling apart. But what they hear is the body of Christ reminding them that even in the midst of our pain, His mercies are new every single morning.
And as you declare that truth, we put our shields together and we fight for each other and we protect each other and we strengthen each other. this is why you generously give to the love account.
[31:21] Because there's families in our church that are hurting, that have lost their job, that have medical issues, that have unexpected bills. And so you take up your shield of faith and you generously give so that a family in our church who is hurting is strengthened by your generosity.

When we do the Lord's Supper, we always allow people to give to the love account. The exception to that was Good Friday. It just seemed a little odd to me with the emphasis of Good Friday and with the Lord's Supper and the crucifixion.
It just felt a little strange to me to transition from that to the love account. So we did not mention the love account. We did not put an offering plate on the Lord's table. We just closed by singing a hymn.
You know what happened? We had church members going and finding deacons and saying, I've got money. I want to give to the love account to help families in need. I don't see an offering plate. How do we do that?
I had deacons coming to me saying, you didn't think we were taking an offering to the love account? We've got money given. What do we do with it? People just wanted to give.
[32:38] We didn't even ask for it. We didn't even give them a way to do it. They had to go out of their way to find a way to give. Why? Because they wanted to put up their shield of faith and say, we're doing okay.

The Lord's blessed us, but we want the strength we have to be used to help protect others who are weak and vulnerable right now. That's understanding that we are the body of Christ.
And one of the reasons why it's so important that you sing, not only because it says something about your own soul in the moment, but because it's not just about you when you worship.
it's about strengthening the faith of those around you. And there may be some people beside you. Be quick here, careful here.
Don't judge people with this because there may be somebody beside you and one day they're not singing and it's not because they don't love Jesus. It may be because what they're going through is so hard right then in that moment they can't even sing.

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[33:43] What they need to do is just hear the church remind them that Christ is our refuge. So we sing. And so we pray.

And so we give. Because part of the shield of faith is not just protecting you, it's protecting others. It's so important.
That's why we share testimonies. Because it's not just about what God's doing in your life, it's how what God is doing in your life can strengthen others.
So tonight, it's not just about what Jamie's learning, it's about Jamie planting a shield of faith and saying, this scripture has ministered to me, it's encouraged me, it's helped me call upon the name of the Lord to grow, it's helped me seek to trust in Him, not because it's just about her, but because she wants what God has used in scripture to help her to bless you.
Because there's other people here tonight who need to hear that word. That's part of being a part of the body of Christ. That just like Paul would have in his mind, we are planting our shields and linking them together so that we absorb the enemy's flaming darts, sure to protect us, but also to protect and defend those around us.
[35:20] Never forget and never underestimate the significance of how the Lord can use your faith to strengthen those around you.

you need to you need to sing, you need to give, you need to pray, you need to encourage, you need to make people feel welcome, you need to meet somebody that you don't know.
And in all of those ways, we're planting our shield and we're saying we're here to protect and defend not just us but each other. This is absolutely part of what is on Paul's mind.
Which brings up a fourth question. What are the enemy's darts? Just staying in the text of the verse here with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one, what are his darts?
Well, this is not an exhaustive list by any means but let me share with you a couple of things that I think we can see from Scripture are the primary darts that the enemy uses.
[36:40] One, doubts. One of the primary darts, the evil one wants to hurl at you is doubts. Doubts where you doubt your salvation, doubts where you doubt God's love for you.

Romans 5.1, therefore, therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. That's everything I've been trying to say tonight.
That our peace that we have comes through our faith, namely, in Christ. And as you have faith in Christ, you have peace with God.
And so, when you doubt your salvation, you ask yourself, do I love Christ? Do I believe the gospel? Am I living my life for His glory?
Do I believe that Christ is the Son of God? Do I believe that He died? Do I believe He was raised back to life? Do I believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation? Am I trusting today in His love and in His salvation?
[37:42] Am I trusting today in His promise? Not only for this moment, but for all eternity? Do I love Christ and love what He loves? And do I love His word?

And do I love His people? And today is my faith and my refuge and the promises of God revealed to us in Christ. That's where you find your refuge.
That's how you hold up the shield of faith. Because the enemy is going to try to get you to doubt your salvation. You're not as smart as this guy.
You're not as gifted as this lady. You don't have as much influence as this person has over here. You sin last week. You sometimes struggle with pride. You sometimes struggle with selfishness. You sure you're a Christian?
How do you resolve that? You go to the Word. And you say, do I believe by faith in the person of Christ and the promise of God revealed in Christ?
[38:45] He's going to try to get you to doubt His love for you. If God loved you, why are you sick? God loved you, why does this happen to your family?

If God loved you, why are things not working out for you? If God loved you, why was your prayer not answered? What do you do? You go to the Scripture, particularly you go to Romans 5.8, which stands as the eternal monument of God's love for His people.
God demonstrated His love this way, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. How do you know God loves you?
Look to the cross. How do you know God is faithful? Look to the cross. How do you know His love for you is eternal? Look to the cross.

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So that's one dart He'll throw at you. It'll take different forms, but the dart of doubt. Another discouragement. The evil one wants you to be discouraged.
[39:56] He wants you to lose heart. He wants you to give up. I want you just to think, friends, tonight with me about this. Your enemy wants you to be discouraged.

Don't live by discouragement. set up the shield of faith by trusting in the promises of Christ. 2 Corinthians 4.16 We do not lose heart, though the outer man wastes away, our inner man is renewed day by day.
What He's saying in 2 Corinthians 4 is it's true your outer man is wasting away, but that doesn't have to discourage you. Because your inner man, your heart, is being renewed every single day. But if you're not being renewed in your heart by trusting in the promises of God, I promise you what will result is discouragement. it's this world is aiming every arrow it can find to discourage you in your faith.
Don't fall for it. Be encouraged. You know what I find difficult? I find it difficult to focus on the things of the world when I'm standing with my family singing Christ is our hope in life and death.
[41:26] I find it incredibly difficult to be discouraged. When I hear you singing be still my soul the winds and waves still know His voice who ruled them while He dwelt here below.

It reminds me that our Savior has power over storms. I find it very difficult to be discouraged when I hear with my church family singing together with me about the confidence the unshakable confidence we have in Christ.
But you remove yourself from the body of Christ? Oh my goodness discouragement is everywhere. Stay connected to the church.
Stay faithful to gather with the body of Christ. It's part of how you pick up the shield of faith to protect your heart and it's part of how you protect others and it's part of how when you feel discouraged the faith of others strengthens you.
We heard a man say this week if Satan had a garage sale the one tool he would never sell is discouragement because it's just too powerful.
[42:54] I think that's true. Discouragement has defeated a lot of people. St.

Corinthians 4 says you look at your body it's wasting away. Maybe not in the first three rows give it a decade. It's coming.
It's coming. the body wastes away. And it can be discouraging. And what you need to do is gather for worship with the body of Christ and link your shield of faith together and together you strengthen each other and you protect each other and you defend each other.
a third dart is temptation. The evil one will throw the dart of temptation at you.
That's what he did in Genesis 3 in the Garden of Eden. That's what he did in Matthew 4 in the temptation in the wilderness with Jesus. He'll do whatever he can to tempt you. Tempt you to lie.
[44:06] Tempt you to lust. Tempt you to cheat. Tempt you to join in whatever the crowd's doing. Tempt you to cut corners.

Tempt you to look at what you shouldn't look at. Think what you shouldn't be thinking about. Speak words you shouldn't be using. Chasing things that you shouldn't be pursuing.
He's going to hurl the dart of temptation at you. But we stack our shield of faith together. And we say this Christian life is not every man for himself.
We run together. And I protect you and you protect me and you're looking out for your own heart but you're also looking out for the person beside you. Galatians 5 tells you to walk in the spirit. Galatians 6 says if you've got somebody straying go find them and bring them back. James says the same thing. Because the Christian life is not just about you.
[45:20] It's about helping all of us to finish the race well. the fourth dart he'll throw at you is persecution. 1 Peter 5 8 and 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 what's the word?

Faith. How do you resist the devil? by standing firm in your faith. By picking up the shield of faith. Verse 9 Resist him firm in your faith knowing the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.
Matthew 5 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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2 Corinthians 12 He said to me my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect in weakness therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so the power of Christ may rest upon me for the sake of Christ then I am content with weaknesses insults hardships persecutions and calamities for when I am weak then I am strong.
And so you link your life and your heart with your brothers and sisters in Christ and you plant that shield of faith and you say I will absorb the darts of the enemy by planting my faith by trusting in the promises of God and I'm going to be looking for people in my life in my family in home in my church who are weak who are struggling and I'm doing everything I can to be a covering for them.
[47:23] That's how the body of Christ must think. Who are you praying for? Who are you looking after? Whose soul are you laboring to help lead them to Christ?

who are you praying for at night when you can't sleep? Who are you begging the Lord to intercede and intervene on their behalf?
That's what we do. Today after one of our morning services one of our teenagers said they've got a loved one, a family member in their home, not a believer, they are burdened for their loved one.
Heard the preaching of the gospel today and said I just want this person in my family, I want them to believe, I want them to understand, I want them to trust Christ. And so we just got to pray right there, right over there after the service and just beg the Lord to save her family member.
Because she loves her. She's burdened for her. And that's what we do as the body of Christ. We march together, we fight together, we look out for each other, we plant our shields of faith together, we extinguish the darts together trying to help each other and strengthen each other.
[48:51] We could list others, fear, confusion, paranoia, on and on and on of the darts that the enemy will use. But here's what we can say, he will use any dart that gets you to focus on you and not on Christ.

don't fall for it. Lastly, how do we put on the shield of faith? Let me just give you three really quick things.
Number one, you've got to be converted. Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 tells us you're saved by grace through faith, you must be converted to put on the shield of faith.
Number two, once you're converted, you take your refuge in him. Psalm 18, 30, this God, his way is perfect. The word of the Lord proves true.
He is a shield for those who take refuge in him. And then thirdly, you remember your ultimate victory. 1 John 5, 4, and 5, everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world, and this is the victory that has overcome the world.
[49:56] Our, what? Faith. Faith. This is the victory that has overcome the world. Our faith in Christ. Where'd your faith come from? Ephesians 2.

It's a gift of God, lest no one should boast. So you fight discouragement with faith, but then you remember where your faith came from, God, so even in your victory, all the glory goes where?
To Christ. Christ. Otherwise, you become prideful. So Ephesians 2 says, you are saved by grace through faith, not of yourself. All of that's a gift of God.
And then you run to him and you overcome the world by your faith given to you by God. So all the praise for all of your life, for now and forever, belongs only to Christ.
Christ. The hymn writer said it this way, rock of age is cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee.
[51:00] Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed be of sin, the double cure. Here's what it does. I'm saved from wrath and makes me pure.

Father, this is what our faith does for us. Lord, we pray tonight that as we take up the shield of faith that we would do so by believing your word and trusting in your promises and running to you as our refuge.
We pray that we would look to not only protect our own heart and soul but also those around us.
May we believe and trust and find you to be our refuge.
In the name of Christ we pray. Amen. Thanks for being here church. You're dismissed. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.
[52:24] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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