

LIVING BY FAITH, PART 2 of 3
Why we need Godly Faith; Angels of Mons;
faith and love working together; Shield of Faith

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If you want to quit worrying, being stressed out, and want to trust God in godly faith, this three part series is a must. This message finishes “WHY” we need godly faith. Also: Angels of Mons; *why faith and love are linked*; Insights into the shield of faith. You’ll identify with Philip’s transparency about his own struggles with worry and desire to grow in faith.

Greetings, everyone. This is part 2 of 3 parts, of the very important topic of Living by Faith. If you want these messages on cassette sent to you, just ask, and I’ll be happy to do that, no charge. The tape messages have a better audio quality than hearing these from the website directly. Though I’m happy that many are just reading the transcripts, I assure you that you’ll add a whole new dimension to your learning, if you’re hearing the messages as well as reading the notes. Many enjoy having a Bible-topic tape like this one to listen to while they drive, instead of commercials and talk radio.

This is Philip Shields. Today we’ll pick up where we left off about this all important topic of faith. Living by faith is not about mustering up a sense of confidence when you’re in trouble – as much as it is a way of life, a way of being, living and thinking that results from a *close, trusting relationship* borne out of knowing God as a friend, Holy One of Israel, Loving Father, and one you implicitly trust, all the time, 24/7 in good times and “bad times”. This kind of faith is based on knowing God’s *love* and that He *is* love personified, and everything and anything He does that involves you is done *out of* His deep love - - even when it seems so illogical to our human minds. We can live by faith when we *give up* the viewpoint and perspective we have as humans here on earth, and *trust* there is *an awesome God* who has a better, fuller, loving perspective we can’t always know in this life. That means giving up a sense of peace that is based on what we can *see*, to a sense of peace that sees *beyond the bend*, to things we *cannot* literally see... that we trust in what we *don’t see* in front of us, but trust, because of *in whom* our faith and trust is placed: IN God, whom we *know*, though we don’t see Him. We’ll see that all through today’s message – and into the next one.

I think it is so inspiring to realize that as God’s child, God keeps His eyes on you all the time, surrounding us with His guardian angels. Where are you right now? Especially if there are several of you in one room, open your eyes in faith. There are angels hovering above you, around you, around your home, around your car, just like Elisha’s servant was allowed to see. God has put a hedge around His people, just like He had around Job. By faith, we walk with God wherever He takes us, and as we do, He sees what our eyes see, He hears what our ears hear. We can’t go anywhere that He is not aware of it (Psalm 139).

This message is also vital for everyone to hear. I own a very inspiring little booklet called “We have a Guardian”, which recounts the numerous times in our history when it seems obvious God intervened – often involving rapid and unforeseen changes in weather – which changed the course of history. When our people, called by God’s name, will humble themselves and pray, and turn from their evil ways, God is merciful and saves us (**2 Chronicles 7:14**).

There were at least a couple such times, involving *faith* of the British people in World War 2 and also in WW 1. You've heard of the **miracle of Dunkirk** – where the entire British and French forces were cornered and doomed, unless a miracle happened. The British people prayed as one people, and God intervened. A lesser known account is the story of **the Miracle of the Angels at Mons**, about God's intervention in World War 1. I'll tell you that skeptics abound, but in researching this account, there are 22,000 accounts of it on the internet alone. Hundreds of British, Portuguese and German soldiers saw something unearthly happen that day in 1914, and I believe it. Once again the Germans were about to wipe out the British near a town called Mons. The Americans had not yet entered the war in any numbers. In the UK, word spread that their soldiers needed God to intervene and the churches were packed with people praying. I'll recount the story now in detail – which I'll *attach to the end of this transcript* if you want a copy. **(Story of Angels of Mons)**

As we live with more of this awareness, and lovingly put our complete trust in our great God, we begin to learn to “live by faith”. Faith –or **just call it “believing”** -- ***unleashes indescribable power into our lives and an incredible confidence no matter what we have to do.*** Jesus said “whatever you ask, believing, without doubting, you will receive”.

Faith is believing God, trusting what He says, even when we can't see the actual fruition of those words yet in front of us. So be careful what you believe. Our *beliefs happen*, though in *God's* timing. Worry is fearful belief. IT is negative faith and since it involves *not* trusting God, is sin.

In part 1, we rehearsed how Jesus voiced disappointment at the prospect of perhaps not finding faith on the earth when He returns (Luke 18:8) at the very time when the world will be going through the time of greatest trouble in its history and you'd *think* we'd *need* faith more, *using* faith more, than ever before. In context, He was asking if He'd find a kind of faith that was *persistent*, not giving up? Remember the BOLD examples of ***persistent faith*** we covered last time – ***Abraham***, David's 7 days of praying for his son whom God had already said would die, Hezekiah's prayers, Moses' prayers, and on and on -- even in cases where God had already spoken His will. ***Daniel*** prayed 21 days (Daniel 9) solid, while fasting, before he got an answer to his petitions. Why should *we* expect anything less than that?

We are told to come *boldly* before the throne of grace. ***As we pray “in JESUS' name”, we're not only approaching God's throne by Jesus' authority, but it also means we're coming under HIS righteousness, His grace, His name—and in that we can be very bold.*** Even when God has already stated His will. God *appreciates* His family voicing their innermost feelings and concerns.

I think it's safest for each of us to assume we desperately need more faith, especially since Jesus Himself predicted those in the end time would not have much, if any, faith – ***than to feel smug*** that we have enough faith now. I came to realize I didn't, and still often don't have enough. The Laodecians are the ones who always have a come-back, a smart mouthed answer, seeing themselves as spiritually rich, full, spiritually able to see – and they were actually miserable, blind and naked (Rev 3:14-22). ***Laodecians would think they're already faithful people too.*** All believers are told to heed the warning to *all seven* of the churches.

FAITH AND LOVE OFTEN DISCUSSED TOGETHER

Here's a thought: perhaps Jesus was able to wonder if there would be faith in the end, knowing what the church in general would be like: Laodecian. Love waxing cold. Smug. Self-reliant. You can't

have self reliant lukewarm love and have strong faith. They can't co-exist. ***You'll find faith and love tied together dozens of times in the Bible. One can't exist without the other! Living by faith means a love for God and fellow man has to rule your every action.***

The end time is a time when “**the love of many** will wax cold”. ***Losing love and losing faith go hand in hand. Why? Perfect love casts out fear, for fear has torment (1 John 4:18).*** When you *deeply* love someone, let's say *God*, or your spouse – you *trust* that person. It is much harder to trust someone you don't love, and hard to love someone you don't trust. And when you know *that* other person *deeply* loves *you* – you can trust that person all the more. So when we love God, and *know* He loves us, we more likely live a life that is full of faithful trusting and believing. If you study the words “faith” and “love”, you'll see they *often* intersect. I'll list a few of the almost 60 places where “faith” and “love” are in the same verse! (Here are a few: 1 Cor. 13:2,13; Gal. 5:6 – “faith working through love”; Ephesians 1:15; 3:17; Eph 6:23 – “love with faith”; Colossians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 3:6; 5:8 – “breastplate of faith and love”; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Timothy 1:5; and many, many more – almost 60 in all!) *So put them together and LIVE by faith.*

Remember also that being gifted with such great faith that we can even move literal mountains --**faith is not the biggest thing. Love is the biggest thing.** “The greatest of these” three – faith, hope, love – “is love” (1 Cor. 13:13). If you have *all* faith so you can literally move mountains, but have no love, you're *nothing*. GOD is glorified when we have faith for the right reasons. It's not the person doing the miracle, after all, but God. ***Life's not about us. It's not about you. It's not about me. It's all about God and bringing glory to Him.*** That's why I have no “about us” button on my website.

So do you want to grow in your faith for God? Learn to love Him more. Hear my sermon “10 steps to Loving God”. You'll do anything for someone you really love. You'll implicitly trust someone you really love. We'll talk more about all this later in part 3, in how to grow in faith towards God.

Just a couple nights ago, my son had a bad accident that fractured his cranium in several places, and initially they found some blood on his brain as well. Well I decided – it was after midnight - - to spend more than an hour praying for Him -- and others who needed prayer too – knocking on God's door, over and over and over. By the time I was done praying, I got the news that the blood on the brain had disappeared, in the latest CAT scan. We must have *persistent*, non-stop faith. My son recovered very quickly and answered our prayers, and others' prayers, completely.

We also talked in depth last time about how Jesus said “**signs and wonders**” *would* follow those who *believe*, as signs for unbelievers mostly, but also to confirm their word. We discussed why we're *not* seeing much of that today, though Jesus promised He'd be with us until the end of the age. ***It's not Jesus' fault that we're not seeing these promises happening regularly, often, in our time.*** Jesus was the one who backed up his first century apostles with signs that confirmed their word. He even promised “greater works than these” we will do, greater than even Jesus' works (John 14:12). *If Jesus promised signs would follow those who believe, but we're not seeing much of that today – is it because in fact we don't believe, and is it in fact because there IS little faith on earth today?*

Having said that, we must still be cautious about signs and wonders per se, by themselves, because the great false prophet at the end of the age will *also* be able to do *lying* signs and wonders, that if possible could even deceive the very elect (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:1-12). In Matthew 7, Jesus

told some ministers He doesn't know them – though they did miracles in His name. So we must be careful. But that shouldn't stop us from expecting Jesus to still back up His people today with signs and wonders – IF we believe, and IF we're pleasing to Him. I'm *not* among those who feel I have to find excuses for *why* Jesus isn't backing up His followers today with anything at all *like* the signs and wonders He spoke of. I'd rather find the fault with US as to why we're not seeing people gifted with miracles today.

In discussing *why* we need faith, the first point is that God's people are to *live* BY faith. That's 24/7, in big things and little things. We wake up each morning thinking "THIS is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24), and we commit this day in prayer to God for His will to be done, for His guidance and help, before we even *begin* the day, and then believe He'll answer our request.

We talked about how faith is not something we work up just in times of trouble, but should have *all the time*. Faith is not based on getting an answer *now* or when we demand it. True faith *believes* God, takes Him at His word, and leaves *when*, the timing, to Him. We live by faith knowing we are "IN God, IN Christ" and they are *in us* for that matter. We're now "believers" and showing God we *do* believe *Him*, and His words.

2. THE SECOND POINT WE DISCUSSED WAS THAT WITHOUT FAITH WE CAN'T PLEASE GOD, but with diligent faith we can please Him. (Heb 11:6).

Faith is synonymous with "trust". As in any relationship, since faith is relationship-based, how could we ever please Someone who feels we don't trust Him? And looking at it positively, we ARE pleasing to God when we do trust Him.

We left off with that 2nd point – that with diligent faith we can please God. Now let's proceed into point 3, of why we need godly faith:

3. WHY we need faith:—Let's pick up here: We need Faith because it is by GRACE through FAITH that we are saved, receive God's righteousness and inherit the Kingdom of God.

*We are called "believers" because we have seen ourselves as sinners, repented before the throne of grace, accepted Jesus as our Savior and believed He can, will, and IS saving us – and we're told that *all* who believe in Jesus Christ now *have* everlasting *life* (read John 3:16, 36; John 5:24; 6:40,47).* You won't be saved without grace and faith. We have to believe in Jesus as our Savior and accept Him as Lord of our lives in faith – or there isn't any salvation. We have to believe He died for me, for you – and that He was resurrected, or we have no basis for our hope. So why do we need faith: because without faith there is no salvation. *When we believe in Jesus as our savior, God gives us His holy spirit, by which we also receive God's faith, and the faith OF Jesus Himself.*

As Jesus said when He was about to resurrect Lazarus, "He who believes in Me, *though He may die, he shall live*" (John 11:25-26). We're not saved by our own works, by any goodness we do, but by faith in, and of, Jesus the Christ. If we don't believe in God, we make God a liar, according to 1 John 5:10. Please turn now to Ephesians 2.

Salvation happens when we *quit* trusting the flesh, *quit* trusting what WE can do or *think* we can do, quit trusting what we can *see* – and start trusting our Savior after deep repentance, believing Him, claiming His promises and *accepting His salvation*, accepting *Him* as our Redeemer, taking *His* righteousness, His grace, His love. Quite frankly the world *constantly* tells us to trust ourselves, believe in what *we* can do. That's *not* what God wants us doing. We're called to trust *Him*, and Him alone.

Ephesians 2:8-10 “For **BY GRACE** *you have been saved through FAITH*, and *that not of yourselves*; it is the *gift of God*, **9 not of works**, *lest anyone should boast*. 10 For we are His workmanship, ***created in Christ Jesus for good works***, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Most Christians seem to hop in one ditch or the other. Either grace or works. It's *not* just one or the other. We're saved by grace, not by our own works – and then once saved we demonstrate our new relationship with a life of new works, conversion. But those works don't save us. But we need to believe in grace, and believe in works as proof of our salvation. We live with both – grace and works. But only grace saves you.

Philippians 3:7-11 “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and *count them as rubbish*, that I may gain Christ 9 and ***be found in Him, NOT having my own*** righteousness, *which is from the law*, ***but that which is through faith*** in Christ, ***the righteousness which is from GOD by faith***; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

Can it be any clearer than that?

Rom 9:30-32 “What shall we say then? That Gentiles, *who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith*; 31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has *not attained to the law of righteousness*. 32 Why? *Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone*”

Here are 6-7 more places that speak of God's righteousness coming by faith, and not by the things we do. I know that disappoints some of you, but here's what the Word says:

Romans 3:22 “*even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference..*”

Rom 4:13-14 “For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, *but through the righteousness of faith.*”

Galatians 5:5 “For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope *of righteousness by faith.*”

Hebrews 11:7 “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, **prepared an ark** for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became **heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.**”

1 Peter 1:5 “*who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*”

2 Peter 1:1 “Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious *faith* with us *by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ*”

I hope you got the point. ***God’s righteousness and salvation come by grace through faith in God and Jesus Christ*** – not by works of the law we try to muster up. Our entire GOAL is to be forgiven, reconciled, redeemed and saved – and it’s all through faith in Christ and accepting the faith OF Christ. That is not to say that obedience is not necessary. Oh it is! But God’s righteousness comes by faith, and faith is proven by obedience, as we’ll cover today also.

4. WHY WE NEED FAITH: GODLY FAITH PRODUCES PEACE OF MIND LIKE NOTHING ELSE AND STOPS SINFUL WORRY, DOUBTS, AND LINGERING FEAR.

Jesus commands us NOT to worry at the end of Matthew 6. He says to learn from the birds and animals – and how they’re provided for. ***It’s a SIN for the children of the most awesome Creator of the whole universe to STAY in a condition of worrying, being stressed out.*** It’s showing terrible confidence in God and shows a definite lack of faith. A *lack of trust* – in fact we read in **1 John 5:10** “...he who does not believe God makes Him a liar”. Worry and fretting shows we *don’t* trust God. GOD *knows* our needs before we do. It is *His* job to protect us, to watch over us. He takes His job very seriously. But too often we’re like fretful children, worrying over something that their Dad has in perfect control. It’s just that the details haven’t been shared with everyone. Turn please to **Philippians 4:6-7**.

We may not know *how* or *when* God will answer. We may not know *what* will happen. But we do know *one* thing: ***WHO we are walking with, and that should be enough***, since faith is in *God*, not in the circumstances we see or don’t see going on around us.

Philippians 4:6-7 “***Be anxious for NOTHING***, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, *let your requests be made known* to God; ***7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***”

Don’t you just love it, when a person is in dire straits with a health condition, the doctors have done all they could, then say, “It’s all in God’s hands now. There’s nothing more we can do.” And it makes it sound so desperate! *But in reality, there should be peace once we get our minds off the object of fear and on to God Himself.*

When you and I are told WE have the C-word –*cancer*, and it’s in our liver or pancreas, *that* can quickly take away your peace of mind! Trust me.

(My story of apparently having pancreatic/liver cancer – and the healing that came about after I truly committed it all to God.)

Isaiah 26:3 “*you will keep him in perfect peace,* whose mind is *stayed* on You, *Because* he trusts in You.” I’d love that perfect peace. Wouldn’t you?

NLT: “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are *fixed* on you!”

Ps 131:1-2 “LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me. ***2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.***”

Great examples of these: -Jesus asleep in the boat during a storm...

- **Peter asleep** (Acts 12) in the maximum security prison, chained to 2 guards, and he has a date with the beheader, the executioner the next day. God had already shown He could allow His people to be killed. Jesus had been killed. Numerous prophets had been. Stephen was martyred. James had been beheaded earlier. And what is Peter doing: *snoring!* Sound asleep. What *peace* he exhibited.
- Paul and Silas singing praises and praying in Jail at midnight, after being beaten severely. (Acts 16:25-26).

When we accept these points, even facing death itself becomes possible, peacefully and with dignity. But only IF we apply these points. I preach to myself. I must grow too, in all these points.

Lingering fear – and solid, peaceful faith – can’t co-exist forever. One must give in to the other eventually. Most of the people of the Bible who are towering giants of faith, first were normal people like us, afraid, with fears. Fear is normal. It’s just that a Godly believer uses love to cast out fear – 1 John 4:18. But if there was no fear, there’d be nothing to cast out! So fear is there, it’s just that we can’t stay in fear.

Those who think having great Faith means having no fear, miss a big point: it is *in* our fears that we *turn* to God and learn faith – and frankly get to practice faith in a more tested way. Sure, it’s *true* that we should *live* by faith, even in the quiet times – but it’s in the *tough* times we have the testing of our faith. And *fear* has a *good* part in faith – IF we get *past* the fear and look to God. *IF the fear makes us go to God.* However, it’s also true that being afraid, fear uncontrolled --- led to many stupid decisions too, such as Abraham and Isaac claiming their wives were their sisters. But the notion that when we are close to God we’ll *never* fear, just doesn’t stack up to the facts. There are just too many examples of leaders of Israel in the Bible who were being defeated, being attacked, and “were afraid” – and turned to God *in* their fear and were answered for their *faith in God!* *I’ll cite a few such places in my transcript:*

Godly faith will eventually cast out fear, true, but having fear at first is understandable, and that leads us to God for the answer, in faith.

Psalms 56:3-4 “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. [notice the sequence] In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?” [See? He started in fear, turned to God, trusted in God – and then was able to conquer the fear]

Cite Ps. 34:4 : “I sought the LORD and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears”. A good example of this in David’s life is found in 1 Samuel 30:1-6, especially verse 6.

FEAR is not the problem by itself. *It’s unconquered fear, fear that isn’t left in God’s hands, that’s the problem. Remember Gideon?* There’s the incredible dialogue God has with Gideon about fear, just before the battle. **In the same way that when your worried child comes to you and voices a fear, and then when you tell them “everything’s OK, I’ve got everything under control” – if you see them nod, give you a hug, and have peace – that’s what God wants to see.** Look at Gideon. Turn please to Judges 7. IN verses 2-3, God let the fearful leave – 22,000. Then came the test of lapping like a dog at the water brooks and all but 300 are left – v 4-8. I’ll pick up in verse 9.

We think of Gideon as being really brave to face the huge army with only 300. But notice carefully, **Judges 7:9-13**: “It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. **10 but if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant**, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” **Then he went down** [he must have FEARED!] with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.”

Even Jesus Himself went through a deep *distress* in the Garden of Gethsemane. Let’s look at that again, and as we do, those of you who self-righteously say we should never fear, feel distress, or worry – think about it. I’ve said we shouldn’t *remain* in fear and distress, and that’s true. But to *have* some fear and distress is what *leads* us to turn to God and have faith:

Mark 14:32-34 “Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to ***be troubled and deeply distressed***. 34 Then He said to them, “My soul is ***exceedingly sorrowful, even to death***. Stay here and watch.”

This kind of passage helps me understand our Savior *understands* our fears, our worries, our sorrow. *But in this same night, He was able to come on top of those concerns and in the end, present Himself calmly without evident distress to those coming to arrest Him without a cause.*

I want you to really get this! I’ve heard many sermons that would make many of us feel if we ever *have* fear, we’re deficient somehow. It IS the fear that makes us go to God! *Even David, even Paul, admit to this. Now yes – we worry, and if we stay worried, that becomes a sin, it becomes something we have imposed as being greater than God. So worry becomes a sin. If we abandon the worry, however, and focus on God, that is normal! It is when we remain in panic mode, remain anxious that it is a problem. Remaining a worried person is reflective of not turning to God for peace and answers.*

It is Jesus’ responsibility to provide for, protect, and oversee us. If we remain worried, it is quite a slap in Jesus’ face. You can read many of the psalms on this – one such one is Ps. 55:4-5,16-18.

Now how about the great Paul?

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were ***burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life***. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, *that we should not trust in ourselves but in God* who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us...”

2 Corinthians 7:5-7 “For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but ***we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were FEARS***. 6 Nevertheless **God**, who ***comforts the downcast, comforted*** us by the coming of Titus...”

Sounds like he had some times of feeling downcast, and certainly had times of *fear*. But he says elsewhere that he refused to keep looking at what he could see, but what he could *not* see.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH and its role with inner Peace

We've all heard about "*the shield of faith*" spoken of in the passage about "the armor of God" in Ephesians 6. ***The shield in reality, is really not just faith itself, but God Himself.***

In **Genesis 14**, Abraham and his "army" of 318 servants, rout the armies of 4 invading kings who have just defeated the city-states around Abraham, and taken Lot captive. Abraham pays tithes on the loot and is blessed by Melchizedek. But after all that, it seems Abraham may have started to worry. Perhaps he began to fear "revenge killings" from the city-states he had just routed. So we pick up in **Genesis 15:1**.

Genesis 15:1 "After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. ***I am your shield***, your very great reward."

Ultimately, the shield is God himself. God was a protective shield many times around His people. He was the **hedge** around **Job**, through which Satan could not penetrate until God let him. God was the **dark cloud shield** that came behind Israel as they left Egypt, keeping the Egyptian armies at bay. Other passages in Psalms and historical passages from Josephus tell us that cloud was full of lightning and tornado strength winds and hail through which no one could pass and live.

In Ephesians 6, God tells us to *put on His Armor*! You know the helmet of salvation, the breastplate/bullet-proof vest of righteousness; the belt of truth and so on...

But there was something else: "**the armor's armor**" – was the shield of faith (Ephesians 6:16). The shield protected even the *other* armor – the helmet, the breastplate, and so on.

Ephesians 6:16 "***above ALL, taking*** the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one..."

You have to ***take*** the shield of faith – and use it – *putting* it over you! That's what "above all" means. It doesn't mean "more than anything else" –but means "over" you. Frankly, too many of us – me too – too often take the useless shield of worry, and stewing! And it's *no* shield!

The shield of faith (which is *God* over us) protects us from the arrows of Satan raining down on us from above. Our battle, remember, is not with circumstances we see on earth, but with demonic powers trying to discourage us. That's what it says in Ephesians 6.

Satan's M.O. has not changed. Like fiery arrows that cause panic and terror in the camp at which they're fired, Satan causes us to panic by putting doubt in our minds. If you were *really* God's son, or God's daughter, He wouldn't abandon you like this. You'd have a better job. You'd be healed. Are you really God's child – he asks us. He injects doubt by making us question God's love, God's fairness, and whether or not we're even converted or not!

These doubts *are non-stop*. If you've seen any movies of ancient battles, it shows how when the armies would face off, they'd send thousands of arrows raining down on the enemy soldiers, to pick off as many as they could even before the hand-to-hand combat would begin! That's what Satan is trying to do to us: pick us off with doubt!

So we're told that part of our armor is "the shield of faith" (Ephesians 6:16). This *was no buckler or small shield*. The Greek word used by Paul is "... *thureos* (NT:2375), the apostle

alludes to **the great oblong shield, or scutum, which covers the whole body**". --Adam Clarke's Commentary. Strong's says the word comes from #2374, "a large shield, as door-shaped". Vine's says it was a shield, which was "large and oblong, protecting every part of the soldier".

You may have heard of the Roman army's "tortoise" formation: where a block of soldiers would travel in one tight group. Those in the middle had their long body shields over the top, and those on the side had their shields protecting all around the perimeter of this advancing tight body. The enemy could launch thousands of arrows but they'd bounce harmlessly off until the unit was close enough to engage the enemy in hand to hand combat. The soldiers' very lives depended on those shields being there above and around them. Your very eternal life depends on you putting GOD as your shield around and over you too!

From the very beginning, Satan no doubt questioned God to the angels under his command. Then he did the same thing with Eve in the garden: "Has God really said you can't eat of the fruit of *all* the trees? *Really* now?!" (Genesis 3:1-6). Doubt! Fiery dart from Satan! Then he comes back with a *direct assault* on God's word and practically calls God a liar: "You will not surely die! God just doesn't want you to be like He is, able to decide for yourself what you want to do, what is right and wrong. Ha! Has God ever hoodwinked *you*!"

When Jesus had Satan casting doubts, "*if* you're the son of God" – all that stuff, what did Jesus do? He put up the shield of faith! I'll address more on that later.

Brethren, if we don't have the full body-length shield of faith over us, we could be spiritual dead meat. The shield is faith – believing God, trusting God's word, confidence in what *He* tells us to do will give us great peace, great trust, and we'll quit doubting, fearing and worrying.

So those are 4 reasons why we need faith. There are many more reasons you can come up with... and why don't you? It would be a great study.

WE CAN, WE MUST – GROW IN GODLY FAITH

Let's be sure we understand that we *can* grow in godly faith, and MUST grow.

The disciples were never commended for *their* faith, but by the time the Feast of Pentecost comes along in Acts 2 – and beyond – their faith is *enormous*. Peter goes from being a sniveling coward denying His Christ, to one who lifted up his voice and said clearly for all to hear after God used him to heal a lame man – "if you want to know by what power this man stands before you healed, hear it clearly: *it was through Jesus Christ, of Nazareth* whom you crucified" (**ACTS 4:8-10**). What a contrast. We can grow like that too. Read 2 Thess 1:3-4 for an example – Paul said their faith "grows exceedingly".

The Bible discusses stages of faith. Please check out the transcript for a full writeup of the stages of faith – the verses and passages, but let me just summarize it this way:

* having "**no faith**". For example: when Jesus stilled the storm – **Mark 4:40**.

* **human faith** -- "**Your** faith has healed you", Jesus said to so many who did *not* have the spirit of God, who were still unconverted. ***Have you thought of that before?*** By "human" faith, we mean

belief that humans can generate apart from the Holy Spirit. It is not yet God's faith, but still very powerful. It was based on what they could *see* going on around them: they could *see* that this man Jesus was healing people. They could *see* people being healed, loaves being multiplied, so they had faith in Him, and that was a good thing, but it's still not *Godly* faith. God's faith can come *only* from God, and it is not "our" faith, but *His* faith. I don't know if you've thought of that. All those Jesus healed, to whom He said "your faith has healed you" did *not* have the spirit of God. It was *their* faith. We now need to have "the faith of Christ" as we live day by day (Gal. 2:20).

* **God's faith** - is a fruit of the Holy Spirit **Gal 5:22-23** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (Greek: *pistis* - faith) 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law"

- "God has dealt *each* one a measure of faith". (Romans 12:3)

The faith that can *only* come because you have the Holy spirit is *not* the same faith that is human faith. Human faith is *still* very powerful. When those with human faith *focused* their faith on the person of Jesus, God honored that and healed them.

* "**little faith**" – Matthew 6:30 "won't God take care of you too, o you of *little faith*".

* some are "**weak** in faith" -- Romans 14:1, whom we are to accept and love. You and I may be weak in faith at times, and at times strong in faith. Faith is based on our relationship with God, so you'll find that even the faith we have can ebb and flow.

* apparently some receive an *extra* **GIFT of faith** through the spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9)

* some are described as being "**FULL of faith**" – like Stephen (Acts 6:5,8)

* Paul even discusses "**having ALL faith**" in 1 Cor 13:2.

HOW TO GROW IN GODLY, LIVING FAITH

So how do we grow into this strong, good, believing faith?

1)how: ADMIT YOU NEED MORE FAITH AND RECEIVE GOD'S FAITH BY GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT. ASK for more godly faith.

Remember the right kind of faith is **godly faith that comes from the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-23)**. Surely you'll remember that Jesus taught us that Father in Heaven is eager to give us more of the Spirit, if we but *ask*! Have you been asking for more faith? As we become more converted, God lives in us more, and God's love, God's faith, God's nature becomes ours.

God is said to be IN us, and we are said to be IN Him. I'll give a full length sermon on that concept soon. God is in us via the Holy Spirit. Since God is love, God is also faith personified. When He lives in us by His spirit, He imparts His nature to us, and He also imparts *His* faith to us. God's faith, vs. "your faith". Godly faith, vs. human faith – doesn't happen until we have God's spirit.

Gal 2:20 in the KJV: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I *live by the faith OF the Son of God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

We live by Jesus’ *own* faith now living in us! That’s what Gal 2:20 said: living by the “faith OF Jesus”. That’s also how we should do the same, or even greater works, as Jesus did. He’s alive and well. He wants to demonstrate His power...*if* we believe. The same faith that worked miracles 2000 years ago can do it today in you and in me – *if* we believe.

Other translations mostly say “by faith IN the Son of God”, and that is incorrect in this verse. The Greek should clearly be translated “OF Jesus”. It’s His faith in us, not our own.

We are to have faith IN Christ too, but in this verse, the correct word from the Greek is definitely referring to having the “faith OF the son of God”.

Now do you see how and why we’ll be able to do the works of Jesus, even “greater works” than Jesus (John 14:12): it is because we should have *His* very own faith in us! And if we do, we will be living by faith just as Jesus did. Jesus is still working His faith today in those who will receive Him and accept Him. But be willing also to *ask* for more faith!

The disciples were often told they had no faith, or little faith. Eventually they got the picture and gave us an excellent example: *they asked for more faith. In Luke 17:5 they approached the Lord and said, “Lord, increase our faith”. We should ask for the same thing.*

And remember the famous response of the man asking Jesus to heal his son: his honest “Lord, *HELP* my unbelief” needs to become our prayer also (**Mark 9:24**). We need to acknowledge we could use some help with coping with doubt and unbelief. **You have not, for you ask not (James 4:2)**. God is *eager* to give us good things, and every good thing eventually comes from God above (James 1:16-17). **Remember Matthew 7:7-8, 11--**. You know we’re told over and over again to *ask* God for good things like more of the Holy Spirit, more love, more knowledge of His will – and by extension, more faith would fit right in. I can’t see God displeased if we asked even for an extra measure, an extra *gift* of this kind of faith. ***Have you been asking for faith lately? How about today?***

Cite Matthew 7:7-8, 11 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **8 For everyone who asks receives**, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. . . .11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things **to those who ask Him!**”

Ask, Seek, Knock – the 3 words spell an acronym in English of “A.S.K.”

So first point: *Ask* for more of the holy spirit. *Ask* for more faith. *Ask* for Jesus to live His life all over again in you, by *His own* faith. And then believe you are receiving what you’re asking for.

Brethren, I’ll end there. Attached next will be the Story of the Angels of Mons. So until next time, keep the faith, and ask for more faith every single day, and more love, more of the holy spirit, more awareness of God’s will – all these important things. And believe.

Until next time, this is Philip Shields your brother. If these messages are helpful, pass them on.

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Here's the addendum I promised about the "angels of Mons" from a website; identical to what I have in the booklet I bought years ago.

www.ensignmessage.com/archives/monsangel2.html

THE ANGELS OF MONS - OUR PROTECTIVE GOD

THE ANGELS OF MONS AND THE WHITE CAVALRY

The second occasion of angelic intervention became known as "The White Cavalry."

THE WHITE CAVALRY

The following account of what occurred between the months of April and August, 1918, I (Captain Cecil Wightwick Hayward) can personally vouch for as being true; as fair as that area of the front line trenches is concerned, lying roughly between the town of Ballieul, some fifteen miles south of Ypres, and the town of Arras, some fifteen miles south of Bethune, in La Bassee (France).

I was responsible for the intelligence on this sector of the battle area, and therefore made my headquarters in the bright little town of Bethune, as it was a very good position strategically, and had also remained practically untouched by enemy shell fire, although it was barely three miles from the trenches just across the La Bassee Canal.

It was an anxious time for Great Britain. The British troops had been in the trenches fighting for weeks without rest or relief owing to the fact that reserves were practically exhausted.

It was at this juncture that Portugal came in on our side, and raised a conscripted Army which landed in France early in March, 1918. Towards the end of that month I was instructed by Headquarters that a Portuguese force would be passing through Bethune shortly in order to take over a sector of the front line trenches just in front of Bethune, so as to relieve the British who had been holding it for so long.

It was evident that the enemy was about to intensify this offensive shortly, with a greater concentration of men and heavy guns. On our side, especially between March and June, our troops

had been greatly reduced in numbers by heavy casualties in the prolonged fighting during those months, and our reserves were practically exhausted.

Although by the middle of May the United States of America had decided to join Great Britain and her Allies, their troops were still being formed, though the first contingent was on its way across the Atlantic. Later on, they came over at the rate of 50,000 weekly; but these reinforcements were not available for the front line much before the middle of June, according as they were dispatched to the various sectors.

As things stood, owing to the vigorous enemy action against the Allied lines to the north of Bethune, the line from La Bassee to Lens and Arras was left in a "pocket" which was liable to be "hemmed in" at any moment, with all the troops, ammunition, arms and equipment it contained.

It was highly improbable that the Portuguese troops, who had by now taken over the La Bassee trenches in front of Bethune, would make much difference to the enemy's plans. Indeed, they did not, for though there had been a temporary lull in the roar of the gun fire, it broke out again shortly afterwards with intensified fury. So tremendous was the reverberating crash of concentrated shell and high explosive fire, that it literally shook the ground and dazed us, though we were nearly three miles behind the front line.

It fell with a dense hail of shrapnel and lead on the unfortunate Portuguese, practically blotting them out wholesale, and thus causing a gap in our front line, through which the enemy began to pour in mass formation. The few Portuguese left came staggering through Bethune, having thrown away their arms and equipment in their mad desire to get away from the hell behind them as quickly as possible.

Shortly afterwards they were followed by British troops, whose flank had been turned, and who were retiring in good order, keeping up a stiff rearguard action as they went.

In Britain everyone was asking: *"Would the Germans get through to Paris?" "Would the Americans arrive in time to check their advance?" "Will the English ports be shelled shortly by German big guns from the coast of France?"*

But then we remembered the "Angels of Mons" and once again the whole British nation was called to prayer. The President of the United States summoned the American people to do likewise; and united prayer went up from all the English speaking peoples.

In the meantime, the enemy shell fire, which had been largely directed against the shattered town of Bethune, suddenly lifted and began to burst on a slight rise beyond its outskirts. This open ground was absolutely bare of tree, houses or human beings, yet the enemy gun fire broke on it with increasing fury, and was augmented by heavy bursts of masses machine guns which raked it backward and forward with a hail of lead. We stood looking in astonishment

"Firtz has gone balmy, Sir," said the Sergeant, *"what in the world is he peppering the naked ground for?"*

"I can't think," I replied. *"Get along down to the canal and see what is happening there."*

I followed him shortly afterwards, being eager to see for myself, as there were obviously no troops within sight against whom the Germans could be directing their fire.

As I made my way over the scattered debris of the ruined houses, the enemy's fire suddenly ceased, and a curious calm fell on everything. I went on wanderingly, and got outside the town. Then a lark suddenly arose from the remains of a meadow, and soared up, up, up, singing a trilling song which rings on my inward ear today, when I think of it.

I saw my Sergeant and men standing on the edge of a shell hole waving their tin hats. They shouted out:

"Fritz is retiring!"

Indeed he was. Outlined on the slight rise by the La Basse village, and as far as we could see, was a dense line of German troops, who a short time before had commenced a forward movement to victory, in mass formation. This line suddenly halted, and, as we watched, we saw it break!

Before our astonished eyes, that well drilled and seemingly victorious army broke up into groups of frightened men who were fleeing from us, throwing down their arms, haversacks, rifles, coats and anything which might impede their flight.

It was not long before my Sergeant arrived with two German officer prisoners, and was soon followed by Tommies bringing in batches of twenty or so at a time.

Briefly, the statement the senior German officer made was as follows: The order had been given to advance in mass formation, and our troops were marching behind us singing their way to victory; when Friedrich my lieutenant here said:

"Herr, Kapitan, just look at that open ground behind Bethune, there is a brigade of cavalry coming up through the smoke drifting across it. They must be mad, these English, to advance against such a force as ours in the open. I suppose they must be cavalry of one of their Colonial forces, for see, they are all in white uniform and are mounted on white horses. "

"Strange," I said, "I never heard of the English having any white uniformed cavalry, whether Colonial or not. They have all been fighting on foot for several years past, and anyway, they wear khaki, not white."

"We saw the shells bursting amongst the horses and their riders, all of whom came forward at a quiet walk trot, in parade ground formation, each man and horse in his exact place."

Shortly afterwards, our machine guns opened a heavy fire, raking the advancing cavalry with a dense hail of lead. But they came quietly forward, though the shells were bursting amongst them with intensified fury, and not a single man or horse fell.

Steadily they advanced, clear in the shining sunlight; and a few paces in front of them rode their Leader, a fine figure of a man, whose hair, like spun gold, shone in an aura round his bare head. By his side was a great sword, but his hands lay quietly holding his horse's reins, as his huge white charger bore him proudly forward.

In spite of heavy shell, and concentrated machine gun fire, the White Cavalry advanced, remorseless as fate, like the incoming tide surging over a sandy beach. Then a great fear fell on me, and I turned to flee; yes I, an Officer of the Prussian Guard, fled, panic-stricken, and around me were hundreds of terrified men, whimpering like children, throwing away their arms and accoutrements in order not to have their movements impeded, all running. Their intense desire was to get away from that advancing White Cavalry; but most of all from their awe inspiring Leader.

That is all I have to tell you. We are beaten. The German army is broken. There may be fighting, but we have lost the war. We are beaten, by the White Cavalry. I cannot understand."

During the following few days I examined many prisoners, and in substance, their accounts tallied with the one given here. This is in spite of the fact that at least two of us could swear that we saw no cavalry in action, here or elsewhere, at that particular time. Neither did any of us see so much as a single white horse either with or without a rider. But it was not necessary for us to do so, the evidence of their presence had to come from the enemy.

Shortly after this, the American forces came into action on the whole front, and about the second week in July there was a general advance which resulted in the capture of over 4,000 enemy and 100 guns on the sector between Bethune and Ypres during the ensuing weeks.

It is interesting to note that official reports give July 11th as the date of the Allied advance, for by November 11 th, 1 918, at 11.00 a.m. the war had ended and an Armistice was declared. Between these dates the British and Allied forces captured 385,000 prisoners and over 5,000 guns.