

The Shield of Faith

Ephesians 6:16

I. The Nature of Faith

➤ How would you define faith?

- **Easton Bible Dictionary:** Faith is in general the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true. Its primary idea is **trust**.
- **Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible:** Faith in the OT and NT carries several meanings. It may mean simple trust in God or in the Word of God, and at other times faith *almost becomes equivalent to active obedience*.

➤ What does the following passage in **James** teach about faith?

- Is faith merely *intellectual*? How do we know if we have faith?

James 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, **what use is that?** **17** Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, *being* by itself.

18 But someone may *well* say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." **19** You believe that God is



one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. **20** But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? → (NASB95 emphasis mine)

- What does the following account with Peter teach us about faith? How can this story with Peter illustrate our struggles with *faith* and *doubt*?

Matthew 14:22 Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. **23** After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. **24** But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. **25** And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. **26** When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. **27** But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

28 Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." **29** And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" **31** Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and *said to him, "You of little **faith**, why did you doubt?" → (NASB95 emphasis mine)



- How was Peter able to walk on the water?
 - What gave Peter the power to walk on water? His *faith*? Or the *object of his faith*? Why is that important?
 - Why did he begin to sink? How can we relate to Peter? Do your circumstances tempt you to doubt God's ability?

II. *The Enemy and his arrows*

- Why is it important that we understand the existence of an *evil one*?
 - **2 Corinthians 2:11** . . .so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.
- From the lesson, what were some common tactics of Satan observed in Scripture?
 - **Genesis 3:1-4** → **1 Chronicles 21:1-6** → **Job 1:1 - 2:10**
- **How** is *faith* the shield that stops all of Satan's arrows?
- How would committing the following sins be an example of a **lack of faith**? How can **faith** act as a shield against committing these (*and other*) sins?
 - Lust, Pornography, Sexual sins
 - Lying to your boss
 - Vengeful anger
 - Jealousy, envy, discontentment
 - Theft
 - Anxiety
 - Laziness



- Etc. etc. etc.
- What kind of flaming arrows has Satan launched at **you**?
 - What scriptures were you able to believe by faith to extinguish his arrows?
- How can we ensure that we are **taking up** the shield of faith?

Prayer Topics:

- Pray that each one of us would daily take up the shield of faith that God has given us.
- Pray that we would know the Word more in order to trust God more.
- Pray that God would protect us and strengthen our faith in Him.

