

Fiery darts and the shield of faith (Quality: Average)

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Preacher: Broome, Leonard Robert James (1905-1986)

[0 : 01] We come today in the Lord's heart to speak again from the 6th chapter of the Ephesians, and this time verse 16.

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 6 and the 16th verse. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. One great danger arises with these most interesting and illuminating illustrations and figures the Apostle uses, and that is, we may pay too close attention to the figures themselves.

They are very apt, and very suitable, but behind them lies a very vital reality, such as having one's feet shed, a shawl for the separation of the gospel of the six, and the previous verse, for which we have also already spoken, as you know.

And here, we have a warlike scene. No composure here, no peaceful settlement here.

[1 : 51] Another very clear evidence of the battle between the church of God and the church of the devil.

And so it is the shield of faith that the Apostle comes to, which must have been for these Ephesians, the most taking work, seeing that they were so used to these convictions, and these warlike scenes.

But above all these effects, overall, we understand this to me, the shield is the only separate piece of armour that is distinct from the actual clothing.

And this shield was a well-known protection in those warlike days.

So that, he likened this to the work of faith, as needful, as Bible, and God-given defensive, whereby his people may withstand the piling up of the wicked.

[3 : 21] He is highly dark, highly dark, then, in also comparison with what he is speaking about, he hears something of.

Our mind has been drawn to the Galatians, which I read, where you see the Apostle standing alone in the defence of the Gospels.

Not because it was overrun in all its parts, but from one particular point, from one cardinal truth. We see him there, in that second of Galatians, and in quite a lot, withstanding even this dear friend Peter.

Now, if he exhorts others to stand, we cannot criticize him, because he didn't. Well, he certainly did. And this is the reason, or one of the reasons, why he is able to speak of these fiery darts of the wicked.

This was a matter of grave concern to him, because it was in the Church of God that these things happened.

[4 : 50] And I understand that these fiery darts referred to were the fiery darts thrown into people's houses to set them alive. not unlike what we read of and hear of today.

And if this be so, is a very apt figure of the errors that were thrown into the early Church in order to destroy those truths that the Apostle had preached.

the great enemy did not the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. And this Gospel of Peace occupied the Apostle's thought much in regard to the Church of Galatia.

It is very noticeable that the great enemy did not come with the same temptation to every one of those early churches.

The Church of Corinth was attacked with many fiery darts. One of them was that proud spirit that said, I am of Paul and I am of Apollos and sure.

[6 : 20] there was a very unclean evil in Christ too, which the Apostle had to do. But the Church of Galatia was tempted in a very different way.

That was to cling to the old order. Though they had received the Gospel, he tells us in the third chapters, they had received it by the Spirit, yet there came a fall.

So that they needed some defence. Now having this text before us and having this shield as our subject doesn't mean that it is going to be effective every time.

When you range through the Scriptures, you will find those gracious characters such as Abraham or David or Jacob who possessed the living faith.

At times, they were called these dark structures. They weren't confusing it. You find the psalmist saying, Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

[8 : 02] Why art thou disquieted within thee? Help thou in God. Well, that was a time when faith was very low. These dark structures.

He was depressed, cast down. Asaph was the same. He said, God forgot to be great. These are not times to commend, but times of instruction to us.

Thus, we must not think that faith is always going to be effective in our use, which is in God's use. but there are times when we are caught on our guard, when the enemy comes in and gains access, just like the arrow that was shot in the battle with a path.

It found an opening and it was recorded death. And when Paul came to the Galatians, he found a considerable amount of penetration there by these ducks, where the work of God had begun, just the same as Corinth, there he found an error.

And that error was clinging to the old law. And you can well understand it. Those things from which they were separated and in the spirit were delivered, clung to them.

[9 : 52] that is, others didn't see as clearly and they were brought into office. So that this shield of faith which I had hitherto been able to use with good effect was no longer used as I said.

faith like the disciples in the stormy sea. They said, Master, perish thou not that we perish.

Their faith was not worthy of them. The Lord said to them, where is it? Where is your faith? God's love?

That these things in the overall view of them constitute a very necessary lesson for us.

As you know in that second chapter of the Galatians that Paul was very concerned about the gospel that he preached.

[11 : 10] He tells us in the second chapter and the second verse, I went up by revelation and communicated unto them that gospel which I preached among the Gentiles.

This was to the Jews. And these were the ones who were and ever have been noted for their opinion to the law.

There had never been a people who have clung so tenaciously to the law or a law as the Jews clung today to the law of Moses.

It's a remarkable evident thing that there are those who have eternal life to rest solely upon the law and their obedience to it of Moses.

They're not to be wondered at that in these early days of the gospel that the same thing happened then. And Paul came up he said to preach among the Gentiles but privately to them who were of reputation.

[12 : 28] This by any means I should run or had run in vain. and then the wisdom that the apostle used to preach privately.

We don't care to think much about this do we but this is a good thing in private conversation and private instruction and private teaching to teach privately to declare the counsel of God privately it's known publicly but privately as well and he did this with a view to speaking to those in authority no doubt James Cephas and John who he said were pillars when he did this they perceived that the grace of God was working it.

Now they must have been possessed of the same grace of course they were to a remarkable degree that they saw like all can see who possess grace the grace of God in love and this is one of the very remarkable thinking of the grace and blessing of God that it detects it in other people.

It's not a question of you saying or making a professor. There is the evidence of the grace of God detectable I believe.

Well they saw it in Paul. Though he come and preach to them who was known to them to be the apostle to the Gentiles he appeared to stand in defence of the gospel before all.

[14 : 33] A noble stand a very blessed stand but what is so excellent about it is that we have the record of it.

God doesn't hide promise what goes on inside the church. This is where the enemy is defeated if all this were hidden up and we knew nothing about it other than so far as the there would have been no reformation in Europe but it was from these felicitous relations that Luther first had this I hope that just shall live by hand.

That was the great illuminating of that remarkable man. God knows how to do and when we would perhaps think it best to cover up the battle that's going on inside the church of God God says no we will expose it or set it forth in its clear light and he gives his soul here the ability to give a short account in this chapter of how he used the shield of faith you can see it so clearly that he had no human health he didn't have the gracious James or Peter or the gracious John they didn't stand by him and uphold his hands like

Aaron and he upheld the hands of Moses they listened they certainly didn't oppose but they certainly didn't instruct him he stood alone like a hymn says he dared to stand alone which is the effectual use of the shield of faith no matter what they said with regard to this dispute as to the validity of the Jewish mode of circumcision to his mind it was perfectly clear that it was all done away in Christ and it was a positive thing with him that Christ would honour the law in every part and we know that in that particular mode Christ had as an enticement into the temple for that purpose and therefore it was a reversal of what

Paul had been taught in his youth and now whilst there were those who came to Galatia to win them back again who had gone over in receiving the doctrines of the gospel Paul stands with this blessed shield of divine given faith to defend in from the works of the Lord now how necessary this is in our private belief and life this is where it comes in it won't do to say that we've got one big shield here that covers all of us it doesn't it must be personal it is the shield doesn't cover two men it's an individual protection we might make it more interesting to speak of what what these ancient shields were made of up to mainly heights of course there were other shields of gold feet and gold and the cross the time of

[19 : 15] Solomon but this isn't really important doesn't matter what the shield was made of in the illustration fact is that there's only one real vital shield for the believer and that is hope to protect him from the fiery darts of temptation and to preserve him for those things which are likely to be as undoing and are there can be no dispute that Abraham was the father of the faithful that he was called a friend of God James Gowder Paul in several references refers to Abraham's pain and yet Abraham you see was beaten on more than one occasion and the darts got through and that's to be reckoned with it does not mean to say that he was defeated of course it does but that shield which Abraham possessed without question he did not use it on all occasions and it was on those occasions that they were what one might call little things compared with some others and it doesn't go thus with God there's no little sins and

Satan gained the advantage over Abraham in the matter of Sarah on two occasions others and these are revealed to us and we cannot help seeing how successful the enemy was when he tempted Abraham to ask Sarah to say that she was his sister and not his wife because he feared of him and what in fact did happen they might take her away from him there you see not for your indolence or mine but for our warning that the greater are going to suffer some injury and how the Lord warned uh see us or

Peter that these darts were coming he could look now notice clearly I say unto thee this day before the cock crow thou shalt design me Christ but it never had any effect on Peter but I have prayed for thee said Jesus that what thy faith fail not it matches up with our first hymn you see faith and repentance all must pass Peter found faith and he found repentance they go together in such a case as this and there whilst that shield of Peter's was not in use shall we put it like that Jesus says that thy faith failed will and still in his hand quite clearly he didn't lose it but it was certainly not used in the proper way and these things are worthy of our very deepest consideration because this foe is ever watched and we haven't the slightest idea of the cunning craftiness of

Satan but we must be alive even to believe this because if we were dead in sin we shouldn't mind whether he was ever on the watch or he wasn't we could look back to see how constantly he tripped us up the days around the generous and how often had the Lord not prevented us even then though we knew him not we should have been plunged into a deep waters of sin and lost so that this is not something that we can trifle with in our speech but this gospel therefore which Paul stuck to put it plainly and held fast to he stood in the face of those who were of reputation and to his advantage they saw in due time that he gave no place to those who he says in verse 4

Paul called Stresor unawares brought in who came in frivolity to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they might bring us into God very illuminating verse here is the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive which we were speaking of a prayer meeting a few weeks ago here is this being tossed to and throw with winds of darkness here are those called false presence presence but false presence what need therefore for this shield who to use against those who come in with a view to spying out our liberties how consistent the devil is with regard to this spying out the liberty of the belief time and time and time again you hear the specious error free will and creature righteousness brought forth the country and the world swarmed with its deadliness is beyond the text that man has the power to accept the offer of salvation and take it at his will only yesterday

[27 : 16] I met a man who said then don't you believe that Christ died for all and if you take the opportunity to be saved you can I said no certainly not yet this goes on and on and is so speechless now only one thing we'll do to put between such as false teachers as I told you they were and the truth and that is the shield of faith through grace we believe that there is no such thing as creature ability and freedom and yet it's rampant and has its power indeed more so to stand and stand with this shield to counter these fiery darts when I will upset and burn and destroy with no small mercy and no credit to the one that uses them these were some of the vexatious things which the apostle

Paul encountered in his ministry and this gospel of the grace of God the finished work of Christ Jesus Jesus Christ and him crucified this great standard of divine truth God's honored gospel this good vital news I'm not ashamed of it not only does he say so but he proved it this is the beauty of it and this is what we need in such an evil day as this to stand far which we have repeated for once from this sixth of the theses having done all you may stand at the end of the journey of life and find that this is so and launch into eternity full confidence and no other hope but in the blood and righteousness of Christ that's what it will mean it is this for which

Paul so earnestly contended and these men who undertook such a an evil task as this weren't easily put off they weren't children they were intent to bring him and those with him they must have numbered a very considerable number of ethicists and at Galatia back into bonding only would give way on this point that it didn't matter circumcision is nothing is it told this to the Romans it is the gospel of the grace of God it is not taught it is being justified freely by his grace we have peace with

God I say it's essential that such gospel as this be preached and the only way to overcome error is to maintain and preach the gospel and you can see this God's bull walk some have said with regard to literal Jerusalem go round about her mark her well her towers consider her bull walk well the bull walk are those preservatives they are those buttresses which maintain the walls you consider this one this buttress divine truth of the gospel of the grace of God that it's all in the honourable work of Christ it is what he has done and nothing can be added to it and certainly nothing taken from it and it is this that really matters therefore if there come those who seek to bring you back again into bondage he says to whom we gave place by subjection no not for an hour that's beautiful isn't it ere you get the war cry of the good man we should say not for a minute not for a minute not for an hour did he listen to such things as these brought in by the false president no not for an hour and why that the truth of the gospel might continue with you peace now this is what is being assaulted here the truth of the gospel let us bear in mind therefore previous words in the text you all think shone with the preparation of the gospel of peace here is abundant evidence that his dear feet were well shone and they were well shone with the gospel of peace and that gospel of peace he would maintain and earnestly desire that those believers so tempted in Galatia should not lose the blessing of him the next chapters will point this out to us but at the moment we find him engaged in this full of warfare not out into the world but among those in the church those who had professed and that of course is where the devil's work is we need not be surprised at the ravaging of the churches we sometimes evince a measure of surprise that certain ones would be attacked the devil should get in the church but no need to wonder that's the very place he's going to attack we are forewarned about this and if it is so with you as an individual beware these temptations

but expect them and this contention earnestly for the truth because you'll have to stand if you are a believer in it you will not dare allow the truth of God to be trampled upon unless your shield of faith is in the wrong place or your faith is low and you've got carnalized and defeated onion described how apollyon crushed christian to the ground and he was about to finally destroy him christian reached both his hands and reached his sword the sword of truth this is so accurate in its description that it cannot be thwarted and so here that the gospel might continue with you how blessed a desire what a loving spirit for the faithful soldier of jesus christ as he contends against the wiles of the devil and obtrudes the shield of faith in his own ministry and ministrations among these very brethren for the preciousness of the finished work of christ he comes to this toward the end of this chapter that i am crucified with christ nevertheless i live to see to see what he means why was christ crucified why have to fulfill the law in all its past and here and here was a happy place for him to be sheltered with christ in the fulfillment of the lord god with one who never broke a single word of it he was crucified with christ and yet he once persecuted him bitterly opposed him sought all men and thieves to obliterate the name of christ of the earth highly men and women to prison now it comes to this uh sacred admission as he again used this shield of faith now it doesn't mean to say that you've got to say this but seek it by all men this will be one of the grand desires of a believer's heart a seeker's heart

[38 : 17] I'm crucified with christ see him standing here without any dissimulation or making out he is what he isn't which was what he accused his brother Peter of dissimulation the very opposite from hypocrisy here he stands firm holds full the shield as regards himself I'm crucified with christ I believe in the crucifixion and death of christ he says on this ground that he honoured the law and magnified it and yet suffered the consequences of a broken law on this ground that he was made a curse as if he broke and he did this on behalf of the people of God this is called therefore the gospel of peace and this is what shoes were on his feet why he stood the blessedness of the standing people yet he says nevertheless one of the most blessed nevertheless in the scriptures though I'm crucified with christ nevertheless

I live which was hopeless wasn't it I live so it was live to fight live to defend live to stand alone live to protrude the shore shield of faith on this ground that christ died for the ungodly to this end therefore he counteracts error and contends against above all therefore he says to the ephesians taking the shield of faith and here is the example and you can find others but this is the one as I said at the beginning to which my mind is led because this is the only scripture where we find a good man standing alone he had a score of enemies all round but they weren't in the church of God but now when these fiery darts have got into among the brethren and are brought in by false brethren we stand alone so that we are not admonished by one who is a coward to stand but we are admonished by one who knows what he's talking about and declares with the most sacred firmness nevertheless

I live yet not I oh how beautiful isn't it we see the shining humility accompanying this sturdy warrior of Jesus Christ yet not I yet not I didn't make didn't saw them to ask yet not I so here we have all the Christian graces in exercise and on the battlefield and this is what you and I have got to know a little about in life and if we don't and our religion is just a glossary of all this we have only surface work and a carnal natural belief in it will be good because these things happen every day and are likely to and it is by these things that men live and all these things is the life of their spirit amen and hold up thousand doors and see as your what or

Harry says it sus in depicted together