Verses: 2 Samuel 22:2-4 and Ephesians 6:16b Occasion: Worship

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Lake Mary August 30, 2020

Pastor: Joe Raymond

**Song**

I sing praises to Your name, oh Lord
praises to Your name, oh Lord
for Your name is great
and worthy to be praised

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**Wise Warriors part 6**

Scripture readings**: 2 Samuel 22:2-4 and Ephesians 6:16b**

**2 Samuel 22:2-4**

David’s words:

2 **He said:**

**The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,**3 **my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield and the horn of my salvation,
    my stronghold and my refuge,
    my savior; you save me from violence.**4 **I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
    and I am saved from my enemies.**

**Ephesians 6:16b**

16 **With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.**

**This is the word of the Lord! Thanks be to God.**

**Let us pray**

 Heavenly Father, please quiet our minds and open our hearts

to Your truth,

and please

**…let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
   O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.**

**Amen**

**Sermon**

It was Friday,

August 28

10 am

A firetruck, an ambulance, and caravan of about 25 cars all converged to celebrate the 100th birthday of one of our members: Walter Scudder.

He is 100!

Driving by, I found myself wondering, because I knew we were going to study the shield of faith today, how great a number of stories about God’s protection a believer who is 100 might have.

Every day that passes, each believer accumulates experience in spiritual warfare.

How many stories will we have at 100 years old?

That led me to ask, “Do we intentionally share these stories?”

Sharing these stories brings glory to God and helps build the shields of all who listen. Believers all through the ages have had their faith strengthened in this way.

The Bible is full of shield-of-faith stories and how the warriors praised God.

In our verse from 2 Samuel today are King David’s words of praise to God for His protection and deliverance in battle.

Similarly, we should share with others how God has been our:

* **rock**
* **refuge**
* **fortress**
* **deliverer**
* **shield**
* **horn of salvation**
* **stronghold**
* **savior**

We will return to this topic a little later.

Last week as you recall, we examined what God’s shield of faith is; this week we will study how to use it to quench Satan’s flaming arrows.

We generalized that a shield is something that protects us from perceived danger. If we sense potential harm, we seek protection. To be effective, a shield must be specific to the danger, much like wrap-around UV-filtering sunglasses protect our eyes from ultraviolet A and B rays.

Figurative shields are similar. They must be chosen wisely to meet the specific danger, and we must know how to use them!

The first step is to identify the danger.

Paul has taught us that the real danger is not from people, but from Satan who relentlessly seeks to destroy us. His tactics are what Paul calls flaming arrows.

To the ancient cultures, literal flaming arrows were much-feared weaponry. They were typically covered with flammable material and shot from bows in a multitude. They rained down on the victims, splattering flammable material, causing panic, fear, pain, and death. When armies saw them coming, they knew they needed to position their shields and hide as best they could.

Paul portrays Satan’s weapons as equally menacing. We must learn to recognize them and learn how to best use our shields for protection. This requires preparation and practice.

Why?

It is because, as Paul has previously warned, Satan is crafty. He knows if we can see the arrows, we will probably take cover. No, rather than coming with wicked, easily visible tactics, his ways are frequently quite subtle. He might slip his enticement in while we are doing some commonplace, pleasant things like watching tv, or having a seemingly casual conversation with an acquaintance (as he did with Eve in the garden).

Because he is devious, your flaming arrows will be unique to you and your specific weaknesses; mine will be unique to me. But all are designed to destroy faith and draw us away from God.

We must, as Peter says: 1 Peter 5:8,

**8 Discipline [ourselves], keep alert.**

Discipline means "train.” Warriors get trained. Wise warriors build up and strengthen their shields of faith and become skilled in their use before the arrows fly! In the heat of the battle, we often do not think clearly.

Church, please pray often about this. Ask God to reveal when and in what areas you are vulnerable. What draws you away from worship and complete obedience?

It might be when we are feeling

* hungry, tired, sick
* under stress
* grieving or hurting
* disappointed

In these times Satan might entice us to doubt God’s provision.

Those are all negative times. But, Satan also might entice us when we are feeling positive. For example:

* when we are enjoying the company of others, he might entice us to “go along with the crowd”

or

* he may use our spare time. Here is a wise saying: Satan readily provides activities to idle hands.

or

* when we get praise or recognition for something, he might entice us to pride and selfish ambition.

And, he entices us in different areas like:

* finances
* health
* relationships
* business endeavors
* recreation choices

How can we use our shield of faith to keep us from harm?

Let us look to Jesus to see what He did in such a situation.

Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4 all record Jesus’s 40 days and nights in the wilderness after His baptism. Satan came when Jesus was famished.

First, he tempted Jesus about his need for food, suggesting He should sustain His own life by changing rocks into bread. But Jesus answered him with scripture, **‘One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”**

Next, Satan suggested that Jesus throw himself off the temple to test the Father’s care. Would God really send angels to prevent His harm? Again, Jesus answered with scripture,

**‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”**

Finally, Satan tempted Jesus with promises of fame if only Jesus would worship him. Jesus kept His eyes only on His Father and His eternal plan.

**“Away with you, Satan! for it is written,**

**‘Worship the Lord your God,
    and serve only him.’”**

Jesus maintained a singleness of focus: He remained steadfast in His trust of His Father.

Did you notice He never engaged in debate with Satan on the specifics of the temptation?

Instead, he focused on God’s attributes, doctrines, and promises.

This is important for us to know for our own shield use.

We must never play with the flaming arrows. Like Jesus, we must focus on God’s attributes, doctrines, and promises.

Satan may plant temptations in our minds, but we must not dwell on them.

If we attempt to argue about them with our enemy, he is on his way to victory.

As wise warriors, we must know our weaknesses and choose to hide ourselves completely behind our shields, not focused on the arrows, but, by faith, solely focused on God.

Where are you vulnerable? Memorize protective scriptures in advance.

Are you tempted to doubt that God remains in charge when things are confusing?

Learn of God’s omnipotence.

Psalm 24:1 **The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,
    the world, and those who live in it;**

Dwell on his power.

1 John 4:4

4 **Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.**

Does Satan tempt you to think God doesn’t really know you?

Learn from Psalm 139.

**Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
    all the days that were formed for me,
    when none of them as yet existed.**

I could, of course, go on and on.

All scripture teaches of God’s character, doctrines, promises, and many, many accounts of people using their shields of faith.

If we are wise warriors, we will learn from their stories.

Also, we can draw wisdom from the shield-of-faith stories from our own brothers and sisters in the Lord with whom we share life now.

Doing this, we build our shields stronger and thicker and gain understanding to use them effectively.

Brothers and sisters, this is truly good news! Our shields can quench all flaming arrows! Please share your shield-of-faith stories with anyone who will listen! And please remember, this good news came to you on its way out to someone else, using YOU as a messenger.

To those listening who remain vulnerable to Satan’s flaming arrows because you don’t yet have this armor of God, I urge you, please call or come see me as soon as possible, so we can have that life and death conversation.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving each believer Your faith-shield. May we learn to hide well, keeping our focus on You alone. Amen

And now:

 “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ… the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14) Go in Peace!