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## THE SHIELD OF FAITH

“...in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one,” (Eph. 6:16). Shields were extremely vital to the survival of Roman soldiers in combat and several different kinds were used. One was a small, round shield that was secured to the soldier’s arm by leather straps. This shield was to block and push away the thrusts of an enemy blade in hand-to-hand combat. This small, lightweight shield is not the one referred to here. The word Paul uses here is “thureos” which comes from the word “thura” meaning “door”. This larger, door-shaped shield which was designed to cover the entire body of the soldier is the shield Paul references. A man could put his entire body behind it as it absorbed the javelins and arrows of the enemy. The tips

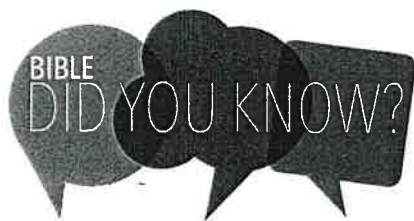
of arrows would be wrapped in pieces of cloth that had been soaked in pitch. This would then be set on fire and shot at the enemy. When the arrow hit its target, the flaming pitch would splatter in every direction, igniting everything flammable it touched. The Roman “thureos” shield would provide an adequate defense against these fiery missiles. If the shield was covered with metal, the arrow and its fiery tip would be deflected. If the shield was covered with leather, it would be soaked in water prior to the battle, and the wet leather would quench the fiery arrows and protect the soldier behind the shield. Often, the arrow would snuff out as it buried itself in the thickness of the shield, and in the midst of battle, these shields would bristle with smoking arrows like porcupines. Paul reminds us of

the great all encompassing shield we may hide ourselves behind when Satan's fiery arrows of temptation are fired upon us. This shield Paul describes is faith. The great danger Satan ultimately brings upon us with every temptation is the attempt to deceive us with the belief that there is more joy and lasting fulfillment in sinful pleasures than there is in obedience to God's word. This is a devastating lie in that the exact opposite nearly always occurs when we give in and indulge the lusts of the flesh. While they may have the allurements of possessing a moment of enjoyable pleasure, they are set on fire with the ability to actually consume and destroy anything resembling lasting joy, fulfillment or peace. God has given us His word to resist the tempting deceptive lies Satan brings upon us in an effort to convince us to indulge the flesh in sinful pleasure. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it," (1 Cor. 10:13). While we must hide behind the shield of our trust in the truth of God's word

to protect us from temptation and resist indulgence with obedience to God's truth, there is something else about His word we must have faith in which is what ultimately quenches the dangerous flaming arrows of temptation. We must believe and have full trust and faith that obedience to God's word is what ultimately leads to complete joy, fulfillment and peace, even though it may not always result in immediate enjoyment the way sinful pleasure nearly always promises. In this way, obedience to the Spirit and obedience to the flesh are total opposites. While obedience to the lust of the flesh almost always promises immediate gratification while at the same time offering nothing in the realm of lasting joy, fulfillment or peace, obedience to the Spirit offers 100% guaranteed promises of lasting joy, fulfillment and peace while promising nothing in the realm of immediate pleasure. In fact most of the time it involves some degree of discomfort or pain either through the struggles of self-disciplined resistance or the pain inflicted from various degrees of outside persecution as a reaction to our choice of obedience. This is the shield we must put our trust in and hide

ourselves behind when the flaming arrows of temptation are fired upon us, that obedience to the Spirit through the Word of God is what will result in lasting joy, fulfillment and peace while giving in to momentary pleasurable sin will only rob, kill and destroy the possibility of attaining those. "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," (2 Cor. 4:17-18). "Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar," (Prov. 30:5-6). "As for God, His way is blameless; the word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him," (Ps. 18:30). "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith," (1 Jn. 5:4). Don't let Satan's deceptive lies that indulging the flesh with immediate gratifying sinful pleasure will bring long lasting satisfaction ignite the flesh and stir up those desires. Quench those flaming arrows with the

confident trust that it is obedience to the Spirit that ultimately brings what sin can never accomplish even though it deceptively promises. "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 1:6-7). – Daniel Ruegg



***Jesus is the English transliteration of the Greek name Iesus. Joshua is the English transliteration of the Hebrew name Yeshuah. Both Jesus and Joshua mean Yahweh saves or Jehovah is salvation.***

***Christ is not actually a name, but a title. When the Bible talks about the Messiah in the Old Testament, it is referring to the same title as the New Testament calls Christ. Both Messiah and Christ mean anointed one.***



# MONTHLY CHALLENGE

**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Thankful Challenge!

*Rom. 12:10 "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor."*

Let's be thankful for one another this month! Isn't it amazing how quickly a negative thought about someone else's flaws or shortcomings can quickly cast a shadow over all of the good uplifting encouraging things we love about them? Let's focus our thoughts on all of the good and thankful traits of one another and be sure to let each other know! Pass the word along, it's Thankful month at the Wellsburg Church of Christ! :) As we attempt to apply the above passage in our relationship with one another, let's dwell on the wonderful blessings we have in the church through our connections with each other. Make mention of one another by name in our daily prayers, specifically thanking God for them. Then pass along your thankful thoughts in person, text, email or note in the mail. You can't thank them personally until you've privately thanked God for them in prayer. Can you reach the whole congregation before the end of the month? Let's be thankful and devoted to one another in love!

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Colossians 1:13-23*

"For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach – if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister."