



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Shield of Faith



*Angels Around Victorious Lamb
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of discernment and study to become lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth. And so we say together:

Our Father...

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Presentation:

During our first three episodes, we began a discussion as to the six components of the Armor of God. As a reminder, St. Paul listed these components in Ephesians 6:10-18. In summary, they are:

The belt of truth
The breastplate of righteousness
The sandals of peace
The shield of faith
The helmet of salvation
The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Last week we discussed the **sandals of peace**. Today, we will discuss the fourth component of the armor of God, which is **the shield of faith**.

As we look at the definition of **faith** in the dictionary, we see words such as.....allegiance, fidelity, sincerity, belief, trust and loyalty to God.

We should also note that we have **faith** in things which are **true** and things which lack **truth**. Our challenge is to discern what exactly is **true**. If we do not know our **faith**, we leave ourselves vulnerable to the one who would take it from us; and we all know who works day and night, 24/7, and throughout the generations to sabotage our **faith**.

The evil one will send those who will challenge the basis of our **faith**. He will send those who will attempt to dissuade us from the fullness of **faith**, such as what we receive through the real presence of Jesus, how we pray, how we share in **faith**, how we reflect upon our **faith**, how we live our **faith**, as well as our relationship with the holy ones of God such as Mary and the saints. If we know our **faith**, then, we can answer the challenges to our **faith** with confidence of **truth**; but more importantly, we enable ourselves to experience the fullness of our **faith** and all the blessings it brings.

The bottom line is that the more we know of our **faith**, the more we are also enabled to share of it in the fulfillment of the greatest of commandments which are to love God and one another.

Keeping this in mind, let's turn to our panel and ask,

Opening Question? What does God ask of our **faith** and how does **faith** become a shield?

According to Webster: Faith is defined as:

1a : **allegiance** to duty or a person : **loyalty** lost **faith** in the company's president

b (1) : **fidelity** to one's promises (2) : **sincerity** of intentions acted in good **faith**

2a (1) : **belief and trust in and loyalty to God** (2) : belief in the traditional doctrines of a religion

b (1) : **firm belief in something for which there is no proof** clinging to the **faith** that her missing son would one day return (2) : **complete trust**

3 : **something that is believed especially with strong conviction**; especially : a system of religious beliefs the Protestant **faith**

Scripture:

Old Testament:

Abram put his **faith** in the Lord, who attributed it to him as an act of righteousness.
(Genesis 15:6)

The LORD said to Moses: I am coming to you now in a dense cloud, so that when the people hear me speaking with you, they will also remain **faithful** to you. (Exodus 19:9)

Know, then, that the LORD, your God, is God: the **faithful** God who keeps covenant mercy to the thousandth generation toward those who love him and keep his commandments, 10 but who repays with destruction those who hate him; he does not delay with those who hate him, but makes them pay for it. 11 Therefore carefully observe the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which I command you today.
(Deuteronomy 7:9-11)

He guards the footsteps of his **faithful** ones, but the wicked shall perish in the darkness; for not by strength does one prevail. (1 Samuel 2:9)

24 But you must fear the LORD and serve him **faithfully** with all your heart, for you have seen the great things the LORD has done among you. 25 If instead you continue to do evil, both you and your king shall be swept away.” (1 Samuel 12:24-25)

(Question: Do we see the great things the Lord does for us? Do we offer up to Him thanks and praise for all the blessings He gives to our lives, or do we focus only on our trials and tribulations which sometimes are generated by what we do and fail to do or may be more perception than reality?)

We might ask of ourselves, what do we bring upon ourselves through selfishness, arrogance, pride, and envy? Could it be that they are the source of many of our trials and tribulations?

This does not mean that the evil one does not promote mischief against the innocent, but we should also consider the result as we seek to walk paths in opposition to the commandments of God. Instead, if we turn our focus to **faith** in Him, we might find that what we perceived as a tribulation is no longer. We might also see the blessings of His healing and assisting hands. The challenge for us is to recognize what we may do in **faith** and what evil we generate when we live in indifference or in opposition to what He asks of us.)

25 So the LORD rewarded my **righteousness**, the cleanness of my hands in his sight.
26 Toward the **faithful** you are **faithful**; to the honest you are honest;
(2 Samuel 22:25-26)

(NABRE Footnote: People are treated by God in the same way they treat him and other people.)

(Question: Does this footnote remind us of anything? - “Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 7:12))

Early in the morning they went out to the wilderness of Tekoa. As they were going out, Jehoshaphat halted and said: "Listen to me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! **Let your faith in the LORD, your God, be firm, and you will be firm. Have faith in his prophets and you will succeed.**" (2 Chronicles 20)

(Question: Does this encouragement of the people by Jehoshaphat remind us of anything? - He said to them, "Because of your little faith. Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20))

Was not Abraham found faithful in trial, and it was credited to him as righteousness? (1 Maccabees 2:52)

(Question: Does this mean that as we live by our faith, it also means doing what is right and just? How might we measure our faith compared to Abraham?)

Love the Lord, all you who are faithful to him. The Lord protects the loyal, but repays the arrogant in full. (Psalm 31:24)

New Testament

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully." 7 He said to him, "I will come and cure him." 8 The centurion said in reply, "Lord, **I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.** 9 For I too am a person subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "**Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.** 11 I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven, 12 but the children of the kingdom will be driven out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth." 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "**You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you.**" And at that very hour [his] servant was healed. (Matthew 8:5-13)

(Question: Why did Jesus see the statement of the centurion as such an expression of faith? When the centurion says, "I too am a person subject to authority," how does this relate to faith and what is the relationship to authority?)

23 He got into a boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. 25 They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" 26 He said to them, "**Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?**" Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. 27 The men were amazed and said, "What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?" (Matthew 8:23-27)

(Question: How do we approach the tribulations in our life – by ourselves, let Him take the wheel as we flee, or do we seek to work with Him and stand confident in **faith**; the **faith** that what God allows is for a greater good to come?)

*Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. 44 So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come. 45 “Who, then, is the **faithful** and prudent servant, whom the master has put in charge of his household to distribute to them their food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master on his arrival finds doing so. 47 **Amen, I say to you, he will put him in charge of all his property.** 48 But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is long delayed,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eat and drink with drunkards, 50 **the servant’s master will come on an unexpected day and at an unknown hour** 51 and will punish him severely and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. (Matthew 24:45-51)*

(Question: What does this scripture reveal about the qualities of a **faithful** person?)

Catechism:

The Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositum On The Publication Of The Catechism of The Catholic Church begins by stating, “**Guarding the Deposit of Faith Is the Mission Which the Lord Entrusted to His Church,** and which she fulfills in every age.”

In section 2 it continues, “**A catechism should faithfully and systematically present the teaching of Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition in the Church and the authentic Magisterium, as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors, and saints of the Church, to allow for a better knowledge of the Christian mystery and for enlivening the faith of the People of God.** It should take into account the doctrinal statements which down the centuries the Holy Spirit has intimated to his Church. It should also help to illumine with the light of **faith** the new situations and problems which had not yet emerged in the past.

(Note: The church plays a major role in our understanding of our **faith**. Part of the authority Jesus gave to His Apostles was to, “**19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,** 20 **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.** And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20))

Those who belong to Christ through **faith** and Baptism must confess their **baptismal faith before men.** First therefore the Catechism expounds revelation, by which God addresses and gives himself to man, and the **faith** by which man responds to God (Section One). **The profession of faith summarizes the gifts that God gives man:** as the Author of all that is good; as Redeemer; and as Sanctifier. It develops these in the three chapters on our baptismal **faith** in the one God: the almighty Father, the Creator; his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior; and the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, in the Holy Church

(Section Two). (CCC: 14)

The Church is catholic [universal]: she proclaims the fullness of the **faith**. She bears in herself and administers the totality of the means of salvation. She is sent out to all peoples. She speaks to all men. She encompasses all times. She is “missionary of her very nature” (AG 2). (CCC: 868)

Quotes:

If you wish to convert anyone to the fullness of the knowledge of Our Lord and of His Mystical Body, then teach him the Rosary. One of two things will happen. Either he will stop saying the Rosary — or he will get the gift of **faith**. (Archbishop Fulton Sheen)

"**Faith** is to **believe** what you do not see; the reward of this **faith** is to see what you **believe**." (St. Augustine)

I will go peaceably and firmly to the Catholic Church: for if **Faith** is so important to our salvation, I will seek it where true **Faith** first began, seek it among those who received it from God Himself. (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton) (Matthew 16:18-19)

“To one who has **faith**, no explanation is necessary. To one without **faith**, no explanation is possible.” (St. Thomas Aquinas)

Points for discussion:

What weakens our **faith**?

What strengthens our **faith**?

In what ways do we see our **faith** in action?

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. But before we go, I would like to offer something for us to ponder. If we look to God in **faith**, if we look to our Lord and Savior in **faith**, indeed, if we look to the Holy Spirit in **faith**; then, truly, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit become our shield against the evil which stalks our soul. And why does this shield matter? Jesus told us, *And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.* (Matthew 10:28) Let us, then, turn to Him in prayer, let us turn to Him in adoration, let us turn to Him in **faith** and ask that God be our shield against all evil as He guides us on the path of **truth, righteousness, peace and faith**.

We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with “the helmet of salvation.”

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may share the blessings of **truth, righteousness, peace, and faith** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen. - Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: The Helmet of Salvation