**OFFERING**

**Matthew 6:9–13 (NKJV)** In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. **10** **Your kingdom** come. **Your will** be done On earth as it is in heaven. **11** **Give us this day our daily bread. 12** And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. **13** And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For **Yours is the kingdom** and **the power** and **the glory** forever. Amen.

Casting Down Arguments (series)

**2— THE SHIELD OF FAITH**

(arguments, lies, high things, thoughts, fiery darts)

**Mark 11:22 (NKJV)** So Jesus answered and said to them, “Have faith in God. **23** For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, **he will have whatever he says.**”

**TO REMOVE MOUNTAINS, YOU MUST HAVE… FAITH… AND YOU MUST SPEAK YOUR FAITH**

* Can you speak to a storm… like in Mark 4 when Jesus said “Peace, be still?”
* Can you speak to a demon… like in Mark 5 when Jesus said “Come out” to the legion of demons?
* Can you speak to a sickness… like in Mark 1 when Jesus said to a leper “Be cleansed!”?
* Can you speak to deafness… like in Mark 7 when Jesus said to a man’s ears “Be opened!”?
* Can you speak to death… like in Mark 5 when Jesus said “Little girl, I say to you arise!”?
* Can you speak to debt… discouragement… fear… and lies?
* **How about to fiery darts of the wicked one?**

**THE ANSWER IS YES, YES, YES, YES, YES, YES, AND YES!**

**AND WHAT TWO THINGS DO YOU NEED?**

**YOU MUST HAVE… FAITH… AND YOU MUST SPEAK YOUR FAITH**

**2 Corinthians 10:4–5 (NKJV)** For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down **strongholds**, **5** casting down **arguments** and **every high thing** that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing **every thought** into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

**I AM ADDRESSING THESE THINGS IN THIS SERIES:**

1. **DESTROYING LIES (double meaning)**
2. **THE SHIELD OF FAITH**
3. **THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT**
4. **WINNING WITH WEAPONS OF WARFARE**

**I WANT TO TEACH YOU TODAY ABOUT “THE SHIELD OF FAITH”**

**Ephesians 6:11–18 (NKJV)** **Put on** the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against **the wiles** of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. **13** Therefore **take up** the whole armor of God, **that you may be able to withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, **having girded** your waist with truth, **having put on** the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and **having shod** your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** above all, **taking the shield** of faith with which **you will be able to quench** all the fiery darts of the wicked one. **17** And **take the** helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; **18** **praying always** with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, **being watchful** to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

**WILES = SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL**

**BUT NOTICE, OUR WEAPONS DON’T SELF-LAUNCH… WE MUST:**

* V11 - Put on” - we must put them on
* V13 - “Take up” - we must lift them up to engage the attack
* V13 - That “you may be able to withstand”
* V14 - “having girded”
* V14 - “having put on”
* V15 - “having shod”
* V16 - “Taking the shield of faith” - we must have our faith ready
* V16 - “you will be able to quench” - we must counter demonically-inspired words and arguments with quenching words of faith
* V17 - “take the helmet… and the sword of the Spirit”
* V18 - “praying always”
* V18 – “being watchful”

**LOOK AGAIN AT VERSE 16**

**Ephesians 6:16 (NKJV)** Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

**AND HOW DO YOU GET FAITH?**

**Romans 10:17 (NKJV)** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

**YOU CAN HAVE FAITH FOR SOME THINGS, BUT NOT OTHERS.**

**Psalm 103:2–3 (NKJV)** Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: **3** Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases.

**FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS…YOU COULD HAVE FIRM FAITH AND NOT DOUBT THAT GOD FORGIVES ALL YOUR SINS, BUT NOT HAVE FAITH THAT GOD HEALS ALL YOUR DISEASES.**

**SO WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU LACK FAITH FOR SOMETHING YOU NEED?**

**YOU GO FIND OUT WHAT GOD’S WORD SAYS… AND HEAR AND HEAR IT… SO YOU CAN BELIEVE IT.**

**LET’S QUICKLY REVIEW FIERY DARTS**

**THE MILITARY OF THE NT TIMES USED THREE TYPES OF ARROWS:**

1. **REGULAR ARROWS: SIMILAR TO THE TYPICAL ARROWS PEOPLE SHOOT FROM BOWS TODAY.**
2. **ARROWS DIPPED IN TAR, SET ON FIRE, AND THEN SHOT THROUGH THE AIR.**
3. **ARROWS MADE FROM LONG, SLENDER PIECES OF CANE THAT CARRY FIRE AND A HOLLOW TUBE-LIKE CAVITY FILLED WITH COMBUSTIBLE FLUID TO INITIALLY CAUSE AN EXPLOSION IMMEDIATELY UPON IMPACT… AND THEN TO CONTINUE BURNING TO CAUSE FURTHER DAMAGE. IT WAS THE MOST EXPENSIVE BECAUSE OF ITS SOPHISTICATED DESIGN REQUIRED MORE ELABORATE MANUFACTURING.**

**I’M GOING TO SHOW YOU FROM THE WORD THAT THE FIERY DARTS PAUL IS DESCRIBING ARE THIS THIRD KIND.**

**Psalm 140:1–3 (NKJV)** Deliver me, O Lord, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men, **2** Who plan evil things in their hearts; **They continually gather together** for war. **3** **They sharpen their tongues like a serpent**; The **poison** of asps is under their lips. Selah

**SINCE THERE WAS NOT A SNAKE UNDER THEIR TONGUE, WHAT ELSE WOULD THE HOLY SPIRIT BE TALKING ABOUT EXCEPT THE SERPENT… THE DEVIL… BEHIND A PERSON’S TONGUE.**

**Psalm 58:3–7 (NKJV)** The wicked are estranged from the womb; They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. **4** Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; They are like the deaf cobra that stops its ear, **5** Which will not heed the voice of charmers, Charming ever so skillfully. **6** Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord! **7** Let them flow away as waters which run continually; When he bends his bow, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.

**Proverbs 26:18–19 (NKJV)** Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death, **19** Is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, “I was only joking!”

**James 3:5–9 (NKJV)** Even so the tongue is a **little member** and boasts great things. **SEE HOW GREAT** a forest a **little FIRE** kindles! **6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; **AND IT IS SET ON FIRE BY HELL.** **7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. **8** But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly **evil**, **FULL of deadly poison**. **9** With it we bless our God and Father, and **with it we curse men**, who have been made in the similitude of God.

**NOTICE “FIRE” AND “FIERY DARTS”**

**SOMETIMES THESE ARROWS — WORDS — MAY NOT SEEM VERY DEADLY WHEN THEY’RE SPOKEN… IT’S ONLY AFTER IMPACT THAT YOU SEE HOW DEVASTATING THESE “FIERY DARTS” ARE.**

**Proverbs 18:21 (NKJV)** Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

**WE ARE LIVING IN A WAR ZONE… AND DEADLY BULLETS ARE FLYING ALL AROUND US… AND AT US.**

**SOME DEADLY WORDS ARE LAUNCHED DIRECTLY AT US… BUT MOST WORDS AGAINST ALL OF SOCIETY… ANYONE WHO WILL LISTEN… THEY COME THROUGH:**

1. TV shows we watch and listen to
2. News reports & articles we read
3. Other articles
4. Social media posts we see and read
5. Videos
6. Movies
7. Radio
8. Etc.

**MANY OF THESE DEADLY WORDS ARE ON A TRAJECTORY TO MISS US, BUT ALL TOO OFTEN WE REPOSITION OURSELVES TO HEAR THEM, OR READ THEM, SO THAT THEY LAND IN OUR HEARTS.**

**Psalm 1:1 (NKJV)** Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

**NOW… LET ME SHOW YOU THE SHIELD OF FAITH**

**Ephesians 6:16 (NKJV)** Above all, taking the shield of faith with which **YOU will be able to quench all the FIERY darts** of the wicked one.

**Isaiah 54:14–17 (NASB 2020)** “In righteousness you will be established; You will be far from **oppression**, for you will not fear; And from **terror**, for it will not come near you. **15** “**If** **anyone** **fiercely** **attacks** **you**, it will not be from Me. Whoever attacks you will fall because of you. **16** “Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows on the **FIRE** of coals and **produces a WEAPON** for its work; And I have created **the destroyer** to inflict ruin. **17** “No **weapon that is formed against** you will succeed; And **YOU** will condemn **every tongue** that accuses you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their vindication is from Me,” declares the Lord.

**WHO IS LAUNCHING THESE WORDS OF ACCUSATION AND JUDGMENT?**

**Revelation 12:9–10 (NLT)** This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels. **10** Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, “It has come at last— salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth— the one who accuses them before our God day and night.

**“condemn”** = rashaʿ [raw·**shah**] = to pronounce guilty

**IN OTHER WORDS, GOD IS SAYING… “WHEN ACCUSATIONS… ARGUMENTS… ASSESSMENTS… DIAGNOSES… PROGNOSES AND PREDICTIONS ABOUT YOU AND YOUR LIFE COME AT YOU THROUGH HELL-INSPIRED WORDS THAT HAVE BEEN FORMED INTO A WEAPON AGAINST YOU… GOD SAYS… I APPOINT YOU TO BE THE JUDGE… AND WILL USE YOUR WORDS TO CONDEMN THESE WORDS… PRONOUNCING THEM TO BE GUILTY OF LYING… AND THE INTENDED PURPOSE OF THE WEAPON WILL BE QUENCHED… IT WILL NOT PROSPER OR SUCCEED.”**

**SPEAKING YOUR FAITH IN GOD’S WORD IS THE SHIELD OF FAITH.**

**AND WHAT DOES THE DEVIL DO? HE SPEAKS MORE WORDS OF ACCUSATION… SAYING THAT YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO QUENCH AND NEGATE HIS WEAPONIZED WORDS.**

**AND THEN NOTICE… GOD SPEAKS TO SOMEONE ELSE.**

**LET’S READ IT FROM THE NKJV**

**Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV)** No weapon formed against **you** shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against **you** in judgment **You** shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And **their** righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.

**GOD IS SAYING THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS… THEIR “RIGHT” TO QUENCH THESE WORDS CAME FROM ME… IT’S THE FREE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**THE SHIELD OF FAITH CAN BE USED:**

1. **TO PROTECT YOUR OWN HEART AND FAITH**
2. **TO PROTECT SOMEONE ELSE’S HEART AND FAITH**
3. **TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE YOU LEAD OR ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR, SUCH AS FAMILY OR EMPLOYEES**

**EXAMPLES OF THE SHIELD OF FAITH:**

1. **TO PROTECT YOUR OWN HEART AND FAITH**

**Matthew 16:21–23 (NKJV)** From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. **22** Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” **23** But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

**JESUS USED WORDS OF FAITH TO QUENCH THE FEAR THAT CAME FROM A BAD REPORT**

**John 11:1–15 (NKJV)** Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. **3** Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, **behold, he whom You love is sick.**” **4** When Jesus heard that, He said, “**This sickness is not unto death**, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” **5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. **7** Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let us go to Judea again.” **8** The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?” **9** Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. **10** But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” **11** These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend **Lazarus sleeps**, but I go that I may wake him up.” **12** Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” **13** **However, Jesus spoke of his death**, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. **14** Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. **15** And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

**AND… LET ME SHOW YOU HOW SUCCESSFUL JESUS WAS AT KEEPING THE DEVIL’S LIES, DECEPTIONS, AND THOUGHTS OUT OF HIS HEART.**

**John 14:30 (NKJV)** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

**AS SOON AS YOU HEAR… YOU NEED TO SAY**

**AS SOON AS THOUGHTS OF FEAR OR WORRY COME TO MIND… YOU NEED TO HOLD UP YOUR SHIELD OF FAITH BY SPEAKING FAITH**

**HOW COULD YOU RAISE YOUR SHIELD OF FAITH IF THESE WERE YOUR DIAGNOSES?**

**Psalm 118:17 (NKJV)** I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the Lord.

**“He heals all my diseases.” (Psalm 103:2)**

**“By His stripes I am healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)**

**EX – Not like my parents did when my dad was told he’d be laid off. “Lord, we’re tithers, and You said You would rebuke the devourer for our sakes.” (Malachi 3:10–11)**

**EX – In November of 1996, shortly after I woke up in our townhouse in Covina, CA, I clearly heard the Lord speak a word of wisdom to me. “Start meditating the healing scriptures because you’re going to need them in six months.” So I did… and six months later, I had an enormous amount of faith that God heals all our diseases. I won’t take time to tell all the ways the God used that faith, but it was in May 1997 when Kimberly called me and said, “The doctor said the cause of Jonathan’s wheezing and coughing when he runs is asthma.” I immediately responded in faith and said, “No he doesn’t.” And that fiery dart was immediately quenched… and the mountain of asthma… has been gone 26 years THIS MONTH.**

1. **TO PROTECT SOMEONE ELSE’S HEART AND FAITH**

**LET’S WATCH JESUS HOLD HIS SHIELD OF FAITH UP TO PROTECT SOMEONE ELSE FROM A FIERY DART FILLED WITH FEAR AND DEATH**

**Mark 5:21–43 (NKJV)** Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. **22** And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet **23** and begged Him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.” **24** So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. **25** Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, **26** and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. **27** When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. **28** For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.” **29** Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. **…**  **VERSE 34** And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.” **35** While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” **36** **As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said** to the ruler of the synagogue, “**Do not be afraid; only believe**.” **37** And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. **38** Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. **39** When He came in, He said to them, “Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.” **40** And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. **41** Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” **42** Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. **43** But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat.

1. **LET’S WATCH JESUS PROTECT THE PEOPLE HE LEADS AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR**

**JESUS ANSWERED PUBLIC CRITICISM PUBLICLY**

**Mark 7:5–9 (NKJV)** Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?” **6** He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. **7** And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ **8** For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” **9** He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

**EX – NOT ADDRESSING IT PUBLICLY – Years ago we were taking some territory for the kingdom of God… and like all supernatural feats, it required faith…. We have been extremely successful in hearing from God and seeing Him move. And we were seeking God… hearing from Him… we were having the multitude of counselors pray with us… and they were confirming what God was saying. We were doing what the Word tells us to do to hear from God, and I know that we were doing the right thing. But there were some people who began to doubt… and they began to spread criticism… and I chose not to address it… so like leaven, it continued to spread until we were a divided people. Some believed God was going to come through with supernatural power, and some did not. And as Jesus said, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. And every house divided against itself shall not stand. And we didn’t… it was one of the very few defeats we suffered. And I take responsibility for not raising my shield of faith to protect the people from—maybe in some cases a well-intended, but still—a false narrative of unbelief. Our people needed to hear words that would give them faith that they could use to raise up against these fiery darts of unbelief. I needed to take the time to teach the word and share more—from the Word and our application of it—about why the endeavor was from God, and why we could be assured that He would come through… unfortunately, I ignored the criticism.**

**EX – ADDRESSING IT PUBLICLY – In contrast, when we launced into our Worship center project in 2008, I taught a series called, “Advancing Despite Adversity.” I showed everyone in the Word that taking territory requires faith… as well as enduring attacks that were devised by the enemy… As a result, we had almost complete unity… God moved by His power… and we took much territory.**

**EX – Jesus didn’t answer every question… in fact… He didn’t directly answer most questions… He spoke what needed to be addressed.**