

THE SHIELD OF FAITH # 8

EPHESIANS 6:10-20;

Eph 6:10-18

¹⁰ A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we^[a] are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor...and lift up the shield of faith to stop the arrows from the Devil. ¹⁸ Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.





Efesios 6:10-20

*10 Por último, fortalézcanse con el gran poder del Señor. 11 Pónganse toda la armadura de Dios para que puedan hacer frente a las artimañas del diablo. 12 Porque nuestra lucha no es contra *seres humanos, sino contra poderes, contra autoridades, contra potestades que dominan este mundo de tinieblas, contra fuerzas espirituales malignas en las regiones celestiales. 13 Por lo tanto, pónganse toda la armadura de Dios... tomen el escudo de la fe.*

In this passage Paul assumes that you and I will be in a fight. A fight that is bigger than each of us. A fight that we cannot win unless we put on God's armor.

Everyone is in the fight. There are no exemptions.

This past week was district assembly. This is a gathering of representatives of all 78 Nazarene Churches on the East Ohio District. We celebrate the work of God together:

-  Across the district as our D.S. gives his report
-  Across the world as missionaries share and our G.S. shares
-  At MVNU as our University President gives his report
-  In each Church as each pastor reports

For pastors it is a time of accountability. Your church statistics are printed in a book: how many people came to worship, Sunday School and small groups, how much money was raised and how it was spent. So pastors approach this time with a bit of fear and trembling. This has been a tough year in several ways and so I was struggling with how to give my report, what to say.

On the way over to the assembly, I had Neil Rulong with me. He is new to the faith and the church and so I was talking to him about what would happen at assembly. I

shared some of the struggles so he would not be caught off guard. He immediately connected to the struggles in our family and church and he shared some of his struggles and burdens. I was not the only one struggling with trials.

I got to Assembly and talked with our District Superintendent. I began to fill him in on a difficult situation that he had been praying with me about and he shared a very deep burden in his family. My District Superintendent had similar trials.

I talked with many of the pastors who are friends and I listened as they shared the struggles they were having or had.

Dr. Diehl, one of the General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene, preached and shared about a deep burden in his family with his son Dave.

In this war we are all in, we cannot stand on our own. If we try we will be overcome and defeated. But we can stand in Christ and put on his protective Armor.

The Shield of Faith

1. I believe God is who he says he is and will do what he says he will do!
2. I believe I am who God says I am and I can do whatever he asks me to do!
3. The Word of God is true, alive and powerful!
- 4. Prayer changes things!**
5. The Church is the Body of Christ and together we can accomplish Jesus mission!

El Escudo de la Fe

Creo que Dios es quien dice y que hará que dice que va a hacer.

¡Creo que soy quien Dios dice y que puedo hacer todo lo que me pide que haga!

¡La Palabra de Dios es verdad, está viva, y es poderosa!

¡El rezo cambia cosas!

¡La Iglesia es el Cuerpo de Dios y juntos podemos alcanzar la misión de Jesús!

Today we take another shot at point number four in the Shield of Faith:

Prayer changes Things! - *El rezo cambia cosas!*

Focus your attention on the end of our passage and what Paul says.

Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere.

Here are some important teaching points for you as you attempt to lift the shield of faith.

1. Prayer is a critical ingredient in our spiritual life; your prayer and our prayer!
¡Oración es un ingrediente crítico en nuestra vida espiritual; su oración y nuestra oración!

If you don't pray, prayer cannot change things. That is so obvious, but true. If you don't pray, then you are not giving God a chance to answer your prayers.

Also, if we don't pray for you and you don't pray for us, we don't give God a chance to answer OUR prayers. We must pray for each other. Prayer for each other is an essential part of being in the family of God.

I went back yesterday and read my prayer journal from the prayer and fasting retreat I took in August. I wrote "we will never be unified in ministry, until we are unified in prayer."

God has called us as a church to a mission, we have a calling. We are to join together with The Church in Warren and live out our faith in Jesus Christ in such a way that people who are outside God's family come in. We have a mission to overcome Satan's destructive work in our community with the powerful love of Jesus Christ. God has called us to transform our world...how are we doing? Not as well as God would like. A critical component is prayer for ourselves and each other.

2. Effective prayer is based on a relationship with God and with each other!
¡Oración efectiva es basada en una relación con Dios y con uno con el otro!

Penny and I are walking in the mall and two 12 year old boys come over to us and ask us to buy them a tee shirt they saw in one of the stores. We talk about it, tell them it is coming out of their allowance, but end up pulling out the debit card and buying the tee shirts.

We walk out of the store and two other boys about the same age who have been watching us walk up and ask, will you buy us tee shirts like you bought those other boys? We look at each other and back at them and say, "Nice try, go find your parents."

What is the difference? The first two boys are my sons. I will give them grief and say no to some of their requests, but I am their dad and if they need shoes or a shirt I will try my best to get it for them. That is what dads (good dads) do.

The second boys are not mine.

Their ability to get something from me, is based upon relationship. The same is true with our heavenly father. He is a loving father who loves to give good gifts to his children.

I have to go to MVNU for the next two days for a pastor's prayer summit. I called my brother Gary and asked if I could borrow his Harley to ride with another pastor to the prayer summit. He told be before I could use it.

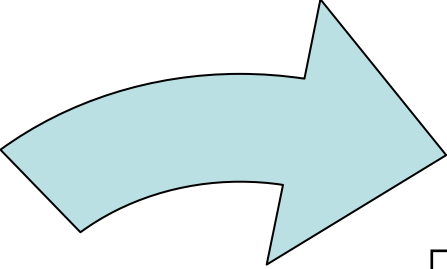
If I went down to the Harley store and waited outside for a guy to come out and asked him if I could ride his Harley to Mount Vernon, he would say.....

It is relationship.

3. Effective prayer requires faith and faith requires the Word of God!

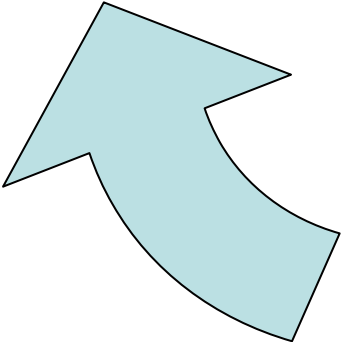
¡Oración efectiva requiere fe y fe requieren la Palabra de Dios!

Let me review this cycle of faith that gives us the courage to overcome the temptation and pray prayers that change thing. Remember without Faith it is impossible to please God. We need new faith each day to face new trials and temptations that Satan hurls at us.

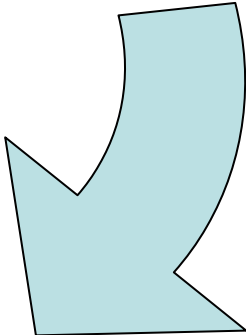


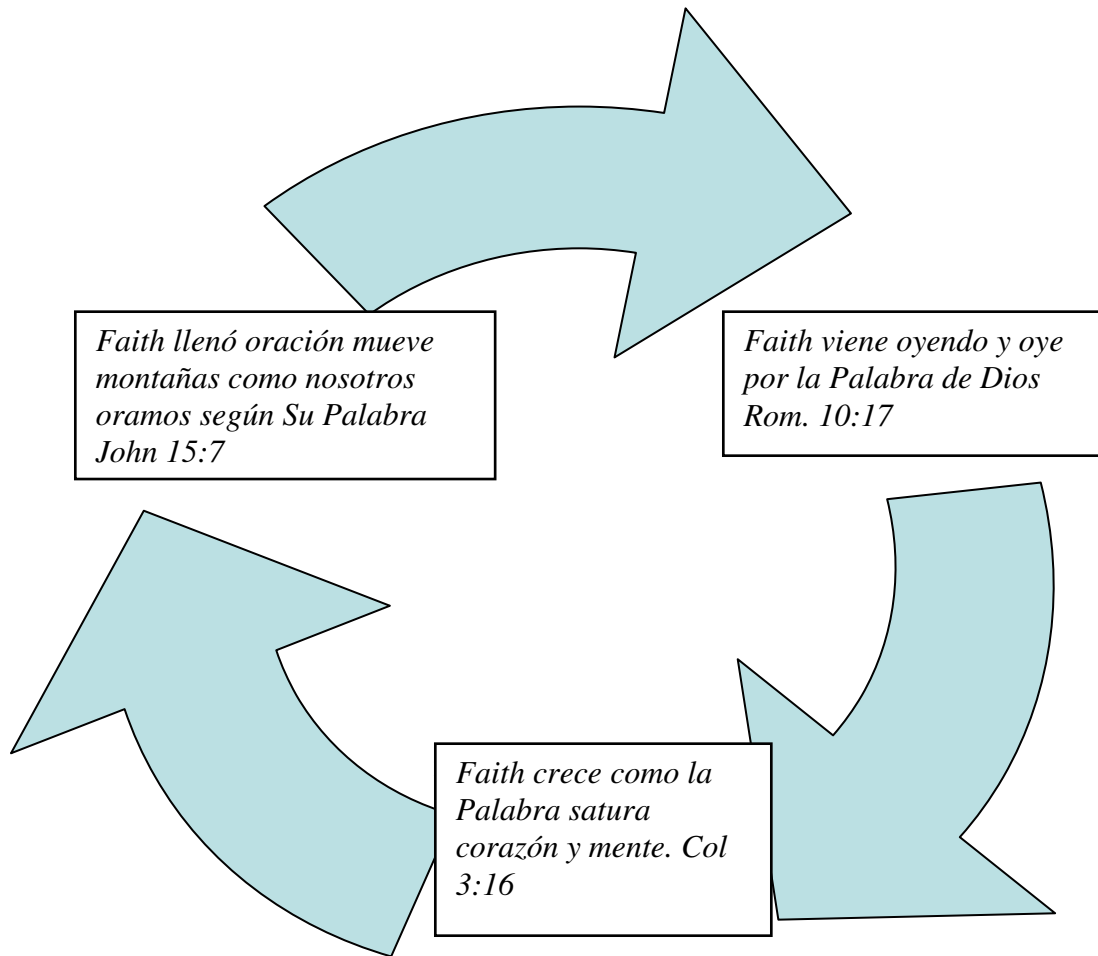
Faith filled prayer moves mountains as we pray according to His Word John 15:7

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God Rom. 10:17



Faith grows as the Word saturates heart and mind. Col 3:16





Col. 3:16 says let the Word of God dwell in you richly, Ps. 119 says your word have I hid in my heart so that I will not sin against you.

John 15:7 says, “If you remain in me and my Words remain in you ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you.”

1 John 5:13-17

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. Prayer that changes things flows out of God’s Word!

4. Effective prayers agree with God!
¡Oraciones efectivas concuerdan con Dios!

Imagine with me a mom who finds out that the husband of her daughter has cheated and broke her daughter's heart. That mom is a Christian and runs to God and pours out her heart to God for her daughter. God is listening, he cares.

In the middle of the prayer that mom who loves her daughter and is a child of God musters up her faith and prays God, I would like my son in law to be run over by a car today.

God hears the prayer, understands the hurt that causes it, but will not answer it because it isn't according to what he says about the situation.

Had she prayed that he would be convicted and repent of his sin. Yeh, God is all about that.

Had she prayed that he would come back to her daughter in repentance and change his ways. Yeh, God is in that one.

But the prayer, "have him run over by a car," isn't one of God's prayers.

Do you see the difference?

Effective prayers have listened and believed what God says first. This involves reading the word and meditating on it as we talked last week. It also means that in our prayer time we must be quiet and listen to what God is saying to us.

Did you know that all failure/sin began in disbelief-the failure to listen and believe what God says about something.

The struggle you are in will be won or loss depending on what you believe! Because faith comes from the Word of God, we can say that your struggle will be won or loss depending on who you listen to: God or Satan.

Addiction temptation comes and it is a struggle. (alcohol, choc. Chip cookies, spending money, pornography, homosexuality or whatever). We think its biology that causes us to fail or physical weakness and these play a part, but at the heart it is believe and believe is based on who you listen to.

Alcohol temp: Someone offers you a drink, I want at drink, I need a drink.

Satan says: One will not hurt you, you deserve a drink, life is hitting you hard, your body is craving it, and it will ease the pain if you drink this one drink. Nothing else

will erase this pain than a drink. You are not strong enough to overcome this struggle. Why don't you go and talk to your old friend, it will be ok.

God says: I love you and I will help you deal with this pain if you let me. I have a plan. This drink will not fix it. I can fix you, not this drink. You are not strong enough on your own to overcome this addiction, but I can help you. Don't go and talk to your alcoholic friend now, he will pull you back into drinking, call your sponsor, call your spiritual brother or sister that you pray with.

The bottom line is who are you listening to: Satan or God?

Prayer and the Word is how we listen and talk to God. The same is true for our struggle with other kinds of temptation, excessive spending is a great example, homosexuality is another great example. Struggling with death, a disease, loss of a job or any other struggle is the same; we win or loose based upon who we listen to.

Because, Prayer that changes things, prayer that wins, prayer that overcomes the battle agrees with God!