

The Daring Dedication to Defy and Deflect Demonic Darts

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- [0 : 0 0] Ephesians chapter 6, if you ain't got anything to say, at least come up with a good title. The daring dedication to defy and deflect demonic darts. That's our responsibility as believers who put our faith in the Lord, and we need to because we're in a war.
- It's not a war overseas, even though all those wars that you watch on television are influenced by this war. It's not a political war, although we're in the midst of one.
- And it sure is the evidence of a larger war. The war I speak of is an unseen, invisible war, but more real than what we see. It's a spiritual war that influences and evades all of those wars that you see in life.
- It's bigger than what we see. And I believe we need to recognize it, and I believe that for what it is, and do what we need to do to stand strong spiritually in the midst of it.
- The Apostle Paul tells us how to do that, and he explains the spiritual attributes that we're to have, and he describes them as an armor of protection provided for us by God.
- [1 : 1 5] And the key to that protection is our faith in God. I want you to listen to how he explains it. It's in Ephesians 6, verse 16.
- It says, Defying, deflecting, even extinguishing the flaming demonic darts that are headed our way is the duty of those who put their faith in Christ, those who've dedicated their life to Christ.
- It's only by the power of God, it's only by our trust and our dependence upon God that it works. And Paul calls that a shield of faith. Now, the shield that he talks about is not one of those Captain America type shields, okay?
- There's a word for that in the Greek, but that's not the one he uses. Not Captain America, that's not in the Greek. But the shield type, the small type of shield, no, what he's speaking of here is much larger than that.
- It's the size of a small door, usually about two and a half feet wide, about four feet long. It's like a riot gear shield, if you will. It's made of wood and iron and often layered with linen and then with leather on top of that.
- [2 : 3 6] And often dipped in water before battle. And you say, why by water? Because arrows were dipped in tar and set on fire. Why would they do that?
- Well, if you live in a thatch hut and you go under a fiery attack by the darts of those that are arrows that are being shot, you're in trouble, okay? Your house will burn down. So in the same kind of effect, whatever that fire hit could cause all kinds of problems.
- And so they often did that. And soldiers relied upon their shields. A historian from early days said that there was a soldier that came in one day after battle with 200 previously fiery darts stuck in his shield.
- They relied upon them. When pursuing another army in battle, the soldiers would line up and form a wall. They called it a phalanx. And the shields there, they would get together and serve in that capacity.

And those shields, not only could they stoop behind them, but if you'll notice, the second and third roads could use them as rooftops to keep from fiery darts coming.

[3 : 50] The shields were hooked together, kind of like chairs in an auditorium you see sometimes. They could hook them together at times, making for a wall of defense. And that's the kind of protection that the Apostle Paul says that we need against the fiery darts of the evil one.

Now when we say fiery darts, what do we mean? Well, I want to spend my time this morning identifying the darts that we are to expect, and then to learn how to defy and deflect them.

The evil one loves to shoot his fiery darts. One of them is he loves to shoot the fiery dart of misdirection. Temptation is simply defined as attempts of the evil one to throw us off our path that God has for us.

Satan wants to redirect us, and one of the clearest ways that he does that is mentioned in 1 John 2, verse 15 through 17. When John wrote, Do not love the world or the things in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For that is in the world. For all that is in the world, listen to this, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life.

[5 : 07] And it's not from the Father, but it's from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Do you know what will throw us off of God's path for our life? One thing that will throw us off is answering our every yearning. That is what John calls the desires of the flesh.

Just because we get a craving for something does not mean we have to answer that craving. God made us with an appetite for food, drink, sensuality, and the devil loves to lead us to make any and all of those things be our focus.

We can become driven by our yearnings if we're not careful. They're innate, they're natural, therefore we feel like sometimes they're justified. However, Satan misdirects us, and we'll follow his lead, and it'll make for a mess.

You eat too much, not only will it ruin your night, but it'll ruin your health, and it can sabotage your self-esteem as well, quite honestly. It'll bring you down, and Satan likes doing that kind of thing.

[6 : 17] You drink too much, it'll ruin not only your health, it'll ruin your family. It'll ruin your testimony. I just advise you to stay away from it completely. If you become too sexually driven, it'll destroy us from the inside out, the Apostle Paul said.

He said sexual sin is a sin against your own body. I just want you to think about the heyday that Satan's having today in a world that so celebrates sexual deviance.

Porn is at an all-time high. Sexual deviance is applauded by society. And all of it comes back to not surrendering to the base desires that the Lord's given us, but Satan loves to throw darts in there and mix up the matter and misdirect us.

He loves to throw us off our game. He wants us to answer our every yearning. The second way we get in trouble is getting what we want. I gotta have it.

That's the desire of the eyes that he mentions. That deep desire to always want more. We get something new and the luster wears off. We gotta get something else quicker.

[7 : 28] Now we need something more. We like what we have until we find out somebody else has got something better than us. And now we gotta go get what they've got. God wants us to give him reign over our stuff.

And one of the valuable tools of that is when we faithfully tithe to the Lord. Because we remember when we do that, you should anyway, that God owns everything that I have.

I'm just to be a steward of that. And he instructs me in how to give back to him. And quite honestly, most of us, when we faithfully tithe to the Lord, we have to say no to some things in order to do that.

Tithing helps us prioritize what really matters. But the devil would love for us to overextend. The devil would love for us to be drowning in debt.

The devil would love for us to feel incapable of being obedient to God because of things that we've already committed to. That's what the desire of the eyes speaks of.

[8 : 31] But it also talks about looking better than everybody else. That's what the pride of life talks about. He wants us to think that we're the most important things in life.

Period. And if we are a little better than everybody else, then, you know, we can feel hateful towards somebody if they try to succeed and do better than us. It's the pride of life.

We just want to be a little bit better than somebody else. And the reality is we make dumb decisions in order for that to happen. And all of those things are darts of misdirection.

But not only that, the devil also shoots fiery darts of misfortune. And what I mean by that is it's not what happens to you. It's what happens to what happens to you. Life is rough.

We're born into a fallen world. Our bodies get sick. We have hurts along the way. Life is rough. And then we go on Facebook or Instagram or some other social media and see that life's not rough for anybody else but us.

[9 : 32] Everything's grand on those social media. I mean, they go to the finest places. They have the finest things, eat the finest meals. They're always smiling, you know. Those family picture days. They're always just wonderful, you know.

They never show the fight that they had all the way at the house getting ready about what they were going to wear and whether it was ready or not or all the way out there. Ask the photographer. They'll tell you about how y'all act.

I checked it out. But anyway, all that makes us feel worse when we see somebody else so glowing and we realize that everything in life is just not going to glow. Life's bad enough at times.

But when the devil gets mixed in there, it really makes things confusing. When somebody gets so down that they don't seem to be able to look up and then they're concerned about maybe they need to take their own life, where in the world does that kind of thought come from?

I'll tell you where it comes from. It comes from the evil one. He works in people to do that. He'll tear us down. When somebody faces a health trial or a relationship trial and they walk away from their relationship with God because they feel overwhelmed by their difficulty, why in the world would you walk away from God when you're going through a trial?

[10 : 46] Why in the world would you do that? Because the devil twists and turns and those things. He loves to isolate. And he'll drive you mad when he can. And why does somebody walk in an establishment and start shooting?

Why in the world would somebody do that? I'm telling you, it's a spiritual battle. It's the evil one. And he loves to jump on us in times of misfortune.

He loves to jump on us when we're down. He loves to do that. Be aware that when times are tough, the fiery darts are going to come. I mean, they are.

He loves to hit on misfortune. Another time he shoots fiery darts is through mistruths. He does it through mistruths. John 8 verse 44 says that Satan is a liar and the father of lies.

He'll tell us that we are worth nothing. He'll tell us that nobody really loves us. Listen, I got news for you today. Jesus died for you.

[11 : 50] And if you were in Christ, don't you dare listen to that liar. You're a king's kid. You are royal. You got royal rich blood rolling in your veins.

You're a plutocrat. Don't you dare listen to the deceiver. He'll criticize you. He'll call you a hypocrite. He'll tell you to give up. Don't you do it. You walk with God.

You ask for forgiveness of God. And by the power of the blood of the Lamb, walk away from the garbage that Satan throws in front of you. Don't be naive. And don't be slowed by it.

Don't you do it. Keep moving forward for the Lord because Satan is a liar. And he'll tell you that no one will know what you do.

He'll tell you that it'll be okay. He'll tell you that it won't cost you anything. He'll tell you that you can't change. He'll tell you that it will make you change all of its lies, my friend. He's the father of lies.

[12 : 47] And it's just darts of mistruth. He also shoots darts of mixed motives. you'll hear whispers not audible louder than that why go all the way with God why go all the way for God why can't you just go halfway you don't have to get so sold out on something why should God prioritize your life do what you need to do do what you want to do you don't have to go to worship you don't have to get fully invested with those people life's busy enough plus there's somebody in that church you probably got a problem with the clothes may not be as new as theirs you don't know where to sit all of that stuff he's just messing with us he's just messing with us he's just trying to confuse us and he'll work us up to make us angry too he'll make you mad at somebody if he can

I ask you today is there somebody you need to forgive are you refusing to forgive somebody well I'm going to tell you if you're a child of God and you've got a lack of forgiveness in your heart you've allowed the evil one to influence you in that you bitter towards somebody that's the evil one messing with you it's the devil your lack of forgiveness you're taking the fiery darts your bitter feelings you're taking the fiery darts why does my mind wonder when I pray I think man I need to get up and go take care of that you know I'm praying about this but I can get up and go take care of that why is that because listen the power is in prayer the power is not in what we do the power is in prayer and doing what God tells us Satan don't want you praying and so he'll try his best to mess that up why does your morning get filled up and the word get pinched out I'm telling you it's the evil one why do fun opportunities always come on Sunday you ever wondered about that why does that happen you know pinch us out of church why does that happen

I'm going to tell you something everything is not I'm not that guy okay I'm not that guy but I'm just telling you the devil strategizes to keep you out from under the preaching of God's word the worship of the Lord and to be with God's people he wants his best to distract that and he'll throw darts along the way and try his best to make that happen so how do you stand against darts of misdirection misfortune mistruths and mixed motives we do it with the shield of faith we are protected from the fiery darts of the evil one by our trust and our hope in the Lord Hebrews 11 1 defines faith for us in scripture says now faith is the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen simply put faith is believing and then applying what you believe faith is the truth so let me explain it let me tell you what faith is this morning and I'll close faith is trusting in the character of God it's trusting in God's character he knows what he's doing he knows what we're doing he knows why we're doing it and he knows what's best for us

God is on it he knows the circumstances and not only that is he's pursuing you when your walk gets strained before the Lord who convicts you it's the Lord that reaches out to you he walks with us he talks with us listen Jesus said he had the hairs on our heads numbered for some of us that ain't as hard as it used to be but either way that what he means by that is he knows what we need he knows when we need it not only that but he loves us so dearly that he came to live for us to die for us to rise again for us to sit at the right hand of the Father and make intercession for us while he's preparing for us an eternal place faith is trusting that all of that is true and that God is who he says he is not only that but he knows all I mean we get caught up in the worries of the day we worry about what's going to happen this afternoon we worried about what's going to happen tomorrow we were worried yesterday and we got through it we made it because we can't see what God sees so we have to trust his sight what in the world are we worried about for our 20th anniversary years ago

Dawn and I went to New York City and we went for the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade she always wanted to see the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade and so we went to the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade we went to Central Park and saw them blow begin to blow those floats up the night before and to get those ready and then we got on the subway and nearly lost our lives and then we walked out of the hotel and went down a few blocks and stood about eight people back in the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade boy what a red letter day for me but anyway and so we were we were standing there watching that and here comes a float here comes somebody who's that they're on a show ain't they yeah I know her and then she went by and then he went by yeah I've seen that dude he's a star ain't he yeah he's somebody where's Santa you know and Santa's always in the back and we watched float by float by float and there's a bunch of them that went by but while we were watching that there was a helicopter above us that was watching the whole thing and every other year we'd cut that on on Thanksgiving morning and and let that let that show and they'd show that view that that helicopter shows and they'll show you the whole path that that parade goes two and a half miles we had walked it the night before to go see the floats and and they'll show you that whole path there and but while we were there we just saw it afloat at a time the reality is we live life afloat at a time a day at a time a year at a time we don't know what's coming next we know there's an end in sight somewhere but we don't know when that is we're just watching it as it goes by but God has a helicopter view

[19 : 52] God sees the beginning God sees the end he sees everything in between he knows us better than we know ourselves he loves us more than we could ever imagine and he is already in our tomorrow's and he has the reputation to put us at ease faith is trusting in the character of God think about when David walked down in that valley Goliath was representing the Philistines down in that valley and David refused to wear Saul's army scripture says Saul was a head taller than everybody else and I think it means that in a couple of different ways one I believe talks about his physical stature but I also believe man Saul was something else you know and David couldn't wear that armor it was too big for him he didn't want to wear that armor anyway he just went with what God had trained him and trusted him with and that was a slingshot he had prepared him and he put his trust in God and he walked down in that valley and spoke to that giant and it says in 1st Samuel chapter 17 verse 45 through 47 some of my favorite scripture then David said to the Philistine you come to me today excuse me you come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defiled this day the Lord will deliver you into my hand and I'll strike you down and cut off your head for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand and that is exactly what happened and that's faith that's the kind of faith that trusts that God will be there you trust the character of God that's the kind of faith that will extinguish the devil's greatest attempts but let me tell you what else faith is faith is also trusting

God's promises faith is knowing that God will not let you down numbers 23 verse 19 says this God is not man that he should lie nor son of man that he should change his mind has he said and will he not do it or has he spoken and will he not fulfill it what kind of promises does God make that we're talking about well let me remind you of just a couple John 14 verse 18 Jesus promises I will not leave you alone I will not leave you comfortless I will not leave you as offerings I will come to you rest in it that when the devil tries to down you when he tries to depress you when he tries to speak bad things about you when he tries to take your hope away you are not as alone as you feel he's there apostle Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 13 that God would provide a way out when we're tempted that's a promise trust him in that and he'll shield you when you're tempted but you gotta trust him he is present even when you don't feel like he's present because his presence ain't based on your feelings oh that God would open our eyes to see his presence

I love the passage about Elisha he was encroached he was being encroached by his enemies and he would not prophesy what they wanted to hear and so they went after him and he said what the Lord told him to say and people usually don't want to hear what the Lord has to say and so they went after him and he was in Dothan not Alabama but he was in Dothan and he was resting in his tent while his assistant stepped out to see where the enemy's gang of men were and he saw them waiting to attack him it seemed as if he had no hope and scripture tells us in 2 Kings chapter 6 verse 15 it says when the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out and behold an army with horses and chariots was all around the city and the servant said alas my master what shall we do and he said don't be afraid for those who are with us are more than those who are with them and then Elisha prayed and said oh God what a prayer oh Lord please open his eyes that he may see so the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around

Elisha Elisha's army won that battle that day the Lord came through let me tell you something he always will may God open our eyes to see what in the world God's doing Hebrews 11 verse 6 says without faith it is impossible to please him without faith it's impossible to withstand the devil it is but with faith you are both pleasing the Lord and victorious in Christ but that's not all faith is also trusting God's timing we don't know what tomorrow holds but we know who holds tomorrow he didn't bring us this far to let us fall Jeremiah 29 11 says for I know the plans that I have for you declares the Lord plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a hope and a future he don't want you to fail he don't want us to fail he wants us to succeed and so let's put our faith in him that faith that we put in him will shield us from the enemy's attacks

I just want you to think for a moment about the role that faith has played in your life if you've ever committed your life to follow Christ never surrender your life to the Lord you came to Christ by faith if you walk with Christ trusting him you walk with Christ by faith you stand with him by faith you stand for him by faith you win in faith listen friend it's not just a hymn it's the truth faith is the victory that overcomes the world and when we like an army take our shield of faith and we hook it to other shields of faith it's a mighty army shielding us from the enemy's fire my friend that's the strength of the church that when we come together for one cause not to just hold our ground that's not what we're supposed to be doing we're supposed to be invading the enemy's territory claiming folks for Christ and when we do that we're going to face fiery darts don't be surprised when life throws some stuff at you and properly identify what it is listen when temptations burn you need to be accountable to a prayer partner in church when circumstances are adverse you need to share it with your life goof and have a concert prayer over that matter when doubts assail lift up your voice with God's people sing God's praises in the midst of your storm when the storms are threatening dock yourself in the house of God because listen the fiery darts of the evil one are either going to burn you up they're going to burn you out or they're going to fire you up and we are in this together don't go out there alone and get burned up don't listen to the evil one and get burned out go before the throne of God with the people of God get fired up for the Lord this is a battle that we can win but we will only win it in the strength of the

[28 : 08] Lord and our faith in him is our shield we have to trust him we have to trust him so what is it in your life that you need to trust the Lord about maybe you've never trusted to the Lord you're here this morning and there's never been a time in your life when you've surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus ask him to forgive you and to come into your life and surrender your life to follow him if you've never done that I got news for you you are exposed you have no armor in the midst of this battle you're exposed to all the enemy's weapons all his warfare give your heart and life to Christ today maybe you've done that but you've never been obedient to follow that in baptism you've never asked the Lord Jesus to I mean you've asked the Lord Jesus to forgive you but you've never you've never publicly pronounced that through baptism Jesus did that by example as well as by commission he told us to do that and it'll be a hindrance in your walk if you don't follow that maybe God's drawing you to

First Baptist Church God's doing a wonderful work in our midst and I'm thankful for that maybe God's drawing you here we'd love to guide you in that process process or maybe I speak to the majority of us you just got some battles battles there's fiery darts being shot at you and I didn't have to identify them this morning some of them you knew exactly what they were shield of faith ain't quite wet enough it don't feel quite big enough we don't hide behind it long enough today maybe we just need to recommit our lives and say dear Lord I want to trust you I want to trust your judgment I want to trust your word I want to trust your presence I want to live my life relying upon you

I want to join up with others around me and I want to do what only we can do by the power of our belief in the Lord Jesus being who he says he is doing what he'll say he'll do being where he needs to be when he needs to be there we got to trust the Lord we live in a fiery dark world it'll hit you might even before you get out of this building we got to be ready trusting in God all the way Lord Jesus I love you and I thank you for your word thank you for our time together this morning God I pray that you'll work and you'll move right now in the hearts and lives of every one of us to just be obedient to follow as you lead in Jesus precious name amen and Lord and God you.

Thank you for the numbers and the hearts and hearts. Thank you for the complaints. Thank you for the give us about the help of and ourselves. Thank you. Thank you for the