

Picking Up the Shield of Faith



Jim Cymbala April 3, 2021

We told that we have a shield of faith that we're to use. "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Ephesians 6:16, ESV). This verse raises a question, though.

The Bible also says that God is our shield. Genesis 15:1 says, "The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: 'Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.'" David writes about this in his psalms, "O my strength, I watch for You—for God is my strong tower. My God in His lovingkindness will go before me. God will let me look down on my foes. Do not slay them, lest my people forget. With Your power shake them and bring them down, O Lord our shield" (Psalm 59:10-12).

So is God my shield, or do I have my own shield of faith? Which is it?

First, we have to understand what faith is. Most people think faith is when we mentally agree with something we read like, "I believe today is Sunday. I mentally affirm some facts like two plus two is four."

Faith is much more based in the spirit and heart. Scripture says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9, emphasis added). Don't get me wrong; you have to believe with your head too, but the Bible says that salvation comes when we believe with our hearts.

God tells his people through the prophet Isaiah, "Give me your heart. With your mouth, you honor me, but your heart is far from me" (see Isaiah 29:13-19).

The answer is found in David's prayers and songs. "I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.... I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:2,7-8,11).

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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