

I Am Thy Shield

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[0 : 00] If you don't have a Bible with you, just grab that Bible out of the pew row in front of you. It's going to be real easy. It's not going to be hard to find. We're going to go to Genesis, which is the first book of the Bible.

And we're going to go to Genesis chapter 14. And we're going to start reading there in verse 11. One thing I want you to know is that I wouldn't be up here talking about what we're going to talk about today if it wasn't God who was working on my own heart first about these things. Genesis chapter 14, and we're going to start in verse 11. And just a little bit of context here to sort of find out where we are in Scripture here.

God has called Abraham to a land which was foreign to him. He went there with Lot, his relative, close relative.

The two families essentially became too large, the Bible says, for the land to keep them together. Any of you who are familiar with cattle and people and farming and all of those kind of things understand that it takes space.

[1 : 42] And so following a number of disputes between their workers, they said, look, you know, to save our relationship, let's split up here a little bit. And so Lot decided to go one way and Abraham went the other way.

And God is beginning at this point in Scripture to show us how he is building, creating his nation Israel through Abraham.

Abraham. And in the course of this time, there is a number of peoples in the area, a number of kings and their kingdoms.

And they go to war against each other. There seemed to be sort of a main king that kind of subdued these other ones in history.

And they were all kind of under his control. But there's this rebellion that occurs. And a group of kings fight this other king and a group of kings. And so there's this war going on.

[2 : 44] And in the midst of this war, kings of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Lot resides, get pulled into this war.

And Lot and his family and all he has gets taken away as plunder, as capture. And so Abraham hears about this. And so we're going to sort of start in this place here in verse 11.

And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their victuals and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom and his goods and departed.

And there came one that escaped and told Abram. This is before God changes his name to Abraham. Told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre, the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol, the brother of Aner.

And these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

[4 : 01] And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them and pursued them unto Chobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

And he brought back all the goods and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods, and the women also and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlorum.

I'm not very good with the names, so let's just roll with it here. And the kings that were with him in the valley of Shaven, which is the king's dale.

And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God, and blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of

heaven and earth, and blessed be the Most High God, which delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods of thyself. And Abram said to the king, I have lifted up mine hands unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even a shoe latchet, and I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should say, I have made Abram rich, save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which were with me, Aner, Eshtal, and Mamre.

[5 : 36] Let them take their portion. After these things, we're into chapter 15 here now. After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?

And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born of my house is mine heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

I was reading this a couple weeks ago, and there was this statement that I saw in here that really caught a hold of me.

And it is found in verse 1 of chapter 15, when God says to Abram, I am thy shield. I am thy shield, God says.

[6 : 46] And so my head began to just go in a tailspin, and to think about all the times in my own life where I could say that that was true of God, that he was my shield.

And then I thought, knowing that this day was coming, that I thought, is this maybe what the Lord would have me speak about?

And again, I wouldn't be speaking to you about it today unless I felt that the Lord had worked on my heart about it. But first and foremost, what I want to make sure that everybody understands about a shield is a shield is only good if you choose to be behind it.

If you choose to partake of the shelter and the protection that a shield gives. Most of you know my profession, and if I choose not to put on the shielding that I am given, very bad things can happen. If you choose not to put on the shield of a seatbelt in a car and you get into a car wreck, very bad things can happen. So I thought it was very profound that God says, I am thy shield, because a shield is a perfect example of what God has done for us in that it is there, it is available, but it is also up to you to decide if you want to partake of it.

[8 : 50] Partake of the protection of God's shield. The first thing that came to my mind is God's shield of salvation.

The Bible clearly states that all of us are in need of salvation. All of us are in need of forgiveness of our sins, of being counted as righteous and holy, so that we might one day be able to be accepted into the presence of God for all eternity.

Romans 3 says two very profound things. Romans 3 says, as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one.

So, unless somehow you feel like you are excused from that count, there is none of us that are righteous and holy before a righteous and holy God.

Romans 3 also says that all have sinned, and all have come short of the glory of God. And God says, because of my love, I have a shield for that.

[10 : 16] I have offered a shield of protection for that. the second verse I read, that for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Thank goodness, praise the Lord, that it doesn't end there. It says, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Amen. Amen. Amen. You see, God knows that we are in need of his shield of salvation.

And so he has provided it through Christ Jesus. Now, you may be listening here today, or maybe later, if this is posted on the internet, you may think that by chance your, what we call works, your behavior, your conduct in this life is going to be enough of a shield for you to be shielded from God's judgment.

The problem with that is where is your gauge? How do you know enough good works? How do you know enough good behavior?

[11 : 44] How do you know enough charity? And enough love for your fellow mankind? How do you know when is enough? And how do you gauge that versus your sin?

How do you know when the scales are balanced? Ephesians chapter 2 says, For grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift, God's shield. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

That means that all of your good works, all of the good things that you might be doing, count for nothing unless you know Jesus.

[12 : 51] And it is only when you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, that we become this new creation in Christ Jesus, unto good works.

It is only then when our good works in the name of Jesus count for something. Perhaps you're listening today and you are caught up in what this world has to offer.

You're caught up in the TikToks and the Instagrams. You're caught up into the world of celebrity or the world of wealth and business and life. And there's a story about a young man that comes to Jesus.

They call him the rich young ruler. It's from Mark 10. It says, And when he was gone forth into the way, this is Jesus, there came one running and kneeled to him and asked, Good master, what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one that is God.

[14 : 21] Thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and thy mother. And he answered him, the young man, Master, all of these I have observed.

I've done all of this since my youth. Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him and said unto him, one thing thou lackest.

Go thy way, sell whatever, whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven and come, take up thy cross and follow me.

And he was sad at that saying, the young man, and went away grieved for he had great possessions. I want you to understand that although God is talking about here in his word, the interaction between Jesus and this man that had much, this is not specifically talking about a wealth or a poverty faith in Christ.

Christ. The reality of what is being shown here by this interaction is this man loved the things of this world more than Christ.

[15 : 55] He was so caught up with the things in front of him, in his case, it was his possessions, the life he had created, the life he was given, he was so blinded by what was right in front of him that he was not able to see what could be in eternity.

Jesus is not saying that a life in Christ is earthly poverty, but a life with godly perspective on what this earth has to offer.

this is not a prosperity gospel as some people like to call it. This is not saying you get saved and you get rich, but it's also not saying you get saved and follow Jesus that you will be in poverty.

It's saying that whether you are in poverty as far as this world considers, or whether you are wealthy as far as this world considers, that a life in Christ is a perspective on both of those.

It's a perspective that when you have much or when you have little, it means nothing if you have not Christ. I'm going to steal this line from a poem of C.T. Studd.

[17 : 23] I think I've used it before and I think pastors used it before and I like to add my other little line to it, so I'm going to kind of hack job this poem, but the reality is there is a statement in there and I added to it this is what I've come up with from this poem here.

Everything that's done in life will pass, but only what's done for Christ will last. Unfortunately, this is not even just a warning for those who are unsaved, but the reality is this is a reality for Christians.

How tied up are we of the things of this world? How much of our focus is on earthly things as opposed to eternal things? I recently was having a conversation with an unsaved relative and they had purchased a seasonal property, let me just say, and it was a place where they were hoping to find rest and relaxation.

they had purchased this property from an individual estate who had just passed and as they were going through this property they found things that this individual had left behind.

And sort of one night as we were discussing it and he was talking about the things and could see sort of this man who had passed, he could see his life in the things that he had in this property and this unsaved relative said to me, you never really own, do you?

[19 : 15] You're always renting. We have, we continue to pray for this relative of ours.

and thankful that he's starting to get some perspective on this life and this world.

You never really own, do you? You're always renting. Don't be blinded by this world and its pleasures.

Yes, God has given many of it for us to enjoy and partake of. But the devil has chosen the good things that God may have given us in this life to sometimes blind us to the reality of eternity.

Satan may be so blinding you into securing what this life has to offer that you spend no time securing what God has to offer in Jesus for eternity.

[20 : 38] Hebrews 9 gives us a very, very sobering reminder. It is appointed once for man to die and after that judgment. Week after week you can see in even our local newspaper a new name in the obituaries.

you don't even have to wait every week every night every hour it seems you can go to any kind of online media outlet and you can see how many people how many precious souls are leaving this world and entering into eternity minute after minute hour after hour when is your appointment with eternity and judgment?

It is appointed unto man once to die. If you knew when that appointment was I'm sure you might be living a little differently but you don't know.

Maybe perhaps you feel like your faith and your religion and your belief in God somehow is your osmosis to being behind God's shield of salvation.

Well you know what the Bible tells us that even the devil and his angels believe in God. Believing in God is not simply enough. the majority of this world's population which some people say is around 8 billion believe in some type of God.

[22 : 24] Believing in God is not enough. Going to church regularly is not enough. Going to Sunday school when you were younger is not enough.

Why are you here today? Are you here out of some sort of obligation? Some sort of well this is what we've always done this is how I was raised.

Faith in God in a religious format is not enough. It simply is not enough. John 14 tells us Jesus talking to his disciples here.

Let your heart not be troubled. You believe in God. Let me just stop there. The disciples are having this moment of trying to wrap their heads around Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And if you're God, how is he God in putting this all together? Jesus is trying to tell them here, let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

[23 : 49] So he's saying, you were believing in God before for the reasons you were taught and understood, God's God.

I want you to understand that I am the fulfillment of God's promise to man. So he's saying here, if you are, if you're already there and you believe in God and you have a religious attitude about things, if you're already there that you want to try and live a religious God-pleasing life, then it really shouldn't be that big of an understanding, a big of a jump to gap to understand that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of God's promises to man.

You believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself.

That where I am, ye may be also, and whether I go, ye know, you know, you know where I'm going, is what Jesus is saying, and the way you know.

So the reality is, if you are a person that's been in a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching church, you might even say that you believe God. The reality is, is that Jesus is saying, you already know what the reality of the gospel is.

[25 : 19] Thomas said to him, we know whether thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus said unto him, I am the way.

I am the truth, I am the life, and here it is. Here's the difference between those who believe in God simply because they've gone to Sunday school, or they go to church every holiday.

Jesus says, no man cometh unto the Father but by me. This is the difference between those who may be here listening or listening later and believe that simply because they believe in God, simply because they go to church, that that is going to be enough of a shield from God's judgment. It's not. It's absolutely not. And the devil has convinced you that it might be. Jesus saith again, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man cometh to the Father but by me. If he had known me, you should know my father also. For from henceforth you know him and have seen him.

[26 : 56] You cannot really know God unless you know Jesus. Now, some of you might be saying here, well, Nathan, you kind of just read this passage in Genesis and you kind of pulled this phrase out of there and you kind of just said, oh, let's just use this, coin this phrase and we'll just run with this.

I want to show you here from God's own word how the things that happened in the Old Testament tie into what God has said about his plan for Jesus, his son, and for us as New Testament Christians.

There is a central point in human history. The central point in human history is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, his ministry, his dying on the cross and shedding his blood for our sins, his resurrection after three days in the grave.

And so I believe the Bible teaches us that everyone before Christ would follow by faith in God's promise that a Messiah would come.

They are looking forward to Christ on the cross even though they may not know the full details thereof. And anybody since that glorious moment when Christ conquered death and conquered sin is now looking back in faith at the cross.

[29 : 01] in Galatians three it says, know ye therefore that which are in faith the same are the children of Abraham.

Does anybody remember that Sunday school song, Father Abraham, the many sons? It's kind of a funny pokey song because everybody gets up and you start doing dance movements and you're moving your arms and you're spinning around and everything else.

Galatians three. Galatians three. know ye therefore that they which are in faith the same are the children of Abraham.

And the scripture foreseeing that God okay, this is God's word foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith preacheth before the gospel unto Abraham saying in thee all of the nations shall all the nations be blessed.

So then they which are in faith are blessed in faithful Abraham for as many are as of the works of the law are under the curse for as is written cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the things written in the book of the law for them to do but that no man justified the law in the sight of God it is evident for the just shall live by faith and the law is not of faith but the man that doeth them shall live in them Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us for it is written cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree that the blessing of Abraham might come unto the Gentiles through Jesus Christ and that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith so you see we are connected from the beginning of scripture to the end of scripture by the cross and by faith they followed as best as humanly possible the law that God had given them trusting that God would ultimately bring

[31 : 40] Jesus Christ to earth to make up for what they could not do and that was be holy and righteous God was calling separating apart for himself a people who lived by these laws the commandments that we read earlier and even some of the other Levitical laws sort of the lifestyle laws that they lived by and it was by faith in God's promise through Abraham that Jesus would come it is the same faith that we have looking back believing that Jesus did come and he did accomplish on the cross that which he was sent for in Romans 4 it says that

Abraham's faith was counted to him as righteousness as further evidence of what I believe the Bible teaches us here even the people in the Old Testament it wasn't just believing in God it was believing in God's promise that a Messiah would come a Savior would come it was believing that a perfect and holy sacrifice without blemish and without sin would become sin for us so that we would have an opportunity to stand behind God's shield of salvation protection again that is a shield that you have to choose to get behind that is a shield that you have to accept and choose to partake of its protection

I wonder if you're not saved here today I wonder what's your shield what are you hiding behind are you hiding behind some lame excuse of your stuff or your good works or are you just blinded to the fact that at some point you're going to have to meet God face to face Philippians 2 says let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in the fashion as a man he humbled himself became obedient unto death even death on the cross wherefore

God also hath highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name and at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things of heaven and things of earth and things under earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord a number of years ago I excuse me I was asked to say a few words at my great aunt's funeral I don't know how I got picked for that job but nevertheless it seemed pretty evident to us that my great aunt was not saved she never at one point in her life put her faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ this was my grandfather's sister my grandfather after leaving the military became a pastor or left the military to become a pastor and having pretty much retired from that by the time his sister had passed I said to him what am I supposed to say what am I supposed to say at an unsaved person's funeral what do you say there is no hope like the reality is is that I could lie and make it sound all nice and cushy or I could tell the truth and my grandfather said to me he said I've been asked to do funerals before people who we believed did not know the Lord Jesus and he said one thing that I've always said is this you can be sure without a shadow of a doubt now they know now they know and so my plea to you here today if you are not saved is simply this 2nd

[37 : 11] Corinthians verse 6 says we then as workers together with him beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain if you are listening to this you are at the point where you can receive God's grace grace I am sharing with you God's grace is it going to be in vain verse 2 says for he saith I have heard thee in an accepted time and in the day of salvation have I succored thee behold now is the accepted time behold now is the day of salvation if I could promise you that you have this afternoon if I could promise you that you have next week or next year then you could maybe somehow rationally think that

I'll accept Christ later but I cannot promise you more over there's a favorite hymn that talks about this that I that I like this is for you who might be listening today who's outside of Christ and you've been beaten up by this world it says oh soul are you weary troubled there's no light in the darkness you see there's light for look at the Savior and life more abundant and free turn your eyes upon Jesus look full in his wonderful face and the things of this world will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace

God is our shield and salvation for those of you who are saved here today I didn't get off the hook when I read this so neither are you when I have this think about this idea of a shield that's my job that's my job I'm a husband I'm a father I'm supposed to be that shield I'm supposed to be that shield but the reality is is that I cannot be that shield unless God is my shield because I'm not perfect and

I'm not strong enough I don't know how many people have ever tried to simply hold a can of soup up in their arm like this if you haven't tried it you go home and try it right now because I guarantee you before you ever thought it would your arm will be shaking the strength it takes to become a shield to hold a shield that is strength I don't have I cannot protect my wife and my family from everything and in my own life I need God's shield of protection I need it for protection from sin I need his shield to protect me from sin you see God knows that the devil is a roaring lion walking around the face of this earth seeking who he will destroy and the

Bible says wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall for there is no temptation taken unto you such as common to man taken unto you but such as common as man so don't think that the temptations for sin that you have nobody else has gone through but God is faithful I didn't hear anything God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted beyond that you are able but with temptation will also make a way to escape that you may be able to bear it God has given you a shield from sin I don't know how many times I can tell you that it has happened in my life when

[42 : 37] I am standing at the cross roads of standing behind God's shield from temptation or the temptation of the devil to commit sin I can see it in my mind's eye times where I was at the cross road to make a decision to stand behind God's promises for me God's blessing in obedience his

protection in his shield from temptation and choosing to fall into what the world wants me to do and what the devil wants me to do can anybody else testify to that you don't put up your arms but I'm telling you each one of us especially as a Christian comes to that point not always sometimes it's very easy to sin but there have been times when I stand at the crossroads fully aware of the decision before me and I will tell you

I do not always choose right God God is our shield also in the trials and the hardships of this world I don't know what kind of brochure you got before you walked into the church service or the Sunday school service or the summer camp program I don't know what kind of brochure you got about being a Christian before you made that choice but the reality is as a Christian you are not immune to what this world has to offer you are not immune to death you are not immune to sickness you are not immune to hardships you are not immune to losing your job you are not immune to getting cancer you are not immune to your car breaking down at the worst possible moment when there's no money in the bank you are not immune to having kids not turn out the way you want them to you're not immune to having fights and arguments and hardships in relationships the brochure if it was honest would say if you thought you felt the attack of the devil before you knew Jesus you ain't seen nothing yet the world is watching especially if you have been brave enough courageous enough in the Holy Spirit to tell other people that you are Christian the world is watching how you react when hardships and trials come your way the world is watching how you react when you're diagnosed with cancer when you've lost your job and you don't know when you're going to get another one and the money's not there the world is watching we also think many of us we are can be caught up in end times prophecy following trying to discern the times and the Bible says it's important to be aware of what's going on it's important to pray for the lost and to pray for Israel and to pray for the unsaved and to be wise and to stand firm for God 2nd Corinthians says my grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me therefore I will take pleasure in infirmities in reproaches in necessities in persecutions in distresses for Christ's sake for when I am weak then I am strong I won't finish quite to the end here but I there was a person that I know that often said that God will never give you more than you can handle well you know what that's absolutely wrong that is absolutely wrong if you could handle all of the temptation without the shield of God's protection then what would you need God for if you could handle it when you get cancer and you could heal yourself or you could just go out and pick up your bootstraps and get another job and pay all your bills then what would you need God for if you could be righteous and holy enough that you could stand before God when your never dying soul leaves this place then what would you need God for God has offered us his shield [48 : 53] I am thy shield God said will you choose and choose wisely I might add to stand behind the shield that God has to offer