WEEK OF FEBRUARY 14, 2010

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

TOPIC:
WAR OF THE WORLDS V : THE SHIELD OF FAITH

LESSON IN A LINE:
In our daily spiritual battle we need, above all, to take up the shield of faith in order to keep our minds and to stand against the attacks of the devil. We do this by looking to Jesus who endured this type of opposition through sinful men.

Points to Make

- Paul likely used the image of armour to describe the weapons of spiritual warfare for at least 2 reasons:
  - He is following scriptural precedent.
  - His audience could relate to armour because the Roman soldiers were visible throughout the empire as they enforced Roman rule.
- Paul says that above all other armour, faith is what we absolutely must have.
- In Hebrews 11, the author presents a line-up of role models for faith. They all looked for a promise, which was God's manifestation in the flesh for the purpose of saving His people.
- They did not receive that promise, yet their example is that they lived as though they would see it. All the while, they looked to an invisible God.
- On our side of the New Testament, we can look back at the life of Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. As we consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, this view keeps our minds from growing weary.
- When the contradiction of sinners or the sin structure of this world comes against us like fiery darts of the enemy, we look through Jesus' example to quench them.
- Perhaps something that confuses most of us is the point of reference we take. The example of the heroes of faith is that they were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth".
- Our heroes represent a broad variety of life circumstance, yet the shields of faith they carry are identical – a view of the circumstance through the experience of God.
- Some of these heroes:
  - subdued kingdoms (Hebrews 11:33)
  - quenched the violence of fire (Hebrews 11:34)
  - were slain with the sword (Hebrews 11:35-38)
- We have the promise. In the life of Jesus we know how God would act as a man, and we have the power of His Spirit within us to strengthen us. Let us use this shield to press past any darts fired at us by the enemy.

Key Scriptures:
Ephesians 6:16; Isaiah 59:15-17; Hebrews 11-12:3; Daniel 3:16-18

Discussion Tools

- Read Hebrews 11-12:3.
- Take time to reflect on the biblical definition of "faith" – "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". (Hebrews 11:1). Invite members of the group to express what this means to them.
- Consider the role models/heroes in the passage, and discuss how they exercised their faith e.g. Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. (Hebrews 11:25)

Prayer Time

Mighty God, I thank you for your Word. I place my trust in You, Lord, faithfully believing that your promise will come to pass.

ICE-BREAKER: Give an example of a time when you trusted someone and they came through for you. How did you feel?

NOTES