

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about ¾ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, **TannerSt.com** to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

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Needed News

Thelma Echols continues to have difficulty with back pain. This has been an ongoing issue for her for a while. It has also place additional strain on Brenda & Ruben as they try to help her deal with it. **Ruben Keisler** had several tests done this past week. They are waiting on the result.

Phyllis Jackson is scheduled to have knee surgery February 19th. Until that time, she continues to deal with pain.

Joyce Venable has been doing some better this past week.

Ricky Ragsdale has been doing better with his current therapy. He has been walking some with the help of a walker.

Many of our members are dealing with health issues on a daily basis. Often this means doctor visits and tests or procedures in one of the larger cities nearby and thus travel for them and their family. Make sure you remember these in your prayers.

Bible study is the only way to walk with God and make Satan flee from our presence. Study consistently & carefully.

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

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The Fortress Of Faith

Dan S. Shipley

As an encouragement to Christians living under the constant threat of persecution, the apostle Peter writes of a "living hope" made possible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. With such hope the faithful persevere in anticipation of an eternal inheritance reserved in heaven (**1Peter 1:3-4**). The source of their hope and the key to their endurance was faith. It has always been so with God's people and ever shall be. *"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1John 5:4).*

It is in keeping with this idea that Peter writes of being *"guarded through faith"* by the power of God (**vs. 5**). This word "guarded" is a military term used in the sense "of providing protection against the enemy, as a garrison does" (Vine). So, our faith is our fortress for providing protection against all enemies of righteousness. This protective aspect of faith is also suggested in **Ephesians 6:16** under the figure of a shield -- *"Wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one."* Elsewhere, it is pictured as a breastplate (**1Thessalonians 5:8**). Such references show plainly that faith is our protector. Faith is our strength and help in the quest to overcome and to gain the great victory.

But behind all of this, as suggested in the employment of these military terms, is the recurring allusion to a great

conflict. If not, why the need for being guarded? Why the talk of such things as shields, breastplates and victory? Too, conflict implies an enemy. In an earlier noted passage, Paul identifies him as the "evil one." In **1Peter 5:8** he is referred to as "*your adversary the devil.*"

This is why Christians are encouraged to "*put on the whole armor of God*" -- that we "*may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*" (**Ephesians 6:11**). Here it is: the enemy; the conflict, the protection. The battle is real. So are its casualties. And so is the need for protection.

Hence, the need for a strong faith. Old Testament history tells of great fortified and walled cities such as Babylon, built out of concern for physical safety. We need such concern for our spiritual safety! -- for the protection of precious souls. There is a sense in which every Christian is building his fortress of faith. How well we are able to withstand the testing of trials and temptations depends on the measure of our faith -- the strength of our fortress. And be sure of this, the assaults will come! In our context, Peter writes of their "*manifold trials*" and later tells them to "*think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you*" (**1Peter 4:12**). Knowing the trials will come, we must fortify our faith.

To this end we assimilate more and more of the word of God, our only source of strength and growth (**1Peter 2:2**). This means not only knowing it, it means respecting it and applying it to every circumstance of life. As Jesus, we can face and repel the tempter with: "*It is written*". Of him, Peter says, "*withstand steadfast in your faith*" (**1Peter 5:9**). How strong is your fortress?

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Spiritual Health

Gilbert Alexander

When a person gets sick, he goes to consult with a doctor (**Mark 2:17**). He has a personal doctor whom he trusts. The doctor tells him that he has a severe infectious disease which will be fatal unless he takes some medicine that the doctor then prescribes. He believes in the integrity of the doctor. He takes the prescription home and lays it on a shelf, saying to himself, "I'll get that filled in a few days". He grows sicker and sicker, but he does not get the medicine he needs. Finally, he dies, and the good prescription lies on the shelf. Why didn't the man's faith in the doctor save him from death?

A man who is spiritually sick hears about the Great Physician. He goes to hear what the Doctor has to say. The Doctor's words describe the man's sickness exactly, and the man believes what the Doctor tells him and puts his trust in Him. The doctor tells him that if he will listen to Him, trust what He tells him, and do what He prescribes, he can be made well and live forever. He then tells the man to acknowledge Him as the One who can make him whole, to change his course of life, to be immersed in water for cleansing from his disease, and he will be a new man. To keep His spiritual health, he must continue to live as the Doctor prescribes for him, faithfully, in a whole new lifestyle. The Doctor assures him that he will die if he goes back to his old lifestyle. Suppose the man lays the Prescription on a shelf and does not follow it -- will he live anyway? Suppose he begins to follow the Prescription, but then goes back to his old ways -- will he live anyway? At what point will he be cured, or is he already cured?

Dear friends, what kind of persons are you? Would you be like the first man described? Would you go to a doctor whom you trust, listen to him tell you that you will die if you don't take a certain kind of medicine, go home and put the prescription on the shelf? Will you hear the Great Physician Who tells you that you have a fatal illness that only He can cure, and that you must do what He tells you to do in order to be cured? (**Matthew 7:21; 13:15; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32; 7:24-27; 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; 2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4; Hebrews 5:8-9; 6:4-20; Revelations 22:14**). What does it take to make faith effectual? When does a person become well, spiritually?