

## Shoes of Readiness of the Gospel of Peace

Ephesians 6:15     May 12-13 2018

### Introduction

- Ok we're all sitting down right? I want everyone to look down at their shoes. **PP** What type of shoes are you guys wearing? Sneakers, dress shoes, pumps, boots, flip flops? We have any crazy shoe people here today? How many pairs of shoes do you have? Now ask yourself why you picked those shoes to wear today? Were you mindful about choosing them, or did you just throw them on because that's what you always wear?
- We're in the middle of a sermon series called This is War, where we've been studying the reality of spiritual warfare in the life of the disciple of Jesus and we've been learning how to put on the armor of God described in **Ephesians 6** so that we can stand firm against the enemy.
- We've studied the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness and now we turn our attention to the shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace – officially the piece of armor with the longest name – and probably the most misunderstood piece of the armor.
- As you turn with me to **Ephesians 6:15**, I'm going to pray.
- Now before we dive into the shoes, I want to briefly recap how we know the enemy to work. It's important that we continually drip this in and remind ourselves of the schemes of the enemy so that we can stand firm against them.
  - We know that the chief weapon of the enemy is the lies **PP** he speaks to us as he's the father of lies and can only speak lies (**John 8:44**) as he entices our flesh and seeks to crush us with the culture of this world system and difficult circumstances of life.
  - The enemy seeks to deceive us for the purpose of causing one or several of the following circumstances within our hearts, minds, and relationships: **PP** doubt/disbelief, disunity, discouragement, and despairing hopelessness. You can pretty much sum up all of his schemes to fall into one of those four categories.
  - And those schemes are all calculated to steal peace, kill joy, and destroy the testimony of the believer. **PP**
    - **John 10:10** "The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy..."
  - And that's it...that's what the enemy seeks to do over and over through various situations and circumstances, but it's basically always the same pattern: deception calculated to get us to fall for one of his schemes so that our peace is stolen, our joy is killed, or our testimony is destroyed.
- Praise God that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world (**1 John 4:4**)! Amen?!?

- The problem is that the Devil, our flesh, and this world system refuse to acknowledge they've been defeated and continue to plan and scheme and attack – and sadly, most Christians are oblivious to the danger all around them that's coming for them...just waiting to attack us in our lackadaisical spirituality and render us powerless, ineffective disciples of Jesus.
- But the Lord has given us the means to stand firm against the schemes of the enemy that we may be beacons of light in the darkness swirling around us. **PP**
  - **Romans 13:12, 14** "...let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light....put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."
  - We are to put on the Armor of Light which is Jesus Christ - our identity in Jesus Christ. That identity is broken up into the specific pieces of the Armor of God which we have further described in Ephesians 6.
  - I hope that you're beginning to see that every single one of these pieces of armor represents an aspect of our identity as Children of God...and the more we walk in that identity – the more we put on that armor – the more we walk as disciples of Christ letting His Spirit fill us, empower us and guide us to be more like Him, the more we will overcome whatever the enemy may throw at us.
- And so today we turn to the third piece of the armor of God...the shoes of readiness given by the gospel of Peace.
- **Ephesians 6:15** "and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace"
  - We're going to look at this in three parts: the historicity of the shoes, the spirituality of the shoes, and practicality of wearing the shoes

### Historicity of the Shoes

- **PP** The shoes worn by the soldiers of the Roman legions were called *caligae*. They were specifically designed to keep soldiers' feet healthy during the rigors of long forced marches and were very different from the sandals worn by most of the populace.
  - The soles of the shoes were usually constructed from three layers of thick hardened leather, with leather straps pulled up and laced around the ankle. These shoes were specifically designed to protect against blisters, foot diseases, and rough terrain, fitting snugly against the foot so that no pebbles could find their way in and to provide strong support for one's feet and ankles.
  - In addition, small spikes or iron hobnails were driven into the soles of the shoes in order to give firm footing on uneven or slippery terrain, like football cleats, or track

shoes. Some soldiers also wore shin guard type leggings known as leg greaves that were attached to the shoes for added protection.

- Anyone here ever stepped on a Lego before? I can't tell you how many times I've walked into my kids' rooms at night with the lights off to tuck them in and pray with them and then BAM, I step on a Lego and I'm so angry there's no way I can pray.
  - Well, we've got to remember how difficult the terrain was for these soldiers back then. Their battles weren't fought on lush carpets or nicely manicured turf fields. They fought on scorching hot sand, jagged stone, with tiny pebbles that could quickly cause blisters and sores, and thorns and thistles all over the place.
  - On top of that, the enemies of the Roman Empire would often times place sharp, spiked objects on the ground in front of them before a battle. Any attacking soldier not wearing tough, tight-fitting shoes substantial enough for the attack would soon find himself crippled and – at best – unable to fight, but often times killed in the battle because they literally lacked the ability to stand firm against the attack.
    - Though the shoes were by no means the most well-known part of the soldier's armor, they were vital to effectively defending against the enemy.
  - And you can ask any member of the military today about the importance of good footwear. They'll tell you, if you don't take care of your feet, you're in for a world of hurt.
  - If a soldier lacks sturdy shoes he is not ready for the battle...and this is the spiritual truth that Paul is teaching us as he exhorts us to shod our feet in the shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace. So we now look at the spirituality of the shoes. **PP**

### **Spirituality of the Shoes**

- In order to understand the spiritual significance of this part of the armor we've got to break down the construction of this Greek sentence and understand the meaning of some of these words.
- Paul writes, "As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace." Now, when many of us think of this part of the armor, we think of the "shoes of peace". Well, in the Greek, the phrase "shoes for your feet" is coupled with the word "readiness"...it's not shoes of peace, it's the shoes of readiness, and that readiness comes from the gospel of peace.

- This is a very important because overcoming the enemy isn't just a matter of having peace – which we'll define in a second – overcoming the enemy is possible when our feet are in a constant state of readiness to do whatever the Lord calls us to in any given moment in any given situation because of the peace we have. Peace without readiness is no good for the battle.
- The Greek word for readiness **PP** (Gk. *hetoimasia*) means preparedness, alertness, and confidence to act quickly and decisively
- Paul is telling us here that in order to stand firm against the enemy we have to be alert to the enemy, prepared, and confident to act.
- And here is where a lot of the confusion comes into this passage; this isn't readiness to go somewhere and preach the gospel as this passage is often interpreted. **PP** This is readiness to stand firm against whatever attack may come because of the peace we have from the good news of Jesus Christ.
  - Look again back to the first word in **verse 14**; what is it? Stand – this is not going, this is standing firm. The point here is not evangelizing the lost or preaching the Gospel, the point here is fighting the devil. This is not evangelism for an unbeliever, this is warfare for a Christian, and we've got to be ready for that warfare.
- So where does this readiness come from? It's given by the gospel of peace.
  - And here's where our identity in Christ comes into play...Here's where we're putting on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Armor of Light as we walk in the truth of the gospel that gives us peace and therefore makes us ready in any situation to respond to the attack.
  - The Greek word for peace **PP** (Gk. *eirēnē*) refers to the state of untroubled, undisturbed tranquility despite the circumstances in which we find ourselves. We remain whole no matter what chaos abounds.
    - In its verb form, it means to bind, or weave together...the ability to hold it together no matter the state of things around us.
- Our Lord said, **PP John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."
  - You see, the world's idea of peace is always dependent on the circumstances around us. If you're healthy, in a good relationship, have a wealth, success, power, or prestige, well the world says then you have peace. The problem is that our circumstances are constantly changing and therefore there's no real peace from the world.

- **Romans 3:17** “And the way of peace they have not known.” In spite of all human attempts at peace, it's clear from simply observing those who walk apart from Christ that this world does not know the road to peace.
- But Jesus says, He doesn't give us peace like the world gives it. Our peace in Christ is unshakable and not at all dependent on the circumstances of life because the peace of Christ emanates out of our identity as Children of God.
  - To the world, peace comes when they're free from trouble. But for the disciple of Jesus, peace comes because we've been adopted into the family of God and there is nothing that can change who we are in Christ. Therefore, we can have true peace – true wholeness and confidence – even in the midst of the tribulation around us.
- **John 16:33 PP** “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”
  - And this is the reality of the gospel of peace – the good news – that Jesus Christ has overcome sin and death and set us free to have peace with God, peace others, and peace within ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The more we walk in the fullness of the good news, the more our identity is shaped by who God says we are and what God is doing in us, the more peace we'll have and the more strongly we'll stand firm against the enemy.
  - What is the fullness of the gospel you may ask? Well, I would encourage you go onto our website and search for the two-part sermon series called “What is the Gospel?” ... we break it down in depth in those two sermons.
  - But in short, the fullness of the gospel should STIR **PP** us up as we understand that:
    - When we submit to Jesus Christ by acknowledging our inability to please God by ourselves and putting all of our trust, hope and confidence in Jesus Christ, we're saved, forgiven, and set free by the grace of God.
    - But the good news doesn't end there – not only are we saved, but the Holy Spirit seals us and empowers us, leads us, and transforms us to be more and more like Jesus as He teaches us to be his disciples and follow Him.
    - But the good news isn't just about our salvation and transformation, Jesus also invites us to be a part of the work He is doing in this world. We are invited to use our gifts, talents, education, experiences, and everything else as instruments of our God. We are given purpose and direction.
    - All as we look forward to the day of our Lord's return where he will restore all things and renew this fallen creation.
  - This is the fullness of the good news of peace – the more we walk in this truth, the more we will know true peace with God, ourselves, and others.

- So how do we walk in this gospel of peace so that we are ready to stand firm against the schemes of the enemy? Well, **PP** let us turn to the practicality of wearing the shoes.

### Practicality of Wearing the Shoes

- When our feet are injured: fractures, sores, bad arches, bunions, etc. then you typically limp around and are said to be lame. We also use this word to describe a person or statement that's weak, inarticulate, or just plain boring – my kids call me lame all the time.
- Now, the reality is **PP** that there are far too many lame Christians walking around with a limp unprepared and unready because they've not submitted to the truth of the gospel of peace.
  - It's not enough simply to know truth...we've got to submit to truth.
- Instead of walking in our identity as Children of God, we put other shoes on...shoes from the world and when we don't wear the right shoes we're going to come up lame.
  - Sometimes we choose the shoes that the world says are cool, or that our friends pressure us into, or we choose the shoes that we want to wear because we want to do it our way. Can you imagine a soldier going into battle wearing dress shoes, or high heels, or scuba flippers? Yet, that's what many of us do every day as we wear the shoes of this world into battle.
  - And we can know if we're wearing the wrong shoes if we're not experiencing the peace of God...if we find ourselves seeking after the things the world says will give us peace....and then we have no peace when our circumstances change and our lives are thrown into chaos.
  - If that's us, then we're a lame Christian soldier. A lame Christian limps along in life, open to attack, unstable and almost immobile, getting nowhere in their spiritual journey, confused and ineffective in this spiritual war. **PP**
    - **1 Corinthians 14:33** "For God is not a God of confusion but of peace."
- So how do we strap on those shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace? Well, scripture shows us at least 4 hardy leather straps we can fasten around our feet.
  - Be Saved by the God of Peace **PP**
    - **Romans 5:1** "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
    - **Ephesians 2:13-18** "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace...And he came and preached peace to you who were far off [Gentiles] and peace to those who were near [Jews]; for through him we have access in one Spirit to the Father."
    - The starting point is always submission to Jesus and receiving the peace He alone can give...receiving a new identity and learning to submit to that

identity, leaving behind everything else this world says you are or that you have to be. The more we walk in our identity as children of God, the more true peace we'll have and more prepared we'll be when the attack of the enemy come.

○ Be Settled by the Prince of Peace **PP**

- **Isaiah 26:3** "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."
- You've probably heard the story of the little girl sitting by herself on an airplane. During the flight the plane encountered heavy turbulence and was battered and beaten, so much so that many people were crying, and panicking, and clutching their seats in terror. But the little girl sat there unfazed looking out the window. In the midst of the turbulence that buffeted the plane the man sitting next to the little girl leaned over to her and incredulously asked her how she could be so calm. She looked over to the man and said with a smile, "my daddy is the pilot".
- That little girl had unshakable peace in the midst of the storm because she knew who her daddy was and kept her mind fixed on the truth of his control over that plane, and trusted in him no matter what.
- And that's the same type of peace we can have the more we keep our mind fixed on our heavenly Father and our elder brother Jesus Christ, trusting in the control and love of our God.

○ Number 3, we are to Be Steadied by the Word of Peace **PP**

- **Psalms 119:165** "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble."
- The more we learn and memorize the word of God, the more submit to the truth contained in scripture, the more peace we'll have, the readier we will be and we will not stumble when the attack comes.

○ And submitting to the truth goes hand in hand with the final way we strap on the shoes of readiness, we are to Be Steered by the Spirit of Peace **PP**

- **Colossians 3:15** "And let the peace of Christ rule (umpire) in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body"
- If you recall from our last series, one aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit is peace. The more we seek to walk by the power of the Spirit the more He will produce His peace within us. The Spirit of God will help us meditate on the Word of God, that we may keep our focus on Jesus and confidently persevere through life in our identity as children of God.

- If we aren't doing these things **PP** we need to appeal to the grace of God and call out to Him to help us to begin to do them. Otherwise, we will live chaotic, confused lives, lame soldiers in the spiritual war. We can't be lulled into complacency or comfort, nor can we fall into hopeless defeat believing there is no way out.



- Both of those ways of thinking are lies from the enemy. By the grace of God, we must appeal to Him to strap on the shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace so that we're prepared whenever the attack comes.

## Conclusion

- And that brings us back to the shoes we're wearing again today. **PP** Look again at your shoes. Now ask yourself, are these shoes ready for battle...do I have on the shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace? What areas of my life am I not at all prepared for war?
- Regardless of your answer, the good news is that by the grace of God we still have the opportunity to strap on the shoes of the gospel of peace.
  - Though we're under attack from the enemy – and we're often caught by surprise and unprepared – Our Lord is ready to help us put on those right shoes. He will give us the peace so that we can stand firm prepared, alert and confident no matter the situation around us. The more we walk in our identity as children of God, fixing our minds on Jesus, meditating on His word, and being empowered by the Spirit, the more we'll walk in peace and have victory in this spiritual war, always having on the right shoes for the battle. **PP**
- By the grace of God, let's walk with our feet bound up in the shoes of readiness given by the gospel of peace.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:16** "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way...."
- Amen. Amen.