

The Shoes of Peace

Ephesians 6:10-15

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **13** Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. **14** Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, **15** and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

In this last section of Ephesians 6 we see that we are in a battle—a spiritual battle.

- **The same grace that endears us to God makes us enemies of Satan.**
- We are at war with Satan.

And so in light of this battle, Paul describes the provision that God has made for us in order for us to take a stand in this battle.

For 2 weeks Dom has taught on the first 2 pieces of spiritual armor: the BELT OF TRUTH and the BREASTPLATE of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- Today we will examine the 3rd piece of armor in v15—SHOES.
- Before we talk about these shoes, there are 4 important principles for us to remember and to apply to EVERY piece of this armor:

THE ARMOR IS GOD'S ARMOR.

- This battle is SPIRITUAL—Other people are not the enemy—Satan is.
- So traditional weapons and armor are not what is required to fight this enemy.

Paul has instructed us to put on GOD'S armor.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. **4** For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...

- This is a spiritual battle and so **The armor we need is God's armor!**

THE ARMOR POINTS US TO, AND IS FULFILLED IN, JESUS.

- Everything about the armor declares the victory of Jesus over Satan on our behalf.
- In Romans and in Galatians Paul says that we are to ADORN Jesus—put Jesus on as our armor!
 - The Belt of Truth, The breastplate of righteousness—TODAY: shoes of PEACE...
- **As we adorn Christ, we are clothed with GOD'S armor.**

THE ARMOR IS METAPHORICAL, NOT MAGICAL

- We don't "pray on" the armor like casting some weird spell... "Lord give me the shoes of peace!" and we are suddenly standing there with these ancient magical shoes...
 - Every piece of armor is a METAPHOR for a spiritual reality, that is necessary for the spiritual battle—**these shoes represent the PEACE that Jesus has brought us!**
- FINALLY...**

THE ARMOR MUST BE APPROPRIATED IN ORDER TO BE EFFECTIVE.

- Talking about the armor or trying to “pray it on” does no good...
- In order for it to do its job, we must APPLY the spiritual realities of Jesus’ victory over sin and Satan.
- We must STAND FIRM, as Paul says, in the reality of what Jesus has done for us.
- The armor represents the REALITY of the Gospel in our lives.

And today we look at how the Gospel of PEACE functions as our footwear...

In the late 80s it was cool to wear Nike hightops—designed to be BASKETBALL shoes.

- I didn’t like basketball—wasn’t any good at it—didn’t watch it—didn’t play it...
- But I WANTED basketball hightops.

I think my mom was OK with buying such expensive shoes because at least they had ankle support...

- But as soon as I got them home I undermined any ankle support the shoes may have offered by putting loose-fitting wide shoe-laces on and adjusting them so I could slip them on and off my feet and wear them “open” without having to tie the laces.
- This was SO COOL in the late 80s—at least in NY.
- My junior high school SOUNDED like 3,000 kids dragging their loosely-tied hightops around on their feet.
 - These shoes were HORRIBLE in winter with snow and slush...
 - They were HOT in the summer.
 - They were so loose I couldn’t run in them...I had a separate pair of shoes for gym.
 - But they were the right brand, right style, worn the right way, and so they were “cool”.

Those shoes were TOTALLY impractical—ONLY useful so far as they helped to fulfill my early adolescent desire to look and feel “cool”...

Today Paul is addressing the shoes that soldiers wear in battle.

- Soldiers entering battle wear purpose-built, PRACTICAL shoes.
- Soldiers don’t wear shoes to look cool in as an effort to satisfy personal insecurities...
- Their shoes PROTECT THEIR FEET so they can do what they need to do:
 - **Soldiers WORK and MARCH and FIGHT**
 - A soldier’s shoes need to protect their feet as they WORK, MARCH and FIGHT.

1st century Jewish historian Josephus wrote about the successfulness of the Roman army.

- Josephus observed that the Roman army had superior footwear.
- He credited Ceazar for the insight and investment in such sturdy and protective footwear.
- Roman soldiers were the first to wear sandals with hob-nails in the sole

According to Josephus, Rome had a major military advantage because of the SHOES that their soldiers wore!

A Hob Nail is a short nail with a THICK nailhead that protruded from the sole.

- The nail holds the sole of a shoe to the upper part of the shoe.
- The nail ALSO provides traction as the thick nailheads act like cleats providing traction.

Before hob-nails, sandals were stitched together using soft leather.

- The top leather was hand-stitched to sole using a thin leather strap as thread.
 - These sandals were fragile around the stitching (breakage)
 - Soft soles— not great for sharp or rocky terrain & wore out quickly...

Hob-nails enabled sandal-makers to make sturdier sandals.

- Soldiers were SURE FOOTED on any terrain with thicker soles to protect feet.
- Soldiers could now move quickly—even run—in any terrain—nails gave traction.
- Soldiers could march for months on a set of soles, and then the soles could be replaced quickly by a cobbler who would travel with the Roman army in order to keep the footwear functional.
- The hob-nails were LOUD on Roman cobblestone streets, and so a division of Roman soldiers created an intimidating, thundering, rhythmic pounding as they marched through a town.

Paul was a Roman citizen living in a Roman-conquered territory, and would have been familiar with Roman armor.

- He knew of the amazing and intimidating footwear that Roman soldiers wore.
- He was familiar with the intimidating sound of hundred's of hob-nailed shoes marching down cobblestone streets...
- He understood the efficiency of PROPER armor and PROPER footwear.

And in our passage today Paul is saying that we have been given the CORRECT footwear for the spiritual battle that we face.

We are in a battle and God has given us EVERYTHING we need—even the right shoes!

Notice what these shoes are:

Ephesians 6: 15 NLT

“For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the gospel so that you will be fully prepared.”

We put PEACE on... EVERYTHING we need is given to us in **Jesus**

- Jesus IS the Gospel—He IS Gospel peace!
- He IS the peace of God.
- JESUS is our peace.

In our passage Paul is talking about how we are given “Shoes of Peace” as a FOUNDATIONAL piece of God’s armor.

- These shoes are VITAL and NECESSARY for spiritual battle!
- **We literally STAND ON Jesus’ peace.**
 - How is this helpful??

These Shoes of Peace are helpful in 3 ways:

- 1. Jesus’ Peace Stabilizes Us**
- 2. Jesus’ Peace Protects Us**
- 3. Jesus’ Peace Engages Us**

1. Jesus’ Peace Stabilizes Us

I can easily become overwhelmed trying to imagine fighting in a 1st century battle...

- The utter discomfort of military life must have been almost unbearable...
- The brutality of 1st century warfare is overwhelming to read about...
- The chaos of battle must have invoked a range of emotions that most of us will never know...

Paul says not to worry about this battle—Jesus has us covered—literally!

- For US, we get to put on a belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness and shoes of peace—ADORN Jesus—put him on like body armor!

- And we put on this peace like shoes—We literally STAND ON the peace of Jesus
- **Our footing in battle is STRENGTHENED by the Peace of Jesus in our life.**

Remember that once we make peace with God through Jesus we become Satan's enemy.

- Satan HATES and ATTACKS the good work that God has begun in you.
- And on your own you are TOTALLY unprepared and ill-equipped to battle Satan!
- On our own we lack the strength to STAND in battle.

So God gives us HIS armor to strengthen us in this spiritual battle.

- He literally CLOTHES US in Jesus—putting HIS armor on us so we can STAND FIRM.
- In Jesus we have a belt of truth that secures and fastens the rest of our armor.
- We have a BREASTPLATE of righteousness to protect our most vital parts. (heart/lungs)
- Today we see that Jesus also provides FOOTWEAR—PEACE—for us.

Picture a soldier with his belt and breastplate fastened but trying to fight a battle barefoot...

- He may be protected in some places but he will NOT be able to STAND FIRM in battle.

OR, picture a soldier with his breastplate and belt but wearing untied J-high shoes!

- I think some of us do that—we wake up and step into battle with the WRONG armor.
- Satan wants you to be unarmed and un-protected, so that means you've gotta GRAB that armor and make sure you've got the RIGHT SHOES!

If Satan can get us to trust in something that is NOT Jesus' peace, then he's won.

- Only Jesus peace can STRENGTHEN us in battle.

2. Jesus' Peace Protects Us

We live in an insecure world...

- Self-help, Self-motivation, Self-made men, Self-focus, Self-described winners...
- The false religion of our culture is the worship of SELF!!

The problem with worshipping "self" is that we are not able to provide ourselves with peace.

- **People today are searching for peace—inner-peace, financial peace, peace with others, political peace...**
- A lack of peace produces insecurity.

This is why Jesus' title of "Prince of Peace" is so significant—**we need peace to be secure.**

Notice how the Bible talks about peace:

- **First we must have peace WITH God.**
- **Second we experience the peace OF God.**
 - And the peace OF God brings peace with others.
 - And the peace OF God also brings us inner-peace that we long for...
- **Without Jesus we cannot have peace with God.**
- **Without peace with God we cannot have peace within ourselves or with others.**
 - Jesus IS our peace.

Satan wants to lure the barefoot person out onto the rocky battlefield to cut him down.

- Simple rocks are a MAJOR threat to our security when we're barefoot...
- Even darkness is a major threat to the security of a barefoot soldier...
- A shoe-less soldier is a VULNERABLE soldier...

Imagine what a barefoot soldier is thinking about on the battlefield:

- Insecure and constantly looking down to avoid injury...wobbly over sharp terrain...

- Hesitant to engage in combat because of how vulnerable bare feet are when fighting someone with metal hob nails in their shoe soles!
- Worn down, in pain when marching due to sores.

A barefoot soldier is vulnerable, distracted and essentially USELESS in battle.

- *Jesus' peace PROTECTS our footing—giving us a FIRM FOUNDATION.*
- Just like a soldier putting on hob-nailed shoes before marching into battle, Jesus' PEACE takes our mind off of **our** abilities and gives us Jesus' PEACE.
- *Jesus' peace PROTECTS us.*

3. Jesus' Peace Engages Us

A fully-equipped soldier who is STABILIZED and PROTECTED is now able to ENGAGE!

- Without armor a soldier is distracted by personal safety rather than focused on victory.
- But a properly equipped soldier is able to ENGAGE in the battle.

One of the biggest enemies in WWI wasn't an army or weapon—TRENCHFOOT.

- Do NOT google trench foot...

Trench foot is a serious condition that results from your feet being wet for too long.

- Soldiers got trench foot from fighting in cold, wet conditions in trenches
- Without extra dry socks or dry boots to help keep their feet dry, a soldier's feet would swell and cause tremendous pain
- This condition is simple to avoid and simple to treat, but in WW1

Trenchfoot removed nearly as many soldiers from battle as bullets did.

Soldiers with rifles and grenades and helmets and food rations and all the specialty equipment of a soldier...

- **Soldiers are taken out because their FEET are not properly protected.**
- That's how I felt in Junior High—walking to the bus in slushy snow in open high-tops...

And I fear this may be how some of us are living right now—limping along on poorly-protected feet...

- ***HIDING from the spiritual battle raging around us.***

The distinctive Hob-Nail shoes of the Roman soldier allowed the soldiers to ENGAGE.

- Sure-footing ENGAGES a soldier in battle & not worry about footing...
- A well-equipped soldier has a measure of PEACE allowing him to focus—even in battle.

Friends, we have been given PEACE from God in order that we might stand firm in life.

- Life is hard - some rocky places, slick terrain...
- But when we have peace fastened to our feet, it digs deeply into the soil of beneath us and causes us to be able to stay upright.
- We are STABILIZED, PROTECTED and ENGAGED—regardless of what the battle throws our way.

Jesus' Peace is the firm grip needed for us to ENGAGE in a world that is NOT stable!

JESUS is our stability—our PROTECTION—enabling us to ENGAGE...

- We can't WAIT to engage in the battles around us—Satan is attacking!
- Your wife or your husband cannot be your peace...
- Waiting until you're married won't bring you this peace...

- Finances (MONEY) cannot be your stability or protection OR peace...
- Your health cannot be your peace...
- Only the peace of Jesus is armor for our feet—our FOUNDATION!

Jesus brings us PEACE that stabilizes & protects our footing when everything around us is swirling and shaking and chaotic.

- The world may shake around us, but Jesus' peace keeps us grounded
- The peace of adorning Jesus will keep us SANE in the insanity of battle.
- His Peace also keeps us FOCUSED and pointed in the right direction
 - The sure-footing of peace keeps us facing the right direction in life.

Some of us may be living without the stability of Jesus' peace.

- Maybe you're trying to stand and fight, but you're fighting in your own strength.
 - You've got J-high hightop on!
 - Your ankles are all twisted and you feel defeated...
- I know some of us are anxious—fearful even.
- It's easy to lose hope or become cynical when it seems like we don't have good footing.
- Maybe you've just given up and just sat down...

Listen, the battle is NOT over—Jesus is NOT done with you!!

Today the Lord wants to wrap you up in HIS PEACE—give you a SURE footing.

- You might be trying to stand on your own efforts —on worn-out soles or J-high shoes...
- Maybe you're nursing bruised and battered feet from battling barefooted.

Today, God is offering you HIS PEACE as armor—but this armor needs to be appropriated.

- **You gotta PUT ARMOR ON!**

Paul gives us a picture of what it looks like to put on the peace of God:

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- **Thanksgiving activates peace**

- Like a barefoot soldier in battle, we are impotent and ineffective without peace.

Today the Lord wants to put HIS peace on you as armor for your life.

When we adorn Jesus—put Him on as our armor— Jesus' peace strengthens, secures and compels us to LIVE—even in the midst of battle!

This peace guards and protects us.

- Without this peace, we are VULNERABLE!
- This peace not only covers our feet so we can STAND and FIGHT, but it also stands at attention over our soul, as an armed guard.

Without these shoes of peace we are exposed to injury and unable to ENGAGE

- We can't stand firm against the sneak-attacks of the enemy without SHOES!

Without SHOES we are injured or infected or vulnerable and fearful!

- Injured soldiers spend their time in the HOSPITAL treating their wounds...
- We were made to be shrouded in peace and STAND FIRM on the BATTLEFIELD.

Some of us are on the sidelines of the battle nursing wounds as Satan RAVAGES our kids and our families and our loved ones.

- Un-engaged parents leave their kids EXPOSED to Satan's attacks.
 - Peace-less households are Satan's high-ground in battle—He seems unstoppable.
 - Marriages are shot to pieces on the battlefield when we don't STAND in Jesus' peace...
- We are in a battle against a devious, wicked, relentless enemy, and we need to STAND FIRM!
- **We need GOOD SHOES for battle, and Jesus offers us HIS peace.**

Listen—there IS good news!! There is HOPE for you today!

If you're here today and you are desperate for PEACE, Jesus is the prince of Peace!

- The Prince of Peace is able to give you peace—HOW? PUT IT ON!

Remember how I said that "Thanksgiving activates peace"?

- **TRUST activates Thanksgiving... TRUST Jesus—put on His peace!!**

The GOOD NEWS for all of us today is that Jesus has brought us peace by standing on the battlefield and he's already taken the WORST of the battle for us.

- **Jesus took a bullet for each of us.**

Our sin separates us from God and leaves us hopeless and helpless in life...

- Every one of us has sinned and rebelled against God's perfect will.
- But God loves us so much that He took the PUNISHMENT for our sin.
 - Jesus stood as an innocent man before the Father and He took our sin upon Himself.
 - And in isolation, Jesus hung naked on a cross as the guilt of MY SIN and full measure my SHAME that I deserve was put on HIM...
- In that moment of horror, God the Father turned his back to His one and only son and judged JESUS for our sin.
- Draped in our sin, Jesus was found guilty by God—He willingly took the punishment and then gave up His own life—still cloaked in our sin.

Jesus experienced separation from God and took the bullet of judgment we deserve.

- *Jesus took a bullet that was meant for you.*
- Jesus draped Himself in OUR sin, and conquered Satan by dragging Satan's most powerful weapon—sin—into the grave by adorning His own corpse with our sin.
- In that moment Jesus broke the power of sin to defeat us in life.

That is good news, but that is not ALL the news because Jesus didn't stay dead.

- Jesus rose from the grave—leaving sin and death and Satan's WORST in the grave!
- Sin is no longer our master because Jesus has defeated it
- Our past no longer defines our relationship with God because Jesus has REMOVED the errors of our past!
 - He took our WORST and wore it into the grave.
- **We no longer wear SIN as a garment—we now wear JESUS—Jesus IS our peace!**
 - Where once we were ruled by anxiousness or anxiety, Jesus is now our peace.

In Jesus our anxiety is DEFEATED by His peace

- Anxiety can cripple us by shutting us down in fear...
 - Fear of failing can cripple us.
 - Like trench foot overtaking the legs of fearful soldiers cowering in a foxhole...
 - Anxious fear is crippling and keeps us OUT of the battle!

- Anxiety can cripple us in the opposite way too—we become restless and strive to control every situation and every person and every relationship...
 - This is like running in untied Nikes—breaking ankles
 - dangerous for you AND for others.

Jesus is offering you a sure foundation—a foundation of PEACE.

Today you can activate the PEACE of God in your life by TRUSTING Jesus.

- JESUS IS PEACE.
 - Put your trust in Jesus and be forgiven by God!
 - Put your trust in Jesus and be welcomed home by God!
 - Put your trust in Jesus and be covered by the armor of God!
 - Put your trust in Jesus and receive the PEACE of God.