

THE SOVEREIGN GOD AND THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL: A STUDY OF EPHESIANS

(LESSON ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY)

“THE SHOES OF THE GOSPEL”

EPHESIANS 6:10-15

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

In verses **11** and **13** of chapter **6**, the Apostle Paul urges the believers in Ephesus to put on, or take unto themselves, “*the whole armour of God.*” In verses **14-17**, he itemizes the offensive and defensive instruments that believers are to employ in **spiritual** warfare. The instruments appear in the order in which a soldier would put them on before engaging in **physical** warfare.

In our recent studies of the **panoplia** (the whole armour of God), we considered the first two pieces of equipment listed by Paul-the “**Belt of Truth,**” and the “**Breastplate of Righteousness.**” In this Lesson we will look at the “**Shoes of the Gospel.**”

In verse **15** Paul writes, “*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*” There are persons who interpret this phrase to mean that the Christian soldier should be prepared at all times to share the Gospel with others. Others understand it to mean that the Gospel is the firm foundation on which Christians are to stand. I believe that the latter understanding is the correct one.

I am in agreement with the following comment by **John MacArthur** as it relates to this issue: “Many commentators...interpret **Ephesians 6:15** as a reference to preaching. But in the **Ephesians** text Paul is not talking about preaching or teaching but about fighting spiritual battles. And he is not talking about traveling about but standing firm (**Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14**). His subject is not evangelizing the lost but fighting the devil. In this passage the gospel of peace refers to the good news that believers are at peace with God.”

We have presented hereunder five other translations of **Ephesians 6:15**:

The Amplified Bible

“*And having strapped on YOUR FEET THE GOSPEL OF PEACE IN PREPARATION [to face the enemy with firm-footed stability and the readiness produced by the good news].*”

Christian Standard Bible

“*And your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.*”

English Standard Version

“*And, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.*”

New English Translation

“By fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace.”

New Living Translation

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

In order to stand firm the soldier must have secure footing. A common military practice of Roman soldiers was to sharpen pieces of wood to a point and bury them just beneath the surface of the ground so that they could not be seen easily. This tactic was potentially debilitating to their enemies, because if an enemy soldier’s foot was pierced, he could not walk properly and if he could not walk properly, he clearly could not fight effectively. The thick soled sandals of Roman soldiers protected their feet from this catastrophe.

The Roman soldier wore sandals which were bound by thongs over the instep and around the ankle, and the soles were thickly studded with nails. This would give him a firm footing in case of attack. The military successes of the Roman armies were due in no small measure to them having on the right footwear when they engaged the enemy.

Regarding this piece of equipment, **Albert Barnes** made the following comments:

“There is undoubtedly an allusion here to what was worn by the ancient soldier to guard his feet. The Greek is, literally, 'having underbound the feet;' that is, having bound on the shoes, or sandals, or whatever was worn by the ancient soldier. The protection of the feet and ankles consisted of two parts:

(1) The sandals, or shoes, which were probably made so as to cover the foot, and which often were fitted with nails, or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground: or

(2) with greaves that were fitted to the legs, and designed to defend them from any danger. These greaves, or boots (1 Samuel 17:6), were made of brass, and were in almost universal use among the Greeks and Romans."





The phrase, “*And your feet shod,*” is in a construction in the Greek which indicates that it is the believer’s responsibility to ensure that he or she has on the appropriate footwear in which to engage in spiritual combat. If the Christian soldier is to stand against the attack of the devil and his demons, he or she must see to it that his or her feet are properly protected and equipped. As we stated in an earlier Lesson, the Christian soldier needs to be protected from head to foot, and the “*whole armour of God*” is made up of **all** the various pieces of defensive and offensive armour. We need the divine equipment in its completeness, without the lack of any single part. God has supplied us with the complete armour, but He expects us to put it on.

What are the shoes that the Christian Soldier must put on? Paul says it is, “*the preparation of the gospel of peace.*” The word “*preparation*” is the translation of a Greek word which refers to “the act of preparing,” or “the condition of a person or thing so far as preparedness, or readiness is concerned.” In the context of this verse, the preparation or readiness does not refer to a zeal in proclaiming the Gospel, but rather to a preparation or readiness with reference to the conflict. The gospel of peace provides the footing for everything we do. No matter how secure the rest of our body is, if we are wounded in our feet we will be easy prey for the enemy.

The Greek word translated “*preparation*” was used in classical Greek in the sense of **establishment**, or a **firm foundation**; a **prepared foundation** or **base**. Thus, the believer has the responsibility to ensure that his or her feet are equipped with the shoes which will give him or her a firm footing. This firm footing will make it possible for him or her to, “*stand against the wiles of the devil,*” and to “*withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*”

That which will give the believer a firm footing is the “*gospel of peace.*” The Gospel speaks peace to the believer’s heart, because the Lord Jesus made peace by the blood of His Cross, making a way for a holy God to reunite Himself with believing sinners who had been separated from Him and His life in Adam their federal head. In the context of Paul’s description of the believer’s armour, his allusion to the Gospel is not simply a reference to how people get saved. Paul is reminding us to become strong in the faith and prepared for battle by keeping our feet firmly planted in the truth of the **Good News**. What is the truth of the **Good News**?

In **Romans 5:1** Paul writes, “*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” The truth of the **Good News** is that those whom God calls into salvation are **justified** by Him. He takes away the guilt and penalty of their sins, and credits them with a positive righteousness. This positive righteousness is Jesus Christ Himself, in whom the believer stands innocent and un-condemned forever, and righteous in point of law. Our position in Jesus Christ is secure because we have been **legally** declared righteous by God. When God justifies a person, He gives that person a standing before Him that is so impeccable, so pure and so spotless that no power in heaven, earth or hell can bring any condemning accusation against them. Paul informs us of this in **Romans 8:31-34**:

31 What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?

33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

34 Who is the one who will condemn? Christ is the one who died (and more than that, he was raised), who is at the right hand of God, and who also is interceding for us.

(New English Translation)

One of the most important and sadly, most neglected truths concerning justification, is that by His life of absolute perfection, Jesus Christ acquired for His people a positive righteousness which is imputed to them when they are saved, and which guarantees eternal life for them. In Him, His people have fulfilled the Law of perfect obedience, and in Him they have borne the penalty for their sins. By His sacrificial death on the Cross, they have been rescued from hell, and by His perfect obedience to the Law, they are given entrance into heaven.

One of the many benefits of justification is **peace with God**. Paul says, *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* The Greek word translated “peace” is **eiréné, (i-ray’-nay)**, which means “to bind together that which has been separated.” According to **Colossians 1:20**, our Lord made peace through the blood of the Cross. He did so, in the sense that through His atonement, He binds together again, those who by reason of their standing in the First Adam had been separated from God, and who now, through faith in Him, are bound again to God in their new standing in Him, the Last Adam. This is justification.

Brothers and sisters, when God justifies us, our war with Him comes to an end forever. When He justifies us, we enter into an eternal peace treaty with Him. God will never declare war on us again! Yes, we still sin. Yes, we still rebel. Yes, we still commit acts of hostility toward God. But our acts of sin, rebellion and hostility are never enough to

provoke God to declare war on us again! We have an advocate with the Father; we have a mediator who ensures that the peace is maintained. We have a great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession for us. He is the Prince of peace and He is our peace!

Brothers and sisters, it is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have been justified and as a result, have peace with God. This involves at least three things.

Firstly, that God has fully judged sin upon Christ who became our substitute. As **Augustus Toplady** wrote,

*“Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,
And then again at mine.”*

Secondly, that God was so fully satisfied with Christ’s sacrifice, that He will remain satisfied for all eternity. This means that He will never take up the judgment of our sins ever again. In **Hebrews 10:14** Paul writes, *“For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy”* (**New Living Translation**).

Thirdly, that God is at rest about us forever, even though our understanding of the truth of justification may be poor, and even though our walk may be characterized by stumbling and fumbling. God is not looking on our sins. He is looking on the blood of Christ. All the majesty of God’s holy and righteous throne was satisfied when our Lord bowed His head and cried, *“It is finished.”* All claims against us were met when Christ “made peace by the blood of His cross, and because of that, we have peace with God. This is what the Gospel declares and it is **in** the amazing truth of this declaration that our feet must be shod, and it is **on** the amazing truth of this declaration that our feet must stand!

The “*gospel of peace*” declares that, through Christ, believers are at peace with God. It is this confidence of divine approval, acceptance and

endorsement, which allows the believer to stand firm, affording him or her a sure foothold in the campaign in which he or she is engaged.

John Eadie says, "The possession of peace with God...creates blessed serenity of heart, and confers upon the mind peculiar and continuous preparedness of action and movement. There is nothing to disconcert or perplex it, or divide and retard its energies."

The Gospel of peace is the marvelous truth that in Christ we are now at peace with God. Therefore, when our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, we stand against the enemy in the confidence of God's love for us, His union with us, and His commitment to fight for us. The believer who stands in the security of his or her standing "in Christ," never needs to fear any enemy, even the devil himself. When the devil and his emissaries come to attack us, our feet will be rooted firmly on the solid ground of the gospel of peace, through which God changed from being our enemy to being our friend and protector. We who were once His enemies are now His children, and He offers us His full resources to enable us to, "*be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*"

Bible Ref.com comments that in this verse, "Paul imagines the shoes as '*the readiness given by the gospel of peace.*' Shoes made a soldier 'ready' to run into battle. The gospel of peace likewise makes a believer ready for spiritual battle. Anyone who has walked around outside with no shoes knows that some areas are virtually off-limits when you're barefoot. Shoes give you the ability to go almost anywhere. Shoes also provide traction. The gospel anchors our faith in certain basic, universal truths. Without that, we'd find our foundation slipping..."

Those who study martial arts know that setting one's feet is the beginning of all combat. They affect balance, grip, power, and movement. In the same way, the foundation of our day-to-day Christianity is the gospel."