

PREPARE YOUR FEET

Ephesians 6.15: Shod your feet in preparation to preach the gospel

Theme: Know the gospel and prepare to take it out to the lost.

Remember the context of our passage of study: (v13) The whole armour of God.

- The Lord has given us a mission to accomplish: Be and make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (v11-12) We have a very real, organized, and motivated enemy that will oppose us in that work.
- (v10) God expects us to stand against this opposition, and to be able to do that requires certain things:
 - ✓ (v13) Paul uses a metaphor (picture) to show us the things we need: The armour of a Roman soldier.
 - ✓ (v14a) We need truth: God is truth and Scripture is truth. Knowing what is true will “hold everything else together” (because without truth we are easy prey to the enemy's doubts).
 - ✓ (v14b) We need righteousness: We need to understand our *imputed* righteousness in Jesus Christ (which protects us from condemnation) and we need to *put it on* and live in righteousness (which will protect us from accusation).

This morning we're going to talk about our foot gear: (v15) God says we need to shod (“to shoe”) our feet in order to stand against the opposition of the enemy.

- I could not agree more! The enemy has overrun God's people because they do know the gospel and they have prepared themselves in the gospel.
- **Note & Observe:** The “armour” for our feet is not the gospel; it is preparation.
 - ✓ But, in order to shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel...
 - ✓ ...we need to know what that gospel is (and this is where we'll start this morning).

Keep this in mind: This piece of armour touches on the “what for” of the Christian life.

- In order to advance the cause of Christ (and accomplish the Mission He gave us), we must have the proper foot gear. Think of the metaphor (the picture) Paul uses of a soldier...
- Marching: Without our feet properly shod, we will not go out to the lost (or else we'll start and then quit, like a soldier marching to battle with no shoes on—he won't last long).
- Fighting: Without our feet properly shod, we will not be able to stand and hold our ground when we engage the enemy (we will not be able to answer lost people and give them reason to believe the gospel message; we'll be like soldiers trying to fight without good footing).

So, I would like to talk about two things this morning:

1. First: What is the gospel? If we are to prepare in the gospel, we should know what it is.
2. Second: How do we prepare ourselves in the gospel (how do we “shod our feet” with the preparation of the gospel of peace)?

I. The Gospel of Peace

- Hopefully you'll see a similarity here with the breastplate of righteousness (the imputed righteousness that delivers us from the penalty of sin: death).

A. What is the Gospel?

1. The word “gospel” (as we've heard from many a preacher and teacher) means “good news.”
 - But, what is that good news—what is the message that is so good?
2. Paul gives a very concise definition of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15.1-4.
 - a) Observe the key elements of the message (the “news”) of the gospel in this passage...
 - b) (v3) Christ died for our sins.
 - (1) First: This speaks of a **substitution** (Christ died *for* our sins, in our place).
 - (2) Also: This speaks of a **penal** substitution (*penal* like “*penalty*”; having to do with punishment for crimes or offenses).
 - (3) Together: The gospel is the good news about Christ's penal substitution on our behalf—His death in our place; His suffering for us.
 - (a) And this is why it is called a gospel “of peace”: It establishes peace between the offender (us) and the offended party (God).
 - (b) In the gospel we find peace with God because Jesus took the divine wrath (penalty, punishment) that we deserve.
 - (c) We spoke about this at length in the context of the breastplate of righteousness.
 - c) (v4) Christ was buried and rose again on the third day.
 - (1) His resurrection speaks of payment in full.
 - (2) (Jam 1.14-15) From the very first sin (Gen 2.17), God pronounced **death** as the payment and penalty/punishment for sin.
 - (a) (Rom 6.23a) The wages of sin (every one of them) is **death**. It is the debt to God the sinner must pay for having offended God and His holiness by sinning.
 - (b) (Rev 20.15; 21.8) The “second death” is where that debt will ultimately be paid—it is God's wrath poured out for all eternity on those who willfully and knowingly sinned against God (broke His moral law, doing wrong when they knew it was wrong).
 - (3) (Heb 2.9) And yet the Bible says that Christ died for every man (each and every sinner).
 - (4) (2Tim 1.10) This was the only way to abolish death.
 - (a) If Christ did not pay the whole sin debt of the entire human race (the debt pronounced upon all men in Genesis 2 and 3), He could never have risen from the dead; He would still be in the grave paying that debt.
 - (b) The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is the good news that He has abolished (done away with, put an end to, canceled completely) the debt and payment of sin.
 - (5) And this is why the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men...
 - (a) (1Jn 2.1-2) He, as the propitiation (the substitutionary penal sacrifice that satisfied God's justice and inclined God to do good to us), paid for the sins of the saved **and** for the sins of the rest of the world.
 - (b) (1Tim 4.10) God is, therefore, the Saviour of all men (because Jesus Christ died for all the sins of all the sinners, else He could not have risen from the dead), but specially of us who believe (because those that believe not must pay their own sin debt in hell).

(6) There is one more element of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15.3-4 we must take into account:

(a) (v3) Christ died for our sins: He is our penal substitute.

(b) (v4) Christ was buried but rose from the dead three days later (proof of “payment in full” for all sin and every sinner; He canceled the sin debt—all of it).

d) (v3-4) According to the Scriptures: The gospel is a written promise from God.

(1) God is merciful and kind, and He offers you the *forgiveness* of your sins based on the full payment of your sin debt by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

• Where do you find that offer of forgiveness? *Scripture*.

(2) God is full of grace and love, and He offers you *eternal life*, an eternal reward, and an eternal home with Him in His Kingdom.

• Where do you find that offer of eternal life? *Scripture*.

(3) When you doubt your salvation (because you don't feel saved... or you don't see what you think you should see in your life as a Christian...), where do you turn? What do you do?

(a) Scripture is God's written promise of salvation through Christ's substitutionary death and subsequent resurrection.

(b) Your heart will condemn you (because it is wicked, perverse, and deceitful).

(c) Your feelings will fail you (because they are fickle and change from moment to moment).

(d) Your salvation (and the eternal security of your salvation) is by *faith*: (Rom 4.21) Your confidence (“fully persuaded”) in God's written promise—Scripture.

(e) (Rom 10.8-13) God's written promise: Call upon the Lord for forgiveness and eternal life, in repentance and faith, and God *will* save you.

i) You have His word on it. And not only His word; you have His *written* word!

ii) And it is either true or not. And if it is not, then God is a liar and no better than we are (and we are fools to follow Him).

iii) But if it is true (and it is; it has stood the test of time and opposition), then it is God's written promise of forgiveness and eternal life (salvation) to all who would believe.

(4) You see, the gospel message that is the power of God unto salvation is “according to the Scriptures,” not dreams, visions, promptings, feelings, or any other such nonsense.

(a) Any other gospel that comes to any other way... is another gospel.

(b) God's gospel is based in Scripture and Scripture alone—God's written “contract.”

3. So, what is the Gospel? 1 Corinthians 15.1-4...

The gospel is the good news of God's written promise and offer of salvation from sin's penalty (God's eternal wrath) through the substitutionary, penal sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ that paid for all sins of all sinners, the proof of which is His resurrection from the dead.

B. What does the gospel have to do with our *feet*?

1. (Rom 10.13-17, esp. v15) The gospel is good “news”—it is a *message*.

a) What good is a message if the messenger never delivers it?

b) What good is the gospel if it is never delivered to those who are still dead and condemned in their sins?

c) Our feet are our mode of transportation to *move us* out to deliver the message: We must “**go**”!

2. (Isa 52.7) The feet that carry the messenger are beautiful because his message is one of peace with God—salvation and God's goodness toward man (vs. His condemnation, anger, and wrath).
3. The feet of Shane Sanderson carried him to CMSU in 1988...
 - a) Shane went back to college to get his MBA. He didn't want to work in business; he didn't like it. And he didn't even want an MBA; he didn't like to study. But, there he was...
 - b) I had a Business Calculus class with Shane, and Shane witnessed to me (he didn't want to; but, he sat down and told me the gospel). Because God used Shane, I'm saved.
 - c) Shane went into vocational ministry, and he never used his MBA for one day.
 - d) Shane's feet are beautiful to God because they carried him physically to a place where he could preach the Gospel to a sinner (me).
4. And that would bring us to the second point of study this morning.
 - a) We know what the gospel is (1Corinthians 15.1-4 showed us).
 - b) We know what it has to do with our feet (we're the messengers to get the message out). Now...

II. Shod Your Feet with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

A. Foot gear of a Roman soldier:

<p>ARMOR OF GOD Sandals</p> <p>Thick leather soles, embedded with hobnails or bits of rock for increased traction, were tied to the feet with numerous leather straps.</p>		<p>ARMOR OF LEGIONARY Caligae (Sandals)</p> <p>Fit for both marching and fighting</p> <p>Became more comfortable with constant wear</p>
		<p>ARMOR OF GOD Readiness/Preparation of the Gospel of Peace</p> <p>"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Ephesians 6:15</p>

1. The Roman soldier wore what we might call “sandals.” It was a shoe that was fairly “open.”
2. His shoes were tied on to his feet with numerous straps.
 - a) It took him a while to tie them on (he had to go “strap by strap”).
 - b) But, he would definitely take his time to carefully tie them on well (strap by strap) because he knew he would be marching to war... and then fighting when he got there.
3. His shoes had thick leather soles embedded with hobnails or bits of rock for increased traction.
 - a) Hobnails: [def] Large-headed nails.
 - b) Hobnails in the sole of shoe are like studs on a snow tire or lugs on the sole of a combat boot.
 - c) They dig in and let you move quickly and surely, and they give you sure footing in combat.
4. These shoes, because they were leather, would become more and more comfortable (they would form more and more to the individual soldier's feet) with constant wear.

B. Foot gear on the Christian (applying the picture to ourselves).

1. Preparation is required in the gospel.
 - a) We first need to know it (learn it) and then we have to prepare to preach it (learn to witness).
 - b) Evangelizing (taking the gospel to the lost) is not natural for anyone.
 - c) You have to prepare! You have to learn; you have to practice; and you have to be willing to do it (to learn, to practice, and then to witness).
 - d) If we do not prepare ourselves, we are like soldiers going off to war barefoot... or with shoes poorly fitted to our feet. We will not last!
 - e) Satan has crippled God's army by attacking their feet!
 - (1) Few in churches today prepare themselves in the knowledge of the gospel of peace (they cannot define it, let alone preach it).
 - (2) Fewer still prepare themselves to take the gospel message to the front lines and witness to lost people.
 - (3) Even fewer actually witness.
2. Just like the Roman soldier's sandals were tied to his feet with **numerous straps**, we need to understand that there is a lot to learn in evangelism.
 - a) We need to take our time and go “strap by strap” preparing ourselves to evangelize.
 - b) We need to be diligent, systematic, and disciplined in our preparation (learning and practice).
3. Just like the Roman soldier's sandals had **hobnails** in the soles for traction, we need to prepare ourselves to be confident...
 - a) We need to know what we believe. This will give us confidence to march out to war (it gives us “traction” to GO!).
 - b) We need to know why we believe what we believe. This will give us confidence when we engage in spiritual battle for the soul of a lost person (it gives us “traction” to answer questions about our faith; this is called *apologetics*; 1Pet 3.15).
4. And then we need to suffer through the first, difficult parts of getting used to doing this (learning, preparing, practicing... evangelizing... witnessing...), so that these “shoes” become more and more comfortable, molding themselves to our individual feet.
 - a) This only happens with constant wear and use. Just like with a good pair of leather shoes.
 - b) And know this, too: As you “wear these shoes” (as you prepare yourself in the gospel through learning and practice), you'll find a witnessing style/method that “fits you best.”
 - (1) I feel far more comfortable open-preaching than I do witnessing one-on-one. I'm terrible at striking up conversations with people I just “bump into.”
 - (2) Examples: My wife, Sue started a Bible study in a care home for elderly women. We both used to go to the Cherry Street juvenile jail. Where can you go to witness to someone?
 - (3) But, what is important is that we each do something. And if you don't know what to do yet, then you need to continue preparing... learning, practicing, doing... until your shoes fit your feet in a way that fits how God designed you.

Conclusion:

If we hope to stand against the opposition and accomplish our Mission, we must shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

- Yes, we need to know the gospel.
- But we also need to prepare ourselves to GO (march out to battle) and MAKE DISCIPLES (through evangelizing the lost).

(1Cor 9.15-18, Alex's message last week) The principal focus of our stewardship in this dispensation is evangelism.

- And it's usually the most terrifying and disagreeable task in the Christian life.
- So... what are we to do? Prepare!

(1Tim 4.7-8) And you prepare for this battle, just like you would for any other: EXERCISE!

- How does exercise and training work? You start with a fairly easy workload so you don't injure yourself... and then do that until you're used to it. Then you increase the workload... you go little by little, preparing yourself to handle more and more work as your body adjusts for each increased workload.
- It's the same thing in the preparation to take the message of the gospel to the lost.
 - ✓ You start with something easy so you don't "injure" yourself (e.g., it would probably not be advisable to jump first thing into a debate with a college professor about the origin of life).
 - ✓ Then, when you get used to your easy task, you add a little more "resistance" to challenge yourself, stretch yourself... and grow.
 - ✓ Then once that becomes comfortable, you add a little more. And it never stops. Keep growing!

There are many things I could suggest with regard to our preparation in the gospel of peace, and I've listed a few below (in your handout).

- However, here is one that I will specifically suggest and recommend: The School of Biblical Evangelism.
- It will prepare you to evangelize. It will prepare you in some very simple and practical apologetics (it will tie up the first straps of your shoes and put in the first hobnails).

The rest is up to you. Each soldier is issued a pair of shoes...

- But no one tied them on for him. He had to do that for himself (and if he didn't want them slipping and causing injury and discomfort, he learned to tie them one well).
- And no one put the hobnails in for him. If he wanted the extra traction for the march and the fight, then he saw to it his shoes had as many hobnails as he wanted.

RESOURCES: To prepare yourself in the preaching of the gospel of peace to the lost.

1. The School of Biblical Evangelism
<http://www.biblicalevangelism.com/>
2. The “Mother of all Notebooks” (MOAN) from Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry
<http://carm.org/table-contents-apologetics-notebook-moan>
<http://store.carm.org/products/moan-mother-of-all-notebooks>
3. Todd Friel's *Terrified* mp3 Set with Study Guide
http://www.wretchedradio.com/store/product_details.cfm?id=294
4. Hell's Best Kept Secret sermon by Ray Comfort
<http://www.livingwaters.com/learn/hellsbestkeptsecret.htm>
5. True and False Conversions sermon by Ray Comfort
<http://www.livingwaters.com/learn/trueandfalse.htm>
6. *Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* by Walter J. Chantry
7. *The Evidence Bible* by Ray Comfort
8. Mark Cahill (various resources on his web site)
<http://markcahill.org/>
9. Living Waters (various resources; Ray Comfort's web site)
<http://www.livingwaters.com/>
10. Way of the Master (web site with various resources)
<http://www.wayofthemaster.com/>