

**Living In Resurrection Power
(Week 15)
Ephesians 6:14-16
"Shoes and Shield"**

Introduction

"Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one." **Ephesians 6:14-16**

As we stated last week, there is a progression by which the child of God becomes "Spirit-filled". First, they must believe the truth of God's Word, not just in order to be saved, but also to know how to live out their salvation. When we believe the truth of God's Word, we surrender ourselves over to Him. Then, we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, and as The Spirit begins the process of sanctification within us, we are led to live according to the righteousness that we have been shown by The Word. These are the first two steps to being Spirit-filled. Trust and Obey. When we wrap ourselves in the "Belt of God's Truth" and "Put on The Breastplate of Righteousness" by living according to the truth, then we are prepared to take up the next pieces of armor, namely the shoes (of the gospel of peace) and shield (of faith).

It is imperative that we fully comprehend that every "piece of armor" is essential for us to be able to withstand the attacks of Satan. Without this armor of God, we are vulnerable and cannot endure, but when we are wrapped up in Christ, we are more than conquerors.

"As it is written: Because of You we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." **Romans 8:36-37**

For you see, in Paul's day, the attacks of Satan came not only in the form of the fiercest of temptation, but in physical persecution as well. If the devil couldn't stop the fledgling church by enticing it to sin, then he would do his best to have them eliminated altogether. But God saw to it that The Bride of Christ endured, even amidst the harshest attacks from the devil. He will also see to it that we are victorious, if we will just suit-up in the armor that He has provided.

Last week we learned how to wrap ourselves in the truth of God's Word and to put on righteousness by living according to that truth. Today, we will learn how to appropriate (put on) our shoes and shield. It is important to note that both of these pieces of armor are about faith, a faith that not only appropriates peace, but also enables us to counter against the devil's attacks. The Shoes and Shield protect us so that we can stand our ground. And remember, this is exactly what Paul is talking about in this last chapter of *Ephesians*, standing firm against Satanic aggression.

Just like any soldier upon the battlefield, without our shoes and shield, we would be extremely vulnerable indeed. Can you imagine an army with no boots or no form of defensive protection? Of course not. Because an army this poorly equipped wouldn't be an army for long. But just what are these two components of the Armor of God? And how can we know that we have them on? I will attempt to answer these questions for us today using The Word of God with The Spirit as our guide. Let us look together now at the "Shoes of the Gospel of Peace" and "The Shield of Faith".

The Shoes (of the Gospel of Peace)

"and your feet sandaled with the readiness for the gospel of peace." **Ephesians 6:15**

The Roman soldiers in Paul's time wore leather sandals with metal studs attached to the bottom of the soles. These studs were imbedded in the leather to enable the soldier to stand firmly upon whatever ground that he was fighting upon. Think of them much like you would cleats on athletic shoes today, that are used to help professional athletes to "dig in" to the turf in order to make quick turns and to

push firmly against their opponents. A soldier (or an athlete) that is lacking adequate footwear would be at a serious disadvantage upon the field of battle. The Christian without his “shoes” would also be no match for the enemy. To have a firm footing is paramount to any type of struggle. And our Heavenly Father certainly never intended for His children to meet the devil on the field of battle with bare feet. So just what are the “shoes of the gospel of peace” anyway?

Many Bible teachers have believed that the phrase “readiness for the gospel of peace” is a reference to preaching the gospel. They will often use this quote in conjunction with that found in Romans:

“And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.” Romans 10:15

We can easily understand why many scholars would make this connection based on the metaphorical use of “feet” in both of these passages, but to apply this passage in *Ephesians* with that of preaching the gospel is, in fact, I believe, out of context. Remember, Paul is not talking about evangelism here. He is talking about taking a stand against spiritual warfare. Therefore, “the shoes of the gospel of peace” are more about standing our ground against the devil, than they are about reaching the lost. While I absolutely agree that the early mission of the church of Jesus Christ was to go and make disciples, I don’t believe that is what Paul is talking about here.

I believe that in order for us to fully comprehend this verse about our “shoes”, we need to carefully examine some very crucial words that Paul uses in the original Greek text in order to fully grasp its meaning. The first word we need to look at is the word “readiness” (*hetoimasia* in the Greek). This word is translated “preparation” in the KJV, but readiness is actually a better term. Paul is telling the Ephesians that in order for them to stand against the devil’s attacks, they must be ready to do so with “the gospel of peace”.

Now, the word *gospel* (*euaggelion*) simply means “good message” or “good news”. To us in the church, we automatically think of “the gospel” in the context of salvation, but in all truth, being saved is simply a part of the good news of Jesus Christ. The good news also includes the fact that when we have been saved we are reconciled to God! Which brings us to the next word that Paul uses *Eirene*, meaning “peace”.

Have you ever known anyone named Irene? Well, this name is derived from *Eirene* (i-ray’-nay), as well as, our English word *Serene*. The meaning of *Eirene* is peace or tranquility. What Paul is referring to in this verse about our shoes is the tranquility or peace that comes from knowing that we have been reconciled to God, and that we are indeed “in right standing with Him”. Now, let us put this all in context shall we. What Paul is saying is simply this: If we are going to be able to stand against the devil’s spiritual onslaught, then we must be able to prepare ourselves to confidently stand in the knowledge that we are in complete peace with God.

Now here is the proper progression: We begin by wrapping ourselves in God’s Word of Truth, believe what it says, so that we can be saved and have the knowledge of God’s commands (belt of truth). We put on the righteousness of Christ at salvation, and then, as we are enabled by His Spirit, we live out what we believe in personal righteousness (Breastplate). Subsequently, we know by faith that we in right standing before God. We have been reconciled to Him by faith, and as we live according to His commands, we have the peace of knowing we are in the love of God (shoes).

You see, the devil is very good at reminding us of our shortcomings, is he not? When you try and take a stand for Christ it is he, the accuser, that whispers in your ear, “So you really think you are ok with God? Remember what you did last week? Remember what you said to your spouse in that argument? Remember the things that you used to do? I know what you used to be. You may have everyone else fooled, but I know who you really are.”

These are the things that the accuser whispers to us to try and make us drop out of the battle. But when we put on our shoes, we remember these words:

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1

And THAT is where you will find your shoes my friends. From knowing that you have believed God’s Word and are doing your best to live accordingly. Knowing full well that although you have not attained perfection, you are in fact loved and accepted by a Holy God. And not only are you accepted, He is

cheering you on. You see, the devil is called the accuser, but the Holy Spirit is called the encourager. Too many Christians believe that God is just waiting up there in heaven for them to mess up so that He can revoke your “Christian membership”, but the fact is that Jesus is actually standing at the right hand of The Father taking up for you!

“Therefore, He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.”
Hebrews 7:25

Do you fully understand this morning that Jesus saved you for success and not for failure? He intends to see you through to the finish line (**Philippians 1:6**). He is committed to you and wants you to be victorious. Stop believing that He is ready to give up on you, because if you truly belong to Him, He never will. This is what it means to be reconciled to God. It means that God is FOR YOU.

“What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”
Romans 8:31

Well said Paul! Talk about being on a firm foundation. When we believe God’s Word and accept Christ as our Savior, then we begin to wrap ourselves in God’s truth. Subsequently, as we start living according to God’s truth, in increasing measure, we begin to realize that it is He Who is enabling us to not only trust, but to obey. It is through this growing maturity in Christ that we understand that we are truly at peace with God, knowing that we are in the center of His will. When we make mistakes, we confess them, and He not only forgives us, but helps us to overcome. Why? Because He is FOR US! Now, there is a truth upon which you can stand my friends, knowing that your feet are fitted with this good news of being at peace with God. And this is the perfect platform from which to stand against the schemes of the devil. Without your “shoes”, you will become a victim of your own doubts and fears. But knowing you are reconciled to God enables you to take your stand and to stand firm.

“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing can make them stumble.”
Psalms 119:165 NIV

The Shield (of Faith)

“In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one.”
Ephesians 6:16

The Roman soldiers had several different kinds of shields. But two were the most common. The first was small and round, about two feet in diameter, and was used in hand to hand combat to parry the sword blows of the opponent. The second most common shield (called the *thureos*, “full body shield”) was much larger and was used to protect the entire body of the soldier. It is this second shield that Paul uses as his illustration for our faith. It is faith that is to be used to protect us from all manner of the enemies attacks. The devil always tries to get us to doubt the validity of God’s Word in order to destroy us.

Remember Satan’s approach in the Garden of Eden, when he tricked Eve, into eating the forbidden fruit? He questioned not only God’s commands, “Did He really say that?”, but He also blatantly questioned God’s integrity as well, suggesting that God’s real reason for not allowing them access to the tree of knowledge of good and evil was because He was keeping them from something that would be not only pleasurable, but also beneficial to them.

“‘No! You will not die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘In fact God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”
Genesis 3:4-5

The devil, in one short statement, was able to convince Eve that God had lied to them, and His motive for doing so was to keep them from experiencing life to the fullest. In short, he attacked them, by attacking their faith in God’s Word. And he has been doing this to the people of God ever since. The

devil wants to destroy you, do not be deceived. And the very best way for him to do just that is to get you to doubt in the dark that which you have been taught in the light! If we are to be wrapped up in Christ, the Armor of God, then we must have a strong faith with which to fight.

The Roman soldier's shield was made of leather, and before going into battle, the soldiers would dip those shields in water so that when the enemy shot flaming arrows at them, they would be quickly extinguished upon striking those soaked leather coverings. Our faith in God's integrity and His truth is all that stands between us and utter defeat in this battle against the forces of evil. To have faith in God is to settle in our hearts and minds that God, Who is FOR us, actually wants what is best for us. Therefore, we believe that His commands are not to withhold from us, but rather for our own protection and benefit.

For example, God forbids us to commit adultery. Why? Because He wants us to miss out on something good? NO, because He fully understands the hurt and consequences that come as a result of desecrating our marriages. He wants us to have the best life possible and hurting each other isn't in any shape, form, or fashion the "best" thing for us. God's commands are there for us, because He loves us. They are not a burden, they are in fact the keys to a happy life. They are given so that we may be victorious.

"This is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God and obey His commands. For this is what love for God is: to keep His commands. And His commands are not a burden, because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith."

1 John 5:2-4

Do you love Jesus? Then we prove our love by loving His children, as well as, obeying His commands, because to love Him is to trust Him and obey. So, when the devil tries to get us to disobey, we use the shield of faith to deflect his blows against us. All sin is disobedience to the will of God. And if we truly believe that God's will is best for us, then sinning really makes no sense does it? We take up our shield in faith, knowing that God is for us, therefore, we resist the things that His Word says will ultimately destroy us. Even as the devil whispers in our ear that God is just trying to deprive us of life's real pleasures, our faith knows better! Learn to trust The Word of The LORD above the lies of the devil.

Not only did the Roman soldier use his *thureos* shield individually, it was also used collectively with his fellow soldiers. The Roman army was able to fend off incredible attacks from their enemies by a shield formation known as the Testudo (*tortoise*) Formation. The front row of the troops would kneel down and place their large shields on the ground in front of them, while the row behind them placed their shields above their heads. By doing so, the soldiers were encased in a "turtle shell", which was virtually impenetrable. There is a lesson here for all of us. We need to utilize one another's faith as the body of Christ in order to withstand Satan's onslaught.

Have you ever felt like your faith was weak? I have. And do you want to know where I draw strength when I feel this way? Of course, I pray, but I also find strengthening for my faith by surrounding myself with the people of faith. You see, I need my church family. Just like those Roman legions, I need a wall of shields to protect me sometimes. When I feel weak and discouraged, I call on Jesus and His people to strengthen my faith. The faith of my fellow Christians is my "Testudo Formation". There is nothing like the encouragement you can draw from a fellow soldier of the cross, when you are in crisis. This is why you need to be in Church, my friends, when temptation comes your way. Listen to the words of Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy:

"Flee from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on The LORD from a pure heart."

2 Timothy 2:22

In short, when the devil tries to seduce you with unbelief, surround yourself with believers! Use your shields of faith, both individually and collectively, to protect yourself from sin. There is no such thing as an army of one. Take up your shield of faith and stand shoulder to shoulder with your brothers and sisters in arms. Wrap yourself in God's **Belt** of Truth, protect your hearts with The **Breastplate** of Righteousness, by faith step into the **Shoes** that are firmly rooted in the good news of your peace with God, and use your **Shield** of faith to protect you from Satan's attacks. Suit up in the armor of God, for He wants to protect you from sin... because He is FOR YOU!!

And let all of His soldiers say... **TRUTH!!!**