

The Gospel Shoes of Peace

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6.

So Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Chapter 6, and we'll read in verse 10.

Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 10. Where Paul writes, And verse 15, what we're looking at this evening.

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

Before I got married, the advice I was given by my father-in-law was, I hesitate saying this, never comment on the amount of shoes a woman wears.

[1 : 51] Never comment on the amount of shoes that a woman wears. And you know, I've never forgotten it. Because I've often wondered if it was a centipede that I had married.

I've never seen so many shoes in my life. And Alison probably killed me for saying all this. Because, you know, there are shoes for every day of the week. And every occasion you can possibly think of. And there are different types of shoes. There are trainers. There are pumps. There are shoes with a low heel, a medium heel, a high heel. There are long boots, short boots, ankle boots. And there are shoes that are not only different types.

There are also different colours. Because apparently you have to have a different colour of shoes to match your different outfits. And so they're black. They're brown. They're navy. They're white.

They're red. They're green. They're orange. They're pink. They're leopard-skinned. Or print. Or whatever they are. All the shoes and all the colours of the rainbow. And more. And I'm sure that all the women are the same.

[2 : 46] I'm sure that all the women are the same. And that they have a lot more shoes than my centipede does. Now you'll be glad to know that I'm not going to investigate or even invade your wardrobes to see how many shoes you actually have.

I would love to see, actually, to be honest. But anyway. But I do want to ask you this evening. If you have these shoes that are mentioned here in verse 15 in your wardrobe. Do you have gospel shoes in your wardrobe?

Do you have shoes of peace in your wardrobe? Or are these shoes that are buried under all the other shoes in your wardrobe? Are these shoes part of your daily armour?

Because the question Paul wants to ask us as we go through this study of the armour of God is, did you put your armour on this morning? Did you put your armour on this morning?

Have you put on your gospel shoes of peace today? Because this is the next item of equipment that we're thinking about this evening from the whole armour of God.

[3 : 47] We're thinking about the gospel shoes of peace. The gospel shoes of peace. And I want us to think about this under two simple headings. Our feet and our footwear.

Our feet and our footwear. So first of all, Paul directs us to our feet. He says, As shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

So he focuses upon our feet first. Now as you know, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, it's full of encouragements to the Christian. And it's also full of exhortations to the Christian.

And as Paul comes to the conclusion of his letter, he gives us this one final exhortation. He says there in verse 10, To be strong in the Lord.

Be strong in who you are in Christ. And be strong in what you have in Christ. Be strong in the Lord, he says. And in the strength of his might, put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

[4 : 50] Paul asks us, he says to us as Christian soldiers, He says, Christian soldier, have you put your armour on? Have you put your armour on? Because the Christian life, as we've said before, it's not a playground.

The Christian life is a battleground. It's not a physical warfare. It's a spiritual warfare. Because we have an enemy. And as we all know, he's the enemy of our soul.

He's our adversary, the devil. He's the diablo, the divider. And Paul tells us there in verse 12, We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. But against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore, Paul says to us, verse 13, Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

So in our spiritual warfare against the enemy, we're to stand firm. We're to fight the good fight of faith. And as you know what we've said before, we're not fighting the good fight of faith for victory.

[6 : 00] We're fighting the good fight of faith from victory. The victory has already been won. It's already been accomplished and achieved at the cross. Jesus has won the victory and put all his enemies under his feet.

Sin has been dealt with. Death has been destroyed. The grave has been dismantled. And even the devil has been defeated. So we're not fighting the good fight of faith for victory.

The victory is already won. We are fighting the good fight of faith from victory. Therefore, says Paul, we must stand firm. We're not to be shifting.

We are to stand firm. But we can only stand firm if we have begun our day by going into God's armoury and prayerfully picking up and putting on the whole armour of God.

That's the only way to stand firm. In the evil day. Paul says we need to go into God's armoury daily.

We need to prayerfully pick up our armour and put it on.

[7 : 02] Put on the whole armour of God. And as we mentioned before, each piece of armour for the Christian soldier, each piece, it emulates the character of Jesus. So the character of Jesus is a character, as we say in there, of truth, righteousness, peace, faith.

Then there's salvation, the spirit, all these different characteristics that emulate Jesus. And each piece of armour emphasises that we are to emanate the character of Jesus in our Christian lives. In other words, as Christian soldiers, so we're all Christian soldiers in the Lord's army, as Christian soldiers, our Christian character, conduct, and conversation is to follow in the footsteps of our commander-in-chief, Jesus Christ.

The first piece of armour that we prayerfully picked up and put on, as you know, was the belt of truth. Paul exhorts us to gird our loins and to buckle up and to fasten on this belt of truth because the belt of truth is a key component in the whole armour of God.

Like a Roman foot soldier, like our friend here, he would have worn his military belt at all times, on and off duty. So we're to wear our belt of truth at all times, on and off duty, because as Christians, we're to be soldiers with integrity and honesty and reliability.

[8 : 29] We're to delight in truth, rejoice in truth, love the truth, and speak the truth at all times, because without the belt of truth, we're not ready, we're not standing firm, and we're not dressed for battle against the father of lies.

Then secondly, we saw last time, a couple of weeks ago, that we're to prayerfully pick up and put on the breastplate of righteousness. So the breastplate of righteousness, we're to put it on because through Calvary's great transaction, we have received the righteousness of Christ.

God the Father made his son to be sin for us, even though he knew no sin, all so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Therefore, the righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us.

We are as righteous tonight as we will be in glory. We have received his righteousness by faith alone. But as Paul explains here, it's not just a robe of righteousness that we've been presented with.

We have received a breastplate of righteousness to protect our heart from the wickedness of sin and the wiles of the devil. Because the devil, he wants to make us doubt.

[9 : 45] He wants to cause distrust and us to disbelieve and disregard the word of God and maybe even despair about our righteousness before God. Which is why we need the breastplate of Christ's righteousness to protect our heart against the attacks of the adversary.

And so we've seen the first two from God's armoury. We've prayerfully picked up and put on the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness. But now, as we said, we're to prayerfully pick up and put on the gospel shoes of peace.

The gospel shoes of peace. And the thing is, we need shoes for our feet. Why? Because the Lord cares about our feet.

The Lord cares about our feet. As you know, there are many people who don't like feet. That have all their body parts. That's the bit they really hate.

Maybe you're one of those people. If we're looking at feet or touching feet or feeling feet, you just hate it. I've met so many people that do not like feet. Not just because they're smelly or ugly, but they just think feet are disgusting.

[10:53] And yet your Bible tells you that the Lord cares about your feet. The Lord cares about your feet. Not in the sense that he's a podiatrist. Although Jesus, you go to John chapter 13, he took care of the disciples' feet when he set before us the greatest example of service by washing the disciples' feet.

I think we should do a church service of that one night. We'll get one of the elders to lead it. You know, Jesus, as you remember, Jesus said in John 13, If I then, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

So we ought to wash one another's feet. But the Lord cares about our feet because our feet are to be feet of service. Our feet are to be feet of service.

That's why the Lord cares about what you do and where you go with your feet. Because as we were singing in Psalm 40, that's the testimony of the Christian. He's taken me from the fearful pit and from the miry clay and on a rock he set my feet, establishing my way.

The Lord cares about our feet. He wants our feet to stand firm on solid rock. And you know, there are so many times in the Psalms, and it's amazing when you actually look it up in the Psalms, so many times in the Psalms where the psalmists, they all confess that the devil got a hold of them.

[12:22] The devil got a grip on them. Where he came to them as an angel of light and deceived them about the dangers, toils, and snares in the Christian life.

And that was certainly true of Asaph in Psalm 73. That's why we were reading it earlier on. Because Asaph, when you read through the Psalm, Asaph was someone who had tried to live his Christian life as focused and as faithful to the Lord as he possibly could.

But he felt faithless. As a Christian, he felt like a complete failure. He felt like a phony. To the point that Asaph actually became envious of those who were out of Christ.

Because he looked at them and he thought to himself, Asaph thought to himself, well, they didn't have the same struggles with sin that he did. They didn't care about their soul like he did.

They didn't worry about letting the Lord down like he did. They didn't think about death and they didn't certainly think about judgment like he did. Because as Asaph says, even though they weren't pure in heart, they were proud, they were prim, and they were proper.

[13:35] And the sad thing was the devil had convinced Asaph to come to the conclusion. And this is what the devil does. He had convinced Asaph to come to the conclusion that he's better off not being faithful to the Lord.

He's better off not praying. He's better off not reading his Bible. He's better off not going to church and he's better off not being a Christian at all. And I'm sure the devil has told you that one too.

You're better off not being a Christian. The devil had convinced Asaph to give up completely. And that's how Asaph starts Psalm 73. Asaph confesses, My feet had almost stumbled and my steps nearly slipped.

You know, what a confession to make as a Christian. My feet had almost stumbled and my steps nearly slipped. And then you read through the Psalm and then you come to, I think it's verse 17, when he comes into God's house.

He gathers with the Lord's people and he's given this eternal perspective. He's reminded what the end goal is and that the devil is a defeated enemy.

[14:50] Which is why Asaph goes on to confess, Whom have I in the heavens high but thee, O Lord, alone? And in the earth whom I desire besides thee there is none.

And he confesses, My flesh and heart doth faint and fail but God doth fail me never for off my heart God is the strength and portion forever.

You know, what a testimony to have as a Christian. And it's because Asaph realised that the Lord cares about his feet. And that's what we need to remember too. The Lord cares about our feet, especially when the devil is seeking to devour us. Because the promise is that the Lord protects and even preserves our feet.

The Lord guards and keeps our feet. That's what the psalmist says in Psalm 121. Psalm we all know so well and yet the psalmist says, Thy foot shall not slide nor will.

[15 : 49] He slumber that he keeps. Behold he that keeps Israel. He slumbers not nor sleeps. Why? Because the promises the Lord shall keep thy soul. He shall preserve thee from all ill.

Henceforth thy going out and in. God keep forever will. The Lord protects and preserves our feet. He guards and keeps our feet because the Lord cares about our feet.

And the amazing thing is the Lord knows how many steps we've taken with our feet. Matthew hasn't taken one step yet. And yet the Lord knows how many steps we have taken throughout our lifetime. And he doesn't need a Fitbit. He doesn't need an eye watch to monitor our movements or even to count our steps. Because the Lord sees our feet. He has seen where our feet have gone. And he sees where our feet are going.

And the Lord knows our plans. He knows our purposes. He knows our paths because the Lord cares about our feet. Because to him. And this is what I love. Because to the Lord our feet.

[16 : 54] Some people as I said they don't like feet. Our feet aren't dirty or disgusting or smelly or ugly. No the Lord says that our feet are beautiful. Our feet are beautiful.

Our feet are beautiful especially when our footwear are the shoes of gospel peace. Our feet are beautiful when our footwear are the shoes of gospel peace.

Which is what I want us to think about secondly. So our footwear our feet they're beautiful our footwear secondly. He says as shoes for your feet having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

Put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. As you can see our soldier here he wasn't fitted and furnished for a fight with Nike Air Max trainers and he wasn't given steel toe cap Doc Martin boots.

Rather he was gifted and given sandal boots that's what they were called or calige that's the Latin word for it. They were well calige just means boots and they were the standard issue of all the Roman soldiers in the Roman army.

[18 : 14] In fact those who wore the calige these shoes these sandal boots they were known as the caligati the booted ones. They were the caligati the booted ones.

There's an interesting story that there was a Roman emperor maybe you've heard of him he was known and nicknamed as Caligula Caligula and he was given the nickname because when he was two or three years old they dressed him in what was a miniature version of a soldier's outfit and they fitted him with these calige and they were actually called caligulas little boots and that's where he got the nickname Caligula little boot but these calige were sandal boots that supported the foot and they were strapped around as you can see strapped around the ankle.

Now of course whenever we think of sandals in scripture my mind goes to two particular occasions. One was when the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

You remember when the Lord said to Moses do not come near take off your shoes from off your feet or the sandals from off your feet for the ground upon which you are standing is holy ground. The other occasion where sandals are mentioned was when John the Baptist was being asked if he was the Messiah. And you remember John said he who comes after me is preferred before me the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

[19 : 50] But you know what we see with the caligae of the Roman soldier is that their sandal boot had metal studs. Now I've got another picture here. Metal studs on the bottom of the sole of the foot.

And these metal studs they were called hobnails. So there's hobnails hammered in to the bottom of the boot. And the purpose of the hobnails was not just to provide grip for the soldiers but the purpose of them was also to make a loud noise as the soldiers marched together towards their enemy.

In fact historians often said that a legion of over 5,000 Roman soldiers marching together with all these caligae on their feet.

It sounded like the roll and rumble of thunder. And of course this thunderous sound that echoed as the Romans marched into battle it would have terrified and even terrorised the enemy into wanting them to surrender even before the battle had started.

But what's interesting is that when Paul describes the footwear of the Christian soldier so when Paul is describing our footwear he is describing not footwear of panic but as he says there our footwear is footwear of peace.

[21 : 14] Our footwear is footwear of peace because as Paul says our shoes are gospel shoes of peace. Literally they're shalom shoes. They're shalom shoes.

They're shoes which bring a message of shalom. a message of peace. But you know I was looking at this soldier I started calling him Roddy the Roman but I was looking at this and I was wondering why Paul used this order in his armour.

Why does Paul focus upon first of all as you see there he goes through the list of the armoury why does he focus first upon the belt of truth and then he moves up to the breastplate of righteousness and then he goes down to the gospel shoes of peace.

So it's the belt of truth in the middle then up to the breastplate of righteousness then down to the gospel shoes of peace. Why did Paul choose that order of the armour?

And I was thinking well why did he do it? Then I remembered what Paul wrote in Romans chapter 5. Romans 5 verse 1 Paul writes therefore in the whole of Romans Paul is explaining the gospel.

[22 : 31] What is the gospel? And you come to chapter 5 verse 1 Paul says since therefore we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So since we have been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And for Paul that's the truth of the gospel. That's the heart of the gospel. That's the centrepiece.

That's the belt of truth. Because when we put on the belt of truth Paul says we're justified by faith.

We're made righteous by faith. We put on also the breastplate of righteousness.

And through the truth of the gospel and the righteousness of Christ Paul says we have peace. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so he's following a pattern and he's telling us this is the gospel.

You are gospel people. You have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness and you're shod. You are shod with the gospel of peace.

[23 : 32] Which means that we not only experience and enjoy as Christians peace with God. We also experience and enjoy the peace of God. And we often try to explain what is this peace like to those who are unconverted.

And as we often say it's better felt than tell. You can't describe the peace of God in your life when you come to know Jesus. And so as those who have been redeemed and reconciled to God through Jesus Christ we're also to emulate, we're to emanate the character of our commander in chief.

Because he's the prince of peace. He's the king of peace. He's the one who brought peace with God. He's the one who brought reconciliation for us to God.

And he was, he did it all by being crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Amazing, it's the city of Jerusalem, the city of peace. He brought peace outside the walls of the city of peace.

peace. And this is the good news of the gospel. We're to be gospel people. We're to go with the gospel. And this gospel message is a message of peace.

[24 : 48] And we're to go with it, says Paul, we're to go with it, we're to thunder against the enemy without caligae on our feet. Because as Jesus says, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

So we're to be gospel people. We're to be Christian soldiers. We're to be peacemakers, not peace breakers. We're to be people of peace who emulate the character of Jesus by seeking and striving for reconciliation.

Reconciliation with one another, because the devil, he will get in. He's the diabolos, he's the divider. But we're to seek and strive for reconciliation with one another. But we're also to seek and strive for others to be reconciled to God.

Because we're gospel people. We're in gospel shoes. And we have a gospel message. And the gospel message is a message of peace. It's a message of reconciliation.

It's a message of peace with God through Jesus Christ. And it's a message of the peace of God which passes all understanding. And you know, this is why Paul reminded the Corinthians, I think it

was 2 Corinthians 5, he says to the Corinthians, we are ambassadors for Christ.

[26 : 08] We are ambassadors for Christ, where God makes his appeal for peace through us. God makes his appeal for peace through us.

Our message then, as gospel people, as Christian soldiers, wearing these gospel shoes, our message to those in our homes, which is the hardest place to be a Christian, in our families, our neighbours, our community, our workplaces, our workspaces.

Our message is, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, we employ you, we beseech you, that's the way the AV puts it, we beg you, we beg you in the name of Jesus Christ, be reconciled to God, be at peace with God, or as the psalmist said, seek peace and pursue it earnestly.

That's to be our mission, our mantra as gospel people, as those wearing shoes of peace, we're to tell people you need to seek peace with God and pursue it earnestly.

And it's hard, but you know, it's the greatest privilege as well, because as our Bible teaches us, you have beautiful feet. And you have brilliant footwear.

[27 : 30] Beautiful feet and brilliant footwear. And so Paul is saying, stand with your feet and stand firm in your footwear. You have gospel shoes.

You have shalom shoes. You have shoes of peace in your wardrobe. So prayerfully pick them up. Prayerfully put them on every day.

Prayerfully ask the Lord for obstacles to be taken away. Even if you think, I'm the obstacle. My nerves and my anxieties hold me back. But pray that these obstacles will be taken away and that opportunities will be given to pass on this message of peace.

To tell people you need to seek peace with God and pursue it earnestly. We're gospel people with gospel shoes. And you know, Paul says, he uses a clear word there.

Put on the readiness. It's not just gospel shoes. No, no, these gospel shoes, they're ready and ready to go. These gospel shoes, they have readiness.

[28 : 39] There's readiness when you put on these shalom shoes. And that's what Peter reminds us. You're always to be ready. Always to be ready to give an answer for the reason of the hope that is within you.

Always to be ready to speak about Christ. Always to be ready to say to someone, you need to seek peace with God and pursue it earnestly. You need to be reconciled to God.

Always to be ready to think, well, I want to invite this person to come to church. I want them to come with me to church. Always to be ready to even defend the name of Jesus when somebody speaks against him.

We're always to be ready to give an answer for the reason, for the hope that is within us because as Christian soldiers, Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5, we are ambassadors. We are ambassadors for Christ.

We are his representatives. We are representatives of our commander-in-chief. Therefore, as Paul reminded the church in Rome, and with this I'll conclude, Paul brought his letter to the church in Rome to a conclusion.

[29 : 45] And I want to bring our message to a conclusion this evening because we need to prayerfully pick up and put on these gospel shoes. But Paul gave that great encouragement.

That when we put on these gospel shoes, these shoes of peace, Paul said to the Romans, the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet. So stand firm, Christian soldier. Put on your armor every day and stand firm. You have gospel shoes and they are shoes ready and wearing to go.

So put your armor on. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Amen. Our Father in heaven, we give thanks this evening for reminding us of what the gospel is and that the gospel has changed our lives and transformed us and even reconciled us to a holy God.

But Lord, help us, we pray, to put on our gospel shoes every day, to be ready and willing to give an answer for the reason, for the hope that is within us.

[31 : 05] And Lord, we have a great hope, a hope that is sure and steadfast. We have peace with God and the peace of God that passes all understanding. And help us then, we pray, to be willing and ready to tell others to seek peace with God and to pursue it earnestly.

Lord, remember our homes and our families where it is often so hard to put on our gospel shoes. But Lord, help us, we pray, to put them on. Help us in our workplaces, with our colleagues, those whom we rub shoulders with day by day, those whom we meet, Lord, in the street, those who are

our neighbours.

Lord, help us, we pray, to be gospel-minded, to put on our shoes every day and to be ready as we go out the door to speak and to tell of this wonderful Saviour who saves to the uttermost, who is able to redeem us and reconcile us and restore us to himself.

Lord, remember us then, we pray. Bless us in our meeting this evening and we pray that everything that has been said and done would be God-honouring and God-glorifying and ultimately Christ-exalting.

Keep us then, we pray. Go before us, we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening.

[32 : 27] We're going to sing the words of Psalm 121. Psalm 121, page 416. Psalm 121.

How the Lord cares about our feet. I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come mine aid. My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made. Thy foot he'll not let slide, nor will he slumber that thee keeps. Behold, he that keeps Israel, he slumbers not, nor sleeps.

So the whole psalm to God's praise. I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come my aid. My safety cometh from the Lord, who heaven and earth hath made.

[33 : 47] Thy foot he'll not bless, my God well, he slumber that thee keeps.

He slumber that he's not, nor sleeps.

He slumber that he's not, nor sleeps. The Lord thee keep's.

The Lord thy shade, on thy white hand, the spare. The Lord by night, the Lord shall not smile.

The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall. He shall preserve thee from all hell.

[35 : 00] The Lord shall keep thy soul, he shall reserve thee from all hell.

ienen.iffs. T Ye getekenis. The Lord shall praise. Thy God above thee, for sale is ral blast against on earth. Its■■ slumber that he shall ever will tell thee of me by putting my father's boeing. And growth unto me on the ground.

He shall guarantee could. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.