

The Sandals Of Peace

Ephesians 6:15

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We're going to back up to Ephesians 6:10 to get a running start as we do each week. Paul says, "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," or the schemes or tactics, "of the devil," there's our enemy. "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;" and tonight, verse 15, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

When it comes to the soldier's armor, nothing can be more important than his sandals that he wears. You know, we have all kinds of different shoes in this world. We have athletic shoes that come in all different shapes and sizes. We have basketball shoes, football, golf, baseball, bowling shoes...which I don't know why anyone wouldn't want to wear those things. If you're wearing bowling shoes when you bowl, then come up after service, we'll pray for you. When it comes to wearing important footwear, nothing is more important than having your feet properly shod when you're in battle or warfare. The most important part of the soldier's armor is not just his shield, sword, or helmet but also his feet because if he falls, slips, can't move, or he's not mobile or stable, then he's going to be defeated in the battle.

We are indeed in a battle. Let's not forget, verse 12, that "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." The three things that we've been focusing on is that the enemy, the devil, in verse 11 has tactics or schemes. Each one of the areas of armor actually prepares us to war against his schemes and tactics, and he's also powerful and wicked, verse 12. He's wily, wicked, and he is indeed powerful. Never underestimate the power of the devil. But if you are a child of God, the Bible is very clear, "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." You have the Holy Spirit inside of you, you have the Lord around you, and His Word underneath you to give you sureness of footing in the battles that we face.

Now, we've seen already in verse 14 that we have the belt of truth, and it all starts with the belt because it holds everything together. We're to be "truthing it" in everything we do. The minute we let the devil's lies come into our lives, then we're going to fall apart and become victims. Secondly, we looked at the breastplate of righteousness, verse 14, last Wednesday night and talked about two kinds of righteousness—imputed righteousness that we have our position standing in Christ, and there's imparted righteousness, how we live the Christian life. It starts with justification, I'm made righteous in Christ; and sanctification, Christ in me, and He lives out that righteousness through my life. It's not enough just to be right with God, we have to live right as we walk in sanctification.

Now we come to the third area, verse 15, "...your feet," need to be shod or equipped, "with the preparation of the gospel of peace." I found it interesting that John R.W. Stott in his commentary said that this is the most awkward phrase in the list of Christian's armor. Of all the aspects of the armor that are listed, this is the one phrase that is a little bit different. I think a lot of Christians miss that when they read it. There are two simple reasons. First, there is really no mention of a specific piece of armor. There's no specific piece of armor mentioned. We call it the sandals or the shoes of peace, but he doesn't say, "sandals." He doesn't say "shoes." It is implied, and I think rightfully assumed, but in the other aspects of armor, there's the helmet, the belt, the sword, the shield. All of these are specific pieces of armor, but he doesn't mention a specific piece of armor. We're just assuming that since he mentions our feet that it must be the boot or the sandal that the Roman soldier wore.

Secondly, and I find this interesting, when Paul makes the application, he uses three words. I want you to look at the verse. He uses the word "preparation," then uses the word "gospel," and then the word "peace." It's interesting, he doesn't use the word "sandal" or "shoes," but he does use the words "preparation," "gospel," and "peace." The word preparation (I'll come back to it more in just a moment) means to be ready or prepared—ready to go. Curtis Vaughan says, "This is the description which makes us quick to see our duty and ever ready to plunge into the fight," so we always have our sandals on. We don't have to put them on, we're all ready sandaled—we have our boots on and we're ready to go. It's kind of a figure of speech for readiness, "Do you have your boots on? your shoes on? Are you ready to go?" It wouldn't do much good if you had your sword, your shield, and your helmet, you were all ready, but you don't have your shoes on. You go running out, "Ooch! Ouch! Oo oo ow ow oo oo!"

I find the older I get, I hate to confess this, but my feet get so tender. Remember when you were little and could run all over the neighborhood with bare feet? Now, you just go out to get the mail, "Oo! Ow! Oo oo ow ow! What's wrong with me?" It's called getting old!

The soldier could not afford to have his feet injured or hurt, it would put him out of commission. He couldn't afford to slip. He had to be ready to go into battle, as we do as well. "Preparation," "gospel," and "peace" are three important key words, but we're not clear on which of the three is the focus. My theory is that all three are in view. Is he focusing on preparedness? Is he focusing on the gospel and its content? Is he focusing on the peace that we have when we go out to battle when we preach the gospel? Is it about preaching the gospel of peace or experiencing the peace of God? I think that all three are involved. When it's not clear, I think it's best to take it as an all-encompassing kind of concept.

What kind of shoe or sandal did the Roman soldier wear? Well, it was basically an open-toe sandal, but the leather was very thick and very strong. It would wrap up around his foot and come up the ankle and onto his calf. It was actually tied together with straps, so it had a lot of ties. The straps would go around his ankle and up his calf, almost just below his knee. It was very, very strong, very, very thick, very, very protective, but also had—and this is the key—hobnails or spikes on it. It was like a golf shoe, a baseball shoe, or maybe a football spike. It had these little hollow-tipped spikes on it that would give the Roman soldier traction, and they

would be able to move with sure footedness. Most of the fighting in those days was hand-to-hand combat. If you're driving a tank today, your boots are important but not all important because you're in a tank, in a jet, or another kind of vehicle. In those days, you were out on your feet fighting hand-to-hand and had to have strong balance and sure footedness and be able to move very quickly. The Roman sandal had spikes or hobnails on the bottom.

This concept of the Roman sandal conveys three things. I am kind of uncertain as to what is the real application or the point. If you read six different books or commentaries or expositors on this verse, you're going to get a lot of different ideas or concepts. These three are important. These are the three concepts: mobility, stability, and balance. If you're taking notes, write those down. We'll look at one at a time. I believe that primarily this is most likely what is being conveyed, as I said, in this very challenging concept of "...preparation of the gospel of peace."

Mobility is your readiness to make the gospel known. Again, there are some scholars that maybe don't see that in view here, but I believe we should be ready. Some say it maybe isn't referring to that because they argue that that would be an offensive moving forward, but sometimes the best defense is a good offense. Amen? We need to take the gospel to the unbelieving world. Would to God that more Christians were aggressive in sharing the good news of the gospel of peace with others. Amen?

If every one of us got fired up and excited to go everywhere we go...you know, just at this church we have people that work all over the Temecula valley, some work in San Diego, some in Orange County or Los Angeles. You're just all over. Wherever I go to shop or out to eat, I'm always running into people from Revival Christian Fellowship. You're out of the salt shaker, and you're to be salt and light, so open your mouth and share the gospel. It's a readiness to say, "Here I am, Lord, use me to preach the good news of peace." I can't help but wonder if Paul had in mind the passage in Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," so tonight, if you're a believer and you're taking the good news to the world, you have beautiful feet. What a blessing it is to publish that good news.

What is this "good news" or this gospel? In 1 Corinthians 15:1, if you want to turn there in your Bible real quick, this is the classic passage that defines in some aspects the gospel that we are to be standing in and preaching to others. Paul says, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received," and I want you to notice this last statement in verse 1, "and wherein ye stand." Remember back in our passage in Ephesians 6:13,14 we're standing. The sandals help us to stand, and one of the things we stand in is the truth of the gospel. It cannot be diluted or changed. It must be proclaimed faithfully. Notice 1 Corinthians 15:2, "By which," that is, the gospel you're standing in, "also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all," which means, first of importance, first in order, "...how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he," secondly, "was buried," and thirdly, "that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

In its simplest form or presentation, here is the gospel: Jesus Christ died for our sins. It doesn't take a lot to know that, to share that. Jesus died for our sins. It is implied in that important biblical truth, that His death was for us, thus a substitution. The essence of the cross is the substitutionary death of Jesus meaning that He died in our place. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus died for us so that we could have everlasting life. Now we have the death of Jesus Christ and then the burial of Christ. Why? Because Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, is going to be speaking about the resurrection of the body—it's all about resurrection—and wants to make clear that Jesus physically, actually literally, died, thus He rose from the dead. He died on the cross physically and was buried physically, and "that he rose," from the dead, which is the third point of the gospel in this text, "again the third day according to the scriptures." In its simplest form, this is the gospel.

Do you know Jesus died for you? Jesus was buried and three days later—and we're coming up on Easter, what a great opportunity to preach the gospel—rose again from the dead, conquered sin and conquered the grave, so that we could be forgiven of our sins—we could be free of sin's penalty, sin's power, and one day the very presence of sin altogether when we go to Heaven. You need to know the gospel. The Bible says, Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Memorize these key verses. Memorize the Roman Road and Romans 6. Put them to memory and be able to share and preach the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.

In Romans 1:16, Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," so the gospel is about Jesus Christ. I am not ashamed of it. Why? "For it is," that is, the gospel, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek," or Gentile. I am convinced that one of Satan's number one targets is the gospel—to dilute it, to weaken it, to change it, to twist it, to take out, to add, to subtract, to confuse, especially to add, "Well, it's not by grace alone or by faith alone, you have to work your way to Heaven. You have to be good to get to Heaven," and Satan's attacks on the gospel are relentless and continue to this day. He wants to distort and confuse people's minds about the gospel. The whole book of Galatians was written because they had been confused about the gospel of God's grace. The whole book of Romans is written about the gospel of God's grace. Paul talks about the gospel of God's grace so much in all of his epistles.

In 1 Peter 3:15, he says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready," which is the idea of preparedness, "to give an answer," share your faith, share the gospel, "to every man that asketh you," and to do it "...with meekness and fear," or reverence and respect. You should always be ready to give a defense for the gospel and do it with humility and with reverence. Are your feet shod and ready to preach the gospel? Did you know Jesus gave us marching orders? I think we're a pretty sad picture of an army, though. Jesus also said, "Take up your cross, and follow me," we've misinterpreted that to, "Take up your couch and follow Me, and don't forget the remote control." No. You deny yourself, "...and take up," your "cross and follow," Jesus. But you've gotta have your sandals on. You've gotta be ready, and get up in the morning and say, "Lord, open the door for me to preach, and give me boldness and give me the

burden for the lost to make known the gospel as I go out.”

The marching orders, of course, is the great commission, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” everyone to hear the gospel. We’re to go into all the world and preach the gospel and to make known the good news of Jesus Christ and also to follow up making disciples so sinners can have peace with God. If you’re taking notes, you’ll want to write that down. When a person gets saved, they have peace with God; this is justification, this is positional righteousness, this is imputed righteousness where we have that position standing before God. What a marvelous truth that truly is.

Secondly, not only do the sandals convey the idea of mobility and swiftness, it also conveys the idea of stability. We want to be stable and strong. Not only do we preach the gospel, this is something that we forget about as Christians, but we are to stand in the gospel. We’re to defend the gospel. We’re to preach the gospel and to stand in the gospel. In the book of Jude, which is a book written about the dangers of apostasy, Jude says, “...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once,” and for all, “delivered unto the saints.” We have to be clear about what the gospel is and hold tightly to that, standing strong. As I mentioned (if you haven’t gone back to Ephesians 6, turn back there), in verse 13, Paul says, “...and having done all, to stand,” and then repeats again in verse 14, “Stand therefore, having,” the whole idea is to stand. Back in verse 11, “...that ye may be able to stand,” so three times in this whole text he mentions standing. This is where the soldier’s footwear, or sandals, would come into play. We’re to stand.

When Satan attacks us, we can stand in God’s peace having the peace of God which passes understanding. A moment ago I said when you get saved you have peace with God, and I know that most of you understand that; but after you get saved, you want to have the peace of God. There’s a difference. Peace with God is salvation; the peace of God is your sanctification. He’s not just going to take you to Heaven when you die, but He’s going to bring Heaven to your soul right now. What good does it do to be saved, on your way to Heaven, but you have no peace in your heart? God wants you to have His peace. It’s the peace of God in your hearts during this time of walking with the Lord. First of all, we must stand in the truth of the gospel, and then we must also stand in the peace of Christ which passes all understanding.

I like Ephesians 4:14, if you want to turn back there for just a moment. Paul says, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,” so we are not to be unstable but to be standing strong and stable. We’re to be ready to preach, standing strong, and not “...carried about with every wind of doctrine.” Some Christians, rather than being oak trees, grounded in God’s Word, are tumbleweeds; and every doctrine that blows through the church, they go rolling right along with it. There’s no stability and there are no roots.

One of the biggest problems I see in the church, not just today but over the last many, many, many, many, many, many years is a lack of stability in believer’s lives. That’s always the sad thing about pastoral ministry is to see people never get grounded and growing and solid in

their faith in their walk with Jesus Christ. They never get strong in the Word, but they are cast to and fro with every wind of doctrine. They don't have their shoes on. They're not ready to do battle, and everything that comes along, they get blown to the side because they're not strong in the Word, in the power of His might.

The gospel gives us stability. I think of it in the storms of life when trials, trouble, and temptation comes, we have peace of God in our hearts. What a marvelous truth that is because it's the gospel of peace. Satan wants to rob us of this peace. Again, I don't normally have you flip around in your Bibles this much, but I want you to flip over quickly to Philippians 4. I want to show you how we can have the peace of God. You know the passage well, but it reminds you of this marvelous truth. How can I experience God's peace standing in the gospel of truth? Paul says, verse 6, "Be careful for nothing," in other words, don't worry about anything, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God," there's the peace of God, not peace with God but the peace of God, "which passeth all understanding, shall keep," that is, to guard or garrison. It's actually a military word. It means build a fortress around your mind and your heart, so your mind and your emotions, "through Christ Jesus."

Notice verse 8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." We have "the God of peace," we have the gospel of peace, we have peace with God, and we have the peace of God.

There are three simple steps to take to have your feet stable in the storms of life and to experience God's peace. First, pray, verse 6, don't worry but pray, and pray with "...supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." I love the Bible when it says, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." There's a psalm that says roll your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you. I love that, "Casting all your care upon him," and then you will experience God's peace.

Secondly, not only pray right, but think right. Get your mind on what is true, verse 8, "... whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure...lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue...any praise, think on these things." Satan wants to rob you of your peace by getting you to think about things that are sinful, wicked, and evil. Your mind matters. Don't be sowing to the flesh in your thought life. You can't entertain sinful thoughts and not have them eventually take root and manifest in actions.

Thirdly, live right. Pray right, verse 6; think right, verse 8; and live right, verse 9. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me," notice the progression here. You learn it, then receive it; you hear it, you saw it in Paul, then it says do it, "and the God of peace shall be with you." It's not enough just to hear, learn, or receive, you must be a doer of the Word, not a hearer only, right? You know, it doesn't do any good to come on Wednesday

nights—I'm glad that you're here—and to go through this study of the armor of God and just listen and disregard what you've heard rather than praying. Say, "God, help me to put on the sandals of peace. Help me to put on the belt of truth. Help me to put on the breastplate of righteousness." As we get into the helmet and the sword, it's so important to actually put on the whole armor of God and then rely upon His strength through prayer.

I think of a submarine that can be on the surface of a very stormy sea. When it submerges and goes under water at even a greater depth, the top of the ocean can be a raging, stormy sea, but they're in perfect calm. You, as a Christian, can go through a raging storm, and as you submerge yourself in Christ through prayer—your thoughts, your heart, and your mind stayed on Him—you can have the peace of God which passes all understanding.

John Newton, the man who wrote the song "Amazing Grace," wrote these words in a poem: Though many foes beset me 'round, and feeble is my arm, my life is hid with Christ in God, beyond the realm of harm. That's what it means to cast your cares on God and hide yourself in Christ from the storms. When your feet are stable, you're not going to fall; and Satan comes to rob you of the peace of the gospel.

The gospel brings you into peace with God. Once and only after you have the peace with God, can you experience the peace of God. It has to come in that order. If you wonder why you're not at peace, either you haven't been born again, you do not have peace with God... do you know the Bible interestingly says before we're converted that we're actually at war with God, that we're fighting against God, we're warring against God, and when Jesus died on the cross, He died to reconcile us. It was a peace mission to bring us back to God. That's why that little flag has to go up in your heart and say, "I surrender, God. Have Your way in my life," and then you have peace with God. As you walk and trust Him and stand on His Word and His promises in the midst of the storm, Satan cannot rob you of the peace that God wants you to have and God wants you to experience.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "We should wear the shoes of the gospel of peace with a happy and calm confidence because the gospel has given us perfect peace." I love that. God's gospel of peace has given us perfect peace with God and the peace of God. The gospel brings me into peace with God, the gospel also brings me the grace of God, and the gospel brings me in the standing in God's grace where I experience peace.

Write down John 14:27. Jesus promised, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." God has actually promised you peace, but it takes putting on the shoes and standing in the gospel of peace.

One last point, and I won't tarry on it, the gospel also is for us to be ready to preach. We are to not only be ready but stable, standing in the true gospel; and thirdly, the shoes that the soldier wore gave him balance. What good would it do for a soldier to go out into battle wearing one sandal, kind of hopping on one foot? You have to have them both on. Have you ever had a

shoe go bad and you're kind of stuck with one shoe or it flips off your foot or you have a hole in one shoe or maybe the sole starts flapping off of it? It's like, "Uhhh, I got one good shoe, but I can't hop around on one foot." You need two shoes, we are to have balance. Here's the point: Satan loves unbalanced Christians, so put both shoes on and stand stable and strong. Do not be unbalanced.

Let me give you some examples. It's interesting that Christians tend to want to be imbalanced in so many different areas. They want to go from one extreme to the other and not be strong and balanced. An example is that sometimes Christians want to focus only on one doctrine taught in the Scripture and major on that, argue, and debate with others about that to the neglect of other doctrinal truth that balances that out. There are many examples I could give, but I would give the doctrine of election. Christians sometimes get all whipped up and concerned about that. They want to debate it, discuss it, argue about it, and that's the only thing they can see, the only thing they can talk about to the neglect of the idea of man has free will, he does need to repent and believe in Jesus, he does need to trust Jesus, and they don't see the whole picture. They become imbalanced, focusing on only one major doctrine. It's okay to have an area of Bible teaching that you want to study and dig into, but don't neglect all the doctrines of the Bible. Don't specialize in any one thing.

There are pastors that all they preach is prophecy. There are some pastors that all they preach is health and wealth, prosperity. There are some pastors, all they preach is deliverance from demons or the flesh. Some pastors, every Sunday, they're talking about the sins of the flesh, and they're imbalanced—they're not teaching the whole counsel of God, they're focusing only on one area.

It's interesting. If I preach on God's election, I get someone that complains. If I preach on man's free will and that man can repent and believe and choose to resist God's grace, I get someone that complains about that. I can't really ever be free of someone complaining about one or the other. When I'm preaching through the Bible, I can't teach all the doctrines in every sermon every Sunday. There's always somebody, "You forgot about this," or "You forgot about that," or "You forgot about this," "You forgot about that." Come back next Sunday. Go to the website and check it out. I preached a whole series on that. I can't tell you how many times people ask me questions, "Where were you last year? Where were you last month? Where were you last Sunday?" Go to the website. Look this up and study it. It's all there. Don't get imbalanced in some major doctrine that you get all out of whack and don't keep in balance.

Sometimes people get imbalanced when it comes to their ministry or their gifting in the church. Take evangelism for an example. They get all wrapped up. God has called them to evangelism, so everyone should be evangelizing with them. God's calling them to street witnessing, everyone ought to street witness. Everyone ought to do what I'm doing because it's the most important thing in the world. I can't tell you how many times I've had—Lord, have mercy—crazy Christians that are all upset because we're all not doing this, that, or the other, and they want everyone else to see what they see, do what they do, and to support them. They forget that the body has many different gifts to be in balance. The whole body is not just a hand, it's not just a

mouth, it's not just a foot. We're all together. We all need to find our place and our gifting and do what God has called us to do, and don't get out of balance worrying about what other ministries are doing.

I have discovered that many times when God gives us a ministry, we think that everything revolves around that ministry, that it's the most important ministry in the church and everyone ought to be a part of this ministry forgetting that there are other facets of ministry in the church. Satan loves to create imbalance, and many times it creates tension in the church.

There are some that want to fight over translations that Christians use. There are the "King James only" people. Well, you know that I read and preach from a King James Bible, but it's only because I grew up on the King James Bible, I've memorized it since I was a young boy, I preached from it for many, many years, and you can't teach an old dog new tricks, so I'm sticking with it even though I realize that it's not always the best translation. I don't think we should fight over translations. I don't think there's one that is the translation, "This one is the Word of God; no other translation is the Word of God," and Satan loves that. I've met people, and they've come to our church, that all they talk about, all they think about is King James Bible. If you quote it from the New King James, you're the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel; and the New King James Bibles in our pew are an indication that we are an apostate church. They just get all wrapped up in the translation, and this is the only anointed translation of God and we must speak in Elizabethan English and stuff. It's crazy.

Another imbalance, too, is all they want to think and talk about is the devil. I know we're in a series on standing against the wiles of the devil, but there are other things in the Bible to talk about, not just focusing on the devil. We need to be balanced in our approach.

When we stand in God's peace and we are in a turbulent world, we can have the peace of God in our hearts. Write down Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have," received, "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," there's our word, "and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," so we're standing in the peace with God. In Philippians 4:7, we just read it, Paul says, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Let me give you three quick points, rapid fire, to wrap this up. First, when we put on the sandals of peace, we are ready for every opportunity of service. When God leads—God calls, God guides, God prompts, God opens the door—you have your sandals on ready to go. Secondly, you are able to stand against every foe that may oppose you—you're ready to stand against the foe and his opposition. Thirdly, you find yourself strong for every errand on which the Lord sends us, so I want to have my sandals on, laced up ready to go, because when the Lord says, "Go," I want to be ready to respond and say, "Lord, I'm ready," and respond in obedience. Let us be ready to preach the gospel, let us be ready to stand in the truth of the gospel and experience the peace of God from the peace that we have through the gospel, and stand ready in that peace that passes all understanding. Let's pray.