

“Gospel Shoes”
Ephesians 6:15
(Preached at Trinity, February 28, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In the second half of Ephesians Paul describes the transforming grace of the Gospel. Christianity transforms us from death to life, from darkness to life. In light of this we must live consistently with this work of grace.
Ephesians 4:1 NAU - "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called"
2. As we come to these final verses Paul reminds us that the holy life of the believer is lived in the context of warfare. There is a vicious enemy who never ceases to assault us to discourage us and lead us away from God. As a warrior we must be adequately equipped.
Ephesians 6:11 NAU - "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil."
3. After looking at this enemy we've been focusing our attention upon the Christian armor. In **Verse 11** Paul commands, "Put on the full armor of God"
4. Paul is describing the armor in a particular order. This would have been the order in which it was put on by the soldier.
 - A. Paul describes the first piece of armor as a belt; a girdle worn around the waist. This belt was put on before anything else. It held the loose clothing in place so the warrior could march forth unhindered. Paul calls this belt truth. This is something we must actively put on in order for us to be adequately prepared for battle. We must rest upon the truth of God's Word. We must have confidence in it, and we must be committed to it.
 - B. The second piece of armor is the breastplate of righteousness. For the ancient soldier this was an important piece of armor. It covered all of the vital organs. Paul is saying that righteousness is our breastplate. This righteousness must involve our entire being. It defines us, characterizes us. It gives us confidence before God, not from your own righteousness but from that righteousness which only God can give. It equips us to stand against the lies and accusations of Satan.
5. The third piece of armor seems less significant—shoes. They might seem insignificant at first, but good foot protection was of great importance to the ancient soldier. Sharpened sticks and shards of glass were often placed in the battlefield to wound the feet and disable the soldier. Have you ever stepped on a nail?
The Roman's shoes were made of heavy leather and was often embedded with nails or spikes to aid in traction, very important in the close contact of the battlefield where one slip could result in being seriously wounded. They also provided good support for the rapid advancement of the army.
Thus the footwear had three important functions:
They provided protection from injury to the feet, mobility for the advancing troops, and confidence on the battlefield.

6. Paul calls this Christian armor, "The preparation of the Gospel of peace."
 - A. Most interpreters understand "preparation" to mean a resolve to serve God; a disposition of the mind to the duty of the Gospel
 - B. These Gospel shoes prepare us for battle. Every Christian soldier has experienced the transforming work of the Gospel. We must be ready for the duty of the Gospel
7. These gospel shoes serve the same three functions for the Christian soldier as the shoes for the ancient soldier – Protection, Mobility, Confidence
 - I. Protection – the Gospel gives us protection from the attacks of the enemy
 - A. It provides a protection from worldly influence
 1. Satan continually holds the world before us. This was his method when he tempted Jesus.
Matthew 4:8-10 NAS - "Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"
 2. The Gospel demands separation - those who follow the gospel of Christ are not entangled in this world
 - a. Many have been severely wounded by this world's influences. The danger is to begin to look to the things of this world as our joy and crown. The Gospel keeps our eyes fixed upon Jesus.
Hebrews 12:1-2 NAU - "let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith"
 - b. Paul describes the danger of the love of money. He says many have been pierced.
1 Timothy 6:10 NAU - " For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
 - c. The love of the world pierced Demas
2 Timothy 4:10 NAU - "Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me"
 3. Those soldiers who are worldly are wounded – unprofitable
2 Timothy 2:4 NAU - "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."
 - B. Second, the Gospel of peace provides protection from being used of the devil
 1. Remember, we wrestle not against flesh & blood - in other words our battle is often against those being used of the devil. Satan can use you in his diabolical schemes.

2. We are protected by the gospel of PEACE which helps maintain peace among the brethren.

James 3:13-18 - "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. "

C. The Gospel protects us from being weakened by error

1. The soldier whose feet are wounded is paralyzed, unable to advance, unable to fight, unable to defend himself. The Christian wounded by error is left helpless against the assaults of Satan. He is deceived by Satan's lies.
2. The Gospel provides the substance upon which we stand
1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NAU - "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain."
3. The Gospel is always connected to truth. It is often referred to as the truth
Ephesians 1:13 NAU - "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise"
Colossians 1:5 NAU - "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel"
4. The true Gospel enables us to stand. We are protected from error
Ephesians 4:14-15 NAU - "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ"

II. Mobility – The Gospel keeps us pressing on

A. The soldier's shoes made it possible for him to move forward

1. One of the reasons for the success of Julius Caesar was the fact that his soldiers wore shoes that would enable them to cover long distances in a short period often catching the enemy completely unprepared.
2. The Gospel enables the Christian to press on. We will not be defeated. The power of God is at work in us.
Philippians 3:13-14 NAU - "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

- B. These Gospel shoes provide the Christian soldier with not only protection as a defense, they also equip us for a sure offence.
1. We are called to carry the Gospel to the lost.
Romans 10:13-15 NAS - "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved." ¹⁴ How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"
 2. This is a major place of Satan's attack. He labors hard to keep the world in blindness.
2 Corinthians 4:3-4 NAU - "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."
 3. The Gospel cannot be stopped
 It is the power of God unto salvation. Our feet must go forth with the Gospel of peace. It is a powerful Gospel

III. Confidence – The Gospel of peace gives us confidence in the war.

- A. With the studded sandals the Roman soldier could fight with confidence
1. It was essential that he be able to move quickly and boldly. Even facing the enemy face to face in hand to hand he fought with courage.
 2. The Gospel enables us to march forward with courage and confidence
- B. Satan continually seeks to sow fear into our hearts
1. As our accuser he continually seeks to discourage us and cause us to doubt our great position before God.
 2. We have to remember the transforming effect of the Gospel
 - a. Before God saved us we were His enemies. We were transgressors of the Law and the Law condemned us.
 - b. We had no claim upon the blessings of God and were without hope in this world. The Scripture declares God's anger upon the wicked.
 - c. We lived our life in the fear of God. We didn't trust Him and feared what might come next. Fear characterizes those who are living apart from God. In Revelation this is the characteristic of those who will be cast into hell.
 3. The Gospel has changed everything.
 - a. We are no longer the enemies of God but His dear children. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the demands of the Law and God looks upon our weakness with pity.
 - b. God looks upon us with delight. All of His plans and purposes regarding us are only good.
 - c. God loves us with a love that is beyond our comprehension. The more we understand the love of God empowered by the Gospel of peace the less Satan's lies will terrify us.

- d. Through the Gospel of peace we are now at peace with God. Satan's lies cannot separate us from the love of Christ.
Romans 8:38-39 NAS - "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- 4. Satan's lies cannot hinder us from marching forth with confidence. We are God's people! We are more than conquerors.
- C. We can boldly carry the Gospel to the lost
 - 1. Satan seeks to terrify us with thoughts of rejection in the Gospel; thoughts of persecution. This is the greatest hindrance to evangelism. Christians seem paralyzed in fear.
 - a. Satan tells us we are inadequate. What if we say the wrong thing?
 - b. Strong men become like timid girls – they remain silent
 - c. Fear enters our heart with endless excuses
 - 2. The Holy Spirit equips us and give us courage.
2 Timothy 1:7-8 NAS - "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline. ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God"
The word for "timidity" is δειλία which refers to fear as the result of a lack of courage. The KJV & ESV translate it fear.
 - 3. We need not fear. Satan's lies must not terrify us.
- D. We also know the end of the Gospel of peace
 - 1. Satan is doomed
Romans 16:20 NAU - "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."
 - 2. Satan is referred to as the "god of this world" but make no mistake, this is God's world. He rules, He reigns.

Conclusion:

1. The focus here is upon the Gospel. Have you trusted Christ? Have you rested in Him? With our feet covered with the preparation of the Gospel of peace we are unstoppable. We will press on until the end.
2. The charge to us is press on! Fight the good fight of faith! Don't be distracted - Never retreat
 - a. God is with you - He will never leave you.
 - b. He will surely deliver you from every battle
Psalm 18:2-3 NAS - "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."
3. But we must not diminish the focus upon feet prepared for carrying forth the Gospel. Leon Morris – "The whole expression points to being fully prepared to preach the gospel. The Christian will function as a messenger, telling sinners that they must repent and believe the gospel if they are to enter the peace of God."
 - a. We are equipped if we remember the Great Commission of our Lord.
 - b. We are equipped if we remember His promise to go with us.
 - c. We are equipped if we march forth in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. We are equipped if we understand the unstoppable power of the Gospel
4. Put on the Gospel shoes and march forth. Satan cannot stop this Gospel.