

IN OUR SPIRITUAL WAR WE NEED GOSPEL SHOES AND A SHIELD OF FAITH

Ephesians 6:15,16

Shoes are a fashion statement for many today. In the ancient world many did not even have shoes. But in our spiritual warfare what we wear on our feet and carry as soldiers is crucial.

1.WE NEED TO PUT ON SHOES READY TO CARRY THE GOSPEL OF PEACE – Ephesians 6:15

- Shoes are important in battle. Roman soldiers had shoes that were half boots with metal studs for traction in the battles. They were leather with open sections around the sides and ankles for a comfortable fit. These studded shoes allowed them to travel great distances in all kinds of weather and situations. So we are given special shoes to carry the message of the gospel. The background of this verse is also from the Old Testament – Isaiah 52:7. This passage speaks of feet, good news, and peace. We are heralds of good news that God reigns and rescues His people – Romans 10:13-15.
- In the midst of battle and war, our message is one of good news and peace. Our God reigns and rescues through His Son Jesus Christ is the best news ever. Christ Himself is our peace – Ephesians 2:13-16. Jesus unites us into One Body, One Army. Jesus proclaimed peace Himself – Ephesians 2:17. Christ is the greatest herald of peace – Luke 4:16-18. He not only heralded peace, He accomplished peace. Christ purchased and brought peace through the blood of His cross - Colossians 1:19,20. Today Jesus proclaims peace through us! He is with us in heralding the good news – Matthew 28:20. We are not taking life in this war, we are offering life and wholeness in Christ. A herald is to get the message right and get the message out. At the center of the gospel is the cross of Christ and the peace this brings to the believer. *“The gospel of peace is the good news that tells of peace with God, which only God can give.” – Leon Morris.*
- Getting the message right means not changing the message our King gave us. The gospel message starts with “bad news” first - Ephesians 2:1-3. We are lost and separated from a holy God and cannot do anything ourselves to fix this. We are all born in bondage to the devil’s tyranny and our own idols. The good news is God’s rescuing grace in Jesus Christ – Ephesians 2:4-9. The good news is what Christ has done for us in His death and resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15:3,4. *“Evangelism is just one beggar telling another where to find bread.” – D.T. Niles.*
- The gospel is peace and brings peace – Romans 5:1. Getting the message out means we are not ashamed of the gospel – Romans 1:16. We must have full confidence that this is the only hope for the lost world around us. We trust God for the results of sharing the gospel. The good news of peace with God through Jesus is how we stand firm against the devil. Sharing the gospel is offensive to demons. *“...the devil fears and hates the gospel, because it is God’s power to rescue people from his tyranny, both us who have received it and those with whom we share it. So we need to keep our gospel boots strapped on.” – John Stott.*

2.WE NEED TO TAKE UP THE SHIELD OF FAITH – Ephesians 6:16

- Besides all these (other pieces of armor), and in all circumstances, we are to take up the shield of faith. The shield is indispensable in battle. The word shield here refers to the large “door-like” shield of the Roman soldier, approx. four feet long by 2 and ½ feet wide. It was made of two layers of wood, covered with linen and leather, then bound with iron on the top and bottom, with a “metal boss” in the middle. This shield covered the whole body and when locked

together with fellow soldiers presented a strong defense. It could put out the flaming arrows of the enemy.

- The shield is faith – 1 John 5:4. But faith is not simply faith in general or to “Believe” in faith itself. The Object of faith is all-important. The Shield of faith refers to the faith in the God of the Bible who saves us only through His Son Jesus Christ. This is the only true faith that will stand in the battles of life. Faith is the way by which we run to God for refuge. God Himself is our True Shield – Genesis 15:1; Psalm 18:2, 30. Faith is how we cling to God in times of difficulty and distress. *“True biblical faith derives its power not from any power inherent in faith itself but rather from the object of that faith. Faith is merely the instrument that connects us to the utterly trustworthy and all-powerful God, who created the heavens and the earth and who made us for relationship with Him.”* – Iain Duguid, *The Whole Armor of God*. Faith protects us because it enables us to take hold of the power and protection of God. True faith must be built on the truth of God’s Word – Proverbs 30:5.
- The evil one’s flaming darts include his accusations against God’s people, also things like doubt, guilt, fear, lust, rebellion, bitterness, and temptation. Our shield lays hold of the promises of God in times of struggle, affliction, and temptation. Faith connects us to the promises of God in the gospel. Faith is how we are saved and have access to God – Ephesians 2:8; 3:12. We cry out for His power. We resist the devil by standing firm in the faith – 1 Peter 5:8,9. Faith is trust in Jesus Christ rather than any human effort.
- Faith is a shield in the midst of storm. Jesus knows and prays for us in our spiritual battles – Luke 22:31,32. Jesus prays our faith will not fail! *“For faith to be your shield, you need to believe that God is sovereign over every detail of the universe. You must know that God directs not only the affairs of men and nations but ordains the car crash, the job layoff, the health challenges, the relational difficulties...God’s sovereignty is not in the least comforting unless you know that this God is on your side...Faith reminds me, ‘God has promised to work this situation out, and I believe He will because we’ve been reconciled through the cross. Having loved me that much, He won’t abandon me now. He will not bring one iota of pain into my life that isn’t absolutely necessary for my growth and sanctification.’”* – Iain Duguid.
- Faith is how the Church stands together in unity – Ephesians 4:5, 13. We are not an army of one. Old veterans can encourage new young recruits. We are to stand together in the truths of the gospel of peace. *“The Roman shield was designed to interlock with the shields on either side to form an impenetrable barrier. Likewise, our shield of faith works best in company with fellow Christians – whose help we should seek when the fiery darts start flying, and whose faith can cover our weaknesses as ours covers theirs. With our shields lifted up and locked together we are most safe in battle.”* – Richard Phillips.

Concluding Applications:

- Are you ready to share the gospel? Who do you know who needs the gospel of peace?
- Why is it good news that God reigns? What does this mean for faith?
- Is your faith in Christ alone and do you stand on God’s truth?
- How is faith in Christ a shield for you?
- How are you encouraging your fellow soldiers?