

Put on Your Shoes

Ephesians 6:15

14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

We have seen in our earlier studies that in order to battle Satan successfully we must put on the Belt of Truth and the Breastplate of Righteousness. In Ephesians 6:15, Paul teaches us that we must also shod our feet with Gospel shoes, which he calls “the readiness given by the gospel of peace.” Literally the text reads “the readiness *of* the gospel of peace.” This leaves the question as to whether the readiness comes *from* the Gospel or leads *to* Gospel proclamation. Scholars are divided, but we suspect that both ideas are in play here.

I. We must put on the readiness *from* the Gospel of peace.

We are being attacked by the evil one on all fronts, and we must be able to keep our feet. We need “cleats” in our shoes, just as Roman soldiers had in their leather shoes called the “caliga.” Paul says that from our experience of the Gospel, we have cleated shoes, which are “the Gospel of peace.” Let us look at various aspects of the Gospel of Christ:

1. The nature of the Gospel is a verbal announcement of good news. In Ephesians 1:13, Paul equates the Gospel with “the Word of Truth,” showing us that the Gospel is a verbal communication of good news. The Gospel obviously must also be demonstrated, but in order for anyone to be saved, they must actually hear the Gospel. What is this Truth?
2. The *content* of the Gospel is salvation or deliverance from trouble. Twenty-three times in the Septuagint we find the word “gospel.” In Isaiah 52:7 we find a classic instance of this word in the Old Testament where Isaiah says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’” In this verse, we can see that the Gospel is not only an announcement, but it is an announcement of good news. We also see that the good news is that we are being delivered from danger. The noun-verbal forms of “the gospel” are found over 130 times in the New Testament. In the New Testament we find the most important plight from which we are delivered, namely, the wrath of God. Look at John 3:36; Romans 5:9; and 1 Thessalonians 1:10 to see this clearly taught. The fundamental problem in the cosmos is the alienation between God and human beings. His wrath, by nature, is resting upon us (see Ephesians 2:3). The good news is that God has provided a substitute for us in the person of Jesus Christ whereby the wrath of God against our sin is completely exhausted upon Him, so that we are no longer condemned but are loved and cherished by God. How can we receive such love?
3. The condition of the Gospel is repentant faith. In Luke 24:47, we read “that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations...” A repentant faith is the way in which we receive the salvation offered in the Gospel. When we do this, what difference does it make?
4. The effect of the Gospel is the peace of God, peace with our brethren, and the promotion of peace in the world. Paul describes in Ephesians 2:14 the effect of receiving the Gospel: “he himself is our peace who has made us both one as broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility...” When we receive peace with God we have inner tranquility (peace with ourselves), authentic community (peace with the Church), and the promotion of peace in society (see Jeremiah 19:7).

Our readiness then to confront the evil one, comes from “gospel renewal,” that is, from our *experience* of the things we believe, leading us to abandon all efforts to defend ourselves on the basis of our performance and to trust solely the substitute atonement of Jesus Christ.

II. **We must put on the readiness *for* the Gospel.**

Not only do we stand against the devil defensively, because of Gospel renewal, but we also advance against the devil by the power of the Gospel. Because we have experienced the Gospel, we joyfully desire others to do the same. We become Christ’s witnesses, that is, those who have experienced the liberation of the Gospel and who want others to experience it as well. This is the reason the psalmist says, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so...” (Psalm 107:2a). Our only weapon to defend ourselves against Satan and to advance against his sinister kingdom is believing and proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the “readiness” that comes from faith in the Gospel.
2. Why must the Gospel be communicated verbally in order for anyone to be saved?
3. What is the Christian Gospel?
4. Why does Paul call the Gospel of Christ “the gospel of peace?”
5. Why must someone believe and understand God’s wrath toward sinners in order to understand the Gospel?
6. What is readiness for the Gospel? How does this readiness for the Gospel help us in our spiritual battle with the principalities and powers?

Going Deeper

1. How can you more deeply be renewed in the Gospel each day?
2. How can you more aggressively advance the cause of the Gospel?