

Prepared to Propagate the Gospel
Wearing the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace
Armor of God – Winning the War For Your Soul
Palmetto Baptist Church

Texts

Ephesians 6:15 “and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the **readiness** given by the gospel of peace.”

Isaiah 52:7 “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.””

Ephesians 2:17–19 “And **he came and preached peace** to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”

Romans 10:1-15 “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord **will be saved.**” **How** then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And **how** are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And **how** are they to hear without someone preaching? And **how** are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!**””

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready** to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

John 16:33 “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.””

Philippians 4:7 “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Introduction:

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to reacquaint myself with an old book detailing the legendary life and experiences of Marco Polo who departed from Venice with his father and his uncle in 1271 as a 17 year-old boy and returned to his home 24 years later in 1295 as a 41-year old man after traveling throughout the hitherto unexplored lands of the East – what is today Persia, China, Tibet, Burma, and India. Some surmise he even got as far as Japan.

There is a legend associated with Marco Polo that is worth recounting as we continue our study of the armor God has provided us to wear as soldiers in His army – particularly as we examine the shoes that we are to wear – the preparation or readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Marco Polo's journey was not the first journey by western men into the East – his father and uncle had returned from an earlier journey – one in which they had encountered the great Genghis Kahn – ruler of all the lands stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean!

After the Great Kahn's death – his vast empire eventually came under the control of one of his grandsons – Kublai Kahn. During his reign, Marco Polo's dad (Maffeo) and his uncle (Nicolo) came to his lands and ended up as guests of Kublai's court.

During their time he sought them out and inquired of many things – and chief among those things was the nature of the Christian religion. According to some, his mother may have come under the teaching of a heretical form of Christianity that had survived from the days of Thomas – a Nestorian form.

At any rate, during one of their many discussions, they asked him his reason for not accepting Christianity. Here is an abridged form of his response:

In my court there are many grand and noble men who do not believe in your God – but rather are followers of idols and have received great powers from these idols to work miracles which they do regularly perform in our midst.

If I were to become a convert to the faith of Christ and profess myself a Christian, the nobles of my court and other persons not inclined to your religion will ask me what caused me to receive baptism and embrace Christianity – and I shall not know what answer to make – and they shall consider me to be in grievous error and shall without difficulty through their powers bring about my death.

But – go to your people and seek out 100 men learned in the laws of God and of men and return with them to me that they may demonstrate to all the supremacy of your God and explain the reason why, though more powerful than the idols, His followers refrain from the kinds of miracles that come from evils spirit.

When I witness this, I shall ban them and their religions and I and my court shall be converted to Christianity and I will be baptized.

The Polo brothers returned to Venice and could only persuade two men – both Roman Catholic priests – to return with them with a mangled and deficient form of the gospel – and 500 years of spiritual darkness fell upon the Eastern world!

Polo's later assessment (as an unsaved Roman Catholic) was that – had better men returned to preach the gospel, the Great Kahn would have embraced Christianity, for it is certain that he had a strong leaning toward it!

A great opportunity was lost because men were not “prepared” to give a reason for the hope that was in Christ – **primarily because the hope was not in them!**

This story illustrates the need for the third piece of the marvelous armor that Christ has made available to us by which we are enabled through His strength, to stand against the attacks that Satan and his spiritual forces bring in the war against our soul.

To help us get our bearing let's make sure we keep Paul's theological flow of thought in mind as we come to this piece of armor. ***Here is what the flow of thought we need to make sure we catch as Paul presents the gospel boots that we are to wear in battle.***

1. This is the third piece of armor by which a believer stands – it is key to our resisting the Devil and his forces when they come against us. It is how (the means) we stand!
2. We received these shoes when we became followers of Jesus Christ – God's anointed and appointed champion, Messiah.
3. Whatever these shoes are – they are described as a preparation – an eager readiness – to do something.
4. Whatever that eager readiness involves – it is grounded in the gospel of peace – the good news about peace – shalom.
5. This peace is the central focus of the book of Ephesians – 1:2 & 5:23; 2:12-19; 4:3; and 6:15.
6. Like the belt of truth and breastplate of righteousness, these shoes were worn by God's Messiah in the OT – Isaiah 52:7-10.
 - Jesus came and wore the ***belt of truth*** by obeying every one of God's righteous laws fully, perfectly, and completely. His perfect obedience is credited to us and replaces our imperfect, partial obedience that is flawed by our disobedience.
 - His obedience resulted in a perfect righteousness that became ours when He replaced our filthy robes with His own brilliant ***robe/breastplate of perfect righteousness*** – which became our breastplate of unassailable righteousness.

- And the result of His obedience and righteousness was a wonderful *peace* – a full and unbreakable shalom that He established between God and us when He became our substitute.
7. In Isaiah we meet two servants of God, both consecrated by God and sent out by Him with a message to His people. Isaiah was one of those servants – in Isaiah 6:8-13 Isaiah is “sent” to Israel with a very strong message of judgment from God that is coming on His people because of their unbelief and disobedience!
 8. 44 chapters later, we meet another servant who is commissioned and sent to the mountain of God with a very different message – one of hope and deliverance! This messenger is none other than God’s Messiah with the good news of peace and deliverance from God! Hear His words:

Isaiah 52:7 “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.””
 9. 800 years later, Luke records the occasion of the birth of a baby in Bethlehem of Judea and on the night he was born, an Angel appeared from heaven with “good news of great joy that will be for all people! Because to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord!” And a whole army of angels joined him praising God and saying – “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among those with whom He is pleased!” (Luke 2:10-14)
 10. That baby was Jesus and He came right into the very heart of enemy territory to announce the good news that His Kingdom had come and that He had come to rescue those who were captives and slaves in the kingdom of darkness and make them sons and daughters of God – members of God’s own household (Eph 2:13-19).
 11. And at the end of Matthew’s Gospel, this Messiah stands on a high mountain and states that the God of Israel reigns – “All authority is given unto me” – and that salvation has come to the ends of the earth!
 12. And He commissions His own disciples to do what He did – to strap on their feet an eagerness to take the news of this peace to every corner of Satan’s kingdom in order that He, through the gospel of truth that saved the Ephesians, would save anyone who believed the word that had been preached by those He was sending (Rom 10:13-15)

Romans 10:1-15 “For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord **will be saved**.” ***How*** then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And ***how*** are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And ***how*** are they to hear without someone preaching? And ***how*** are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “***How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!***””
 13. And now Paul looks at us and says to us – strap on an eager, joyfilled readiness to take this gospel everywhere throughout Satan’s kingdom and the nations of the earth that are enslaved in spiritual and moral darkness with the wonderful news that King

Jesus has defeated Satan! He reigns! And He has come to deliver the sinner and to set the captives free!

14. And Jesus promised to give such gospel warriors His very own peace – a peace that Satan could never touch no matter how relentless or ruthless his attack against them (John 14:27) because Jesus has conquered and overcome the world (John 16:33).

So...how do these shoes work? What are we to do with this piece of armor?

- We use it to stand against the attacks of Satan in our own personal life
- We use it to do what Jesus did – to boldly invade Satan’s kingdom with the good news that God reigns and He has come to rescue and deliver people from Satan’s power, from the kingdom of darkness, and from the condemnation of death
- And this peace will sustain us under the most relentless and ruthless of attacks!

In other words, these gospel shoes are designed to help us do two things:

1. **Stand firmly against any attack of Satan in an unmovable, unshakeable commitment to serve Christ no matter what the cost.**

1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

2. **Advance the Gospel and the cause of Christ throughout Satan’s realm – the kingdoms of this world.**

Romans 1:14–17, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.””

So ... what will this require of us personally and corporately?

I. We must Posses this Peace Personally: John 14:27

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

This immediately alerts us that there is a peace that Christ has given to us and that this peace is very different from the concept of peace commonly held by lost men – simply the absence of conflict and trouble or the presence of good circumstances and possessions!

Jesus was talking about a very different kind of peace – a peace that would be present in the midst of persecution (external trouble) and turmoil

(troubles and fears within) – just as He himself experienced when He came to the world to make and establish peace.

Jesus was very clear that His followers would experience and possess peace from God but they would also experience trouble, affliction, and persecution from the world (John 16:33 – “In the world, you will have tribulation!”). So – how are we to actually get this peace that He provided for us?

A. *By Remembering its Source (how it was obtained) (Eph 2.14-17)*

Ephesians 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

1. He is our Peace – for He Himself is our peace! (2:14)

- It isn't just that God provided peace and offered it to us – He Himself is that peace!
- When human governments make “peace treaties” those treaties rest on the strength of the integrity, intention, and duration of those men themselves – and when the men are gone, often so is the peace!
- Here Paul makes clear that this peace is permanent and abiding because it is sourced in and identified with the 2nd member of the Godhead – Jesus Christ Himself!
- And Acts 10:36 makes clear that God Himself set this up and sent His Son to establish a permanent and personal peace for those who were once His enemies!

2. He Made Peace for Us (2:15-16)

Colossians 1:20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

- Not only does this text remind us that Christ is our personal and permanent peace – it also tells us what it took for Him to be our peace – ***the blood of His cross!***
- He actually accomplished the making of this peace by his violent, voluntary, and vicarious death for those of us who were at war with His Father!

3. He Preached Peace to Us (2.17)

- To everyone – to people who were near (Jews) and to those like us who were far off (gentiles) as seen in Acts (10:36).
- God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3.9)
- He sent His son to be the savior of the world (1 John 4.14)
- And He offers salvation to all men – to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Romans 1.16) and commands men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30).

B. *By Recognizing its Provision (Rom 5.1)*

Romans 5:1-2 “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

1. Based on *A New Standing* – the Reality of Justification
2. Resulting in *A New Access* – the Realm of Grace
3. Rejoicing in *A New Assurance* – Hope of the glory of God
–confident expectation of being with God and becoming like Him in our character.

C. *By Resting in its Implications (2 Thess 3.16)*

2 Thessalonians 3:16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

- Because we are now at peace with God we can ask Him about all the stresses and difficulties in life and the peace He has given us is strong enough to sustain us in every circumstance of life (Phil 4:7).

D. *By Rejoicing in its Triumph (Rom 16.20)*

And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

- The Champion of Peace will **crush** the arch-enemy of peace!

II. We must Protect this Peace (with others) Persistently (Eph 4:1-3)

Ephesians 4:1 “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

- An important spiritual key to maintaining our spiritual footing in the midst of the conflict is that we strive with all of our might to “keep” or protect/preserve the unity of the Spirit in something identified as the “bond of peace”

- Unity in the Body of Christ is important to God – and the glue that holds the unity of the body together is “peace.” And to keeping peace intact when we are working and worshipping with other imperfect believers requires that we:
 - A. *By cultivating Christ-like character (humility and gentleness)***
 1. We need to adopt a *biblical mindset* about ourselves – lowliness or personal humility
 2. We need to cultivate a *biblical disposition* within ourselves – meekness or gracious gentleness
 - B. *By cultivating Christ-like responses (longsuffering and patience)***
This is what Christ-like character looks like with shoes on!
 1. Longsuffering – we lovingly endure and tolerate those who are constantly irritated with us and who aggressively act against us! Just like God does – He “suffers” or endures the animosity and offenses that sinful people do against Him for a long, long time!
 2. Forbearance – this is putting up with or tolerating the flaws of others that irritate us or at times affect us personally.

We are more committed to others than to our selves – the unity of God’s body is more important to us than “being right” or “getting our way” or “getting even” or making sure someone gets their “just desserts!”

And – when we are committed to persistently protect the unity of the Body of Christ by working hard to keep the bond of peace – we will not lose our footing when Satan comes against us as a church!

III. We must Propagate this Peace (in the world) Passionately (Eph 6.19-20)

... “and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

- A. *By Speaking the Gospel Graciously and Boldly***
- B. *By Submitting to the Gospel Personally***
Your conduct needs to match your creed – it needs to adorn the gospel
- C. *By Suffering for the Gospel Beneficially***

God has chosen to advance the gospel by letting those who have received it suffer – and the result of that suffering for 2000+ years is that, when believers have suffered well, the gospel has advanced!

Conclusion:

God sent His Champion in the very heart of Satan's domain to make a peace and to announce the good news that He has defeated Satan and that He reigns through King Jesus!

That Champion came and, after He accomplished this mission, commissioned His disciples to go into every corner of the realm over which Satan still rules and announce that deliverance has come through Jesus Christ – and is rescuing many!

But what would happen to someone who actually did this – who actually said to every Jew that their Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth who had suffered the shame of crucifixion? What would happen when this word about a resurrected Savior went to every Greek? How would the might of imperial Rome respond to the news that this Jesus was the true Lord of heaven and earth?

And what would sustain these gospel warriors as they went into hostile territory and came under ruthless and relentless fire? What would comfort them as they gave up houses and lands and suffered the loss of family (father and mother, spouses and children) and even in some cases, their own lives (Matt 19:27; Lk 18:28; Lk 14:25-33; Heb 10:32-36)?

Answer – a peace that sustained Jesus and that He himself gives when He states – be of good comfort, I have overcome the world! So the question for each of us this morning is:

1. **Will I wear the shoes of preparation – and stand my ground – or have I already lost footing at home and in the world because I have made the wrong kind of peace – a peace with sin or with the world?**
2. **Will I strap on these gospel shoes and take the news of the shalom of God to my neighbor across the street? Before I am ready to take it across an ocean, I need to take it next door! Am I ready and eager to share the gospel story when that opportunity comes?**

Remember Kublai Kahn and the lost opportunity for the gospel? 500 years later in 1850 there was another opportunity that at first didn't look like much – but one man had his feet shod and was ready -- Hudson Taylor – 100 missionaries in 60 years – 100 million Chinese Christians in one century under communism! What about you?

Illustration of what it looks like at PBC: Gospel evening with Jairo and the members of the international community group. 10+ lost people came – from Turkey, Columbia, Purto Rico, Honduras, and Japan. Gospel conversation with TK and Kimee – butterfly collection and God – infertility and prayer that God would reveal himself to them – this is what it looks like to wear gospel shoes and **all of you can do this!!**