

Ephesians 6: 15; “The Gospel Shoes – The Preparation of Peace”,
Sermon # 9 in the Series – “The Whole Armor of God”, Delivered
by Pastor Paul Rendall on November 4th, 2012,
in the Afternoon Service.

When I was younger, it was about 1974, about the time that I met my wife Jenni, I used to walk barefoot a lot. I would walk many miles on sidewalks and streets, smooth roads and gravelly ones, over grassy lawns and rough fields, trying to toughen up my feet. My hero in those days was a man named David Carradine, a television actor who a master of the Martial Arts. I was taking Taekwondo and Kung Fu and was hoping that my feet were becoming lethal weapons. I still carried my shoes with me in case the place where I walked became too difficult; I slung them over my shoulder. I didn't know Christ yet as my Savior. The person who does not know Christ will always try to walk through this life barefoot – spiritually speaking. He does not think that he needs the shoes which Christ gives to protect him as he walks through this life. He thinks that he will toughen his feet up, through the hard things that he goes through in this life, and if things get really bad for him, he may think about putting on the shoes which Christ gives to protect him as he goes through this life. But usually he will sling them over his shoulder and hope not to use them at all. But the shoes which Christ gives us should not be slung over the shoulder of a Christian. It is only the unbeliever who thinks he can get along without them. As a Christian our feet are those which carry us to where we want to go; on the path of righteousness. Our spiritual feet must have protection. This is true whether we want to follow our Captain, Jesus Christ, in obedience; or whether we are going into spiritual battle. As we walk through this life we will have great need for the spiritual shoes – the gospel boots – which Christ has prepared for us, which will guard us in our walking wherever our feet will take us. The kind of shoes which Christ gives to all those who believe in Him, and all who would do spiritual battle for Him, are the gospel of peace name-brand. This brand of shoe has 3 features which I will describe for you. These shoes are comfort fit – they will bring peace to the wearer.

1st – Understand; there is a peace that protects your walk with God.

The Christian life and walk begins when you find and make your peace with God. When you are outside of Jesus Christ, the Bible describes you as being at war with God. There is no peace says my God for the wicked. Let's pause and look together at Isaiah 57: 15-21. “For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’” “For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made.” “For the iniquity of covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry, and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.” “I have seen his ways, and will

heal him; I will also lead him, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners.” “I create the fruit of the lips: ‘Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,’ says the Lord, ‘and I will heal him.’” “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” “There is no peace, says my god, for the wicked.” Now, as we think about this passage we first of all see God’s character. He is High and lofty, and He inhabits eternity; His name is holy. In verse 17 it describes God as striving and contending with unrepentant sinners; those who “go on backsliding in their hearts” toward the “iniquity of their covetousness”. These are war-like terms being used here, in relation to God’s actions. The unrepentant sinner is being described as being at war with God, for he will not turn away or turn back from his sins. The sinner will not change in his attitude toward God because his sinful nature keeps turning him towards his sin and not toward God. And God cannot change His mind about determining to bring judgment against the sinner for His sin. This He must do. He is always and forever against sin and those who hold to it; it is His Essential Nature of Holiness; this is the way that He is.

What then, is to be done if the sinner is to be saved? Well, it ought to be pretty obvious that the sinner cannot save himself. And God says that He was angry and struck him; He hid and was angry with him. He stuck him with conviction of sin and difficult Providences in his life. But here we also see the mercy of God the Father toward all of His Elect in Christ, both Old Testament and New. He contrived a plan for completely saving sinners from their sins, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He sent His Son to “create peace to him who is far off and to him that near”. “I create the fruit of the lips”, He says in verse 19. That is, the sinner who has been awakened and converted, or brought back from a backsliding state, will praise God and be eternally grateful to Him. God has “seen the sinner’s ways, and will heal him”. “He will heal him of this sin-sickness would lead him to death if God had not given him grace. But through Christ and His mighty grace the Holy Spirit will lead and guide him into all the truth of God’s blessed Word. He will restore comforts, real spiritual comforts to him and to all who mourned in prayer over him, thinking that there was no hope for him. All the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. Unrepentant, unbelieving sinners hearts are full of the agitation of sin, like waters which cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace for them, says God. But there is peace for those for whom peace has been made through Jesus Christ; all the sinners who have been given the grace of repentance by God Himself. I want you to see that this great salvation is not a thing that the sinner can do for himself. He is perfectly helpless in himself to bring it about, or even to prepare his heart for it. God’s sovereign, powerful, unmerited, and distinguishing grace which was purchased by Jesus Christ the Lord, and applied by the Holy Spirit according to God’s eternal purpose; this is what brings it about. When a sinner comes to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he has a sure and established peace with God. Romans 5: 1 – “Therefore having been justified by

faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

But let me tell you now, that the armor that you have been given, which is spoken of in verse 15 of our text, is even more extensive in its implications than the blessed truth that we have a perfect legal standing in the sight of our Holy God. This gospel peace means not only that there is no enmity and hostility between ourselves and God, but that we now also have the peace which passes understanding which guards our heart and mind, and guards our walk with God. We not only have been reconciled to God, but He becomes the One who keeps and guards our souls. (Psalm 121) Please turn with me over to Psalm 37, verse 23. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in His way.” “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand.” Verse 30 and 31: “The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice, the law of God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.” Let’s think about this for a moment. All the spiritual steps which build our Christian character are ordered of God; they are ordained and established by the Lord, if we are a true Christian. All the things which happen to us are going to work together for our good because the Lord delights to watch over His people. Even when they fall into difficulties, even when they are tempted, tried and oft-times failing; yet they will get up from their spiritual falls. “For a righteous man may fall seven times, and yet he will rise again from such spiritual falls. But the wicked shall fall by calamity it says in Proverbs 24: 16 It is the Lord who holds the hand of the Christian. This is what brings us peace. Our responsibility is to see to it that the law of God, His Word, is in our heart, and then none of our steps will slide.

Let me ask you, “Are your feet shod with this preparation of the gospel of peace? Are you acquiescing in God’s Providential will for your life. Are you seeking to learn and to do His perceptive will which is found in the moral commandments of the Bible? Then hear what verse 37 of Psalm 37 says. “Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; for the future of that man is peace.” “But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.” Your responsibility, O Christian, is to strive to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man. If you are not walking uprightly before the Lord, if your heart is condemning you, if you regard iniquity in your heart, then your sense of God’s peace will leave, your will have no confidence. Let me say to you that you must not be anxious, but prayerful when you experience the wanderings of your heart. Make your request to God for an undivided heart, as many times as you see yourself living in duplicity. You cannot have sin and peace co-existing together in the same heart. You will not be able to bless yourself in your heart and say, “I will have peace, even though I walk in the stubbornness of my own heart.” (Deuteronomy 29: 19) But God’s peace which passes all

understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Put on the Gospel shoes, and walk with God in this holy armor.

2ndly – This brand of shoes features a peace that protects your walking in enemy territory.

Turn with me over to Romans 16. We will read verse 17-20. “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.” “For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” “For your obedience has become known to all.” “Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.” “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” “Amen.” There is perhaps no greater scheme of Satan’s than the promoting of lies and error which undermines the truth of sound doctrine. I hope you see the clear connection between false teachers and the work of the Devil. The Devil loves to promote what is false and will stir up and stand behind men who serve themselves and their own lusts. These men will cause divisions and offenses which are contrary to sound teaching and doctrine. This is indeed enemy territory. The Apostle commends the church of Rome for their obedience to hold fast sound doctrine. Unity over sound doctrine brings peace amongst God’s people. It is peace reigning in the hearts of the united church which Satan would love to destroy, but he cannot, because of Christ’s power to establish it. Satan comes and tries to deceive with the smooth words and flattering speech of false teachers, but the God of peace who loves the peace and unity of His people will crush Satan under His people’s feet.

This word “crush” takes our minds back to the Garden of Eden, when Eve was deceived by the tempter’s subtlety and she ate the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. His reasoning was mixing a bit of truth with damning poisonous error, and God came to her with words of judgment and promise – “And I will put enmity between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise (or crush) your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” Here in the verses of Romans 16 we see the promise that the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet. In the Seed of the Woman, our Lord Jesus Christ, Satan’s head was crushed. All of his deceitful schemes to thwart God’s purpose, all his malignant hatred towards the image of God in man, had its death blow given to it at the cross. Christ’s victory over Satan at the cross brings peace to the heart of God’s people, not only when they encounter false doctrine, but even the face of persecution itself. “The God of all peace shall crush Satan under your feet.” Sometimes we feel alone and isolated in enemy territory, but Jesus comes to us saying: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives, do I give under you.” “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (John 14: 27) Christ has overcome the Evil One and so shall you in due time. This gives us peace, when we know that because of Jesus, the victory is

sure. This is the preparation of the gospel of peace, which we put on as shoes to guard us wherever we go.

And then 3rd – The reason that you must have these shoes on is so that they will give you peace, and convey this peace to others, as you take the peace of the gospel to the lost.

Turn with me to Matthew 10, verse 1. “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.” “Now the names of the twelve apostles are these.” (And then they are listed) Verse 5 – These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying : ‘Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.’ “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.” “Freely you have received, freely give.” “Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.” “Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.” “And when you go into a household, greet it.” “If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it.” “But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.” “And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.” Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!” In this spiritual battle which we fight we are soldiers and ambassadors. And it is evident that although there are no terms of peace which we can offer to the demons or to Satan, that there is with us a preparation of peace which goes with us wherever we go. We are people who have peace with God, and we bring the peace of God with us. We convey the peace of God in being always ready to share the gospel of peace. We are always ready to give an answer for the hope that is within us.

According to Luke Chapter 10, verses 5 and 6, the parallel passage, these apostles were to inquire who in the house was worthy, and to stay with them, when they entered into a city. They were first to say “peace to this house”, and then if a son of peace was there, their peace would rest upon the household. If there was not, their peace would return to them. This peace was a supernatural objective gift; it was the spiritual manifestation of God’s goodwill and offer of peace to men, which was offered when these ambassadors first came to stay at one of these certain houses. The “son of peace” was the person who desired to receive the words of eternal life. Those who preach the gospel, even today, are prepared to convey to you the peace of God through the words of the gospel which are spoken. If you will receive these words you will receive the peace of God through the words which are spoken. If then, that person will receive the peace with God that Christ Jesus has wrought upon the cross to purchase, they will come into the kingdom of God, and they will come to know all the benefits of the peace of God which were

purchased by Christ's sufferings and His death, and applied to them through His resurrection power. Christ has wrought this great salvation upon the cross so that you might come into the kingdom of God, and know all the benefits His peace; peace of conscience, peace of mind, and the peace of God which will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus. Let me ask you now as we close: Have you put on these shoes?