

Ephesians #04: Ephesians 6:15

Ephesians

By Dr. Joel Beeke

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Ephesians 6:15
Preached on: Monday, December 13, 2004

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
200 E. Main St
Taylors, SC 29687

Website: www.gpts.edu
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/gpts

Our text words this afternoon are Ephesians 6:15. Ephesians 6:15,

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

With God's help, we wish to consider with you the shod feet of the Christian soldier. First, shod preparedly; second, shod peaceably; third, shod suitably. The shod feet of the Christian soldier: shod with preparedness; shod with the gospel of peace; shod with suitability.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

We come this afternoon, dear congregation, to a third piece of Christian armor. The first, as you recall, was the girdle of truth, the second the breastplate of righteousness, and Paul takes those two and shod feet is the third, together in one sentence. He sees these three as essential with one another. He who has the girdle of truth needs the breastplate of righteousness, and he who has these two must have his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. So from head-to-toe Paul will teach us that every part of the Christian soldier's warfare and every part of his spiritual body, as it were, is engaged in this great battle with Satan.

Now it is quite possible that when we hear our text this afternoon that we may think to ourselves, "But certainly this is one of the more minor parts of the soldier's outfitting." We can understand very readily that the chest must be covered to protect the important organs of heart, lungs and liver, so we understand the need for a breastplate, we understand, too, that when the girdle does not gather in all and give freedom to do battle, the soldier will trip over his feet and will make no progress. But perhaps we think to ourselves to have shod feet is not quite as critical as the breastplate or the girdle, and yet Paul does not make a separation in these three. He does not tell us that the shod feet are of less importance, and why not do you think, my friends? Well, for a very good reason: you can't continue without having your feet rightly shod. You may have the best breastplate in the world, you may have all that you have girded about and put together

securely, but if your feet are injured or if you are not agile on your feet, if you are not quick-footed, the enemy shall gain hold, shall gain foothold on you and you shall slip and fall in battle. Yes, you could be outfitted from your ankle to your head and if your feet were not properly shod, the enemy will gain the victory.

So our feet are very important in this Christian battle. Our feet need to be properly and well-shod to stand against the wiles of the devil. You can't stand but on your feet. Paul's whole message in Ephesians 6 is that this whole armor may serve to the Christian believer so that he may stand. Three times he uses that word "to stand. Stand therefore." You can't stand on your breastplate. You can't stand on your girdle of truth. You can only stand on shod feet. So in one sense, feet becomes a very critical part of this whole armor. It depends very much on how our feet are shod, their safety and condition, their agility.

How we make progress in the Christian race, a good soldier needs proper footwear and, indeed, if you have served in the army at all, you would agree together with me that your drill sergeants and those in command over you have put no emphasis on any part of your army outfit as they have put on the boots you wear. There is a special emphasis in basic training and in army training, or whatever service of branch you serve, on foot gear, and so it was with the Roman soldiers of Paul's time whom he is picturing.

The Roman soldier in Paul's day wore a type of sturdy sandal. This sandal consisted mainly of a sole with straps, firm, wide straps holding onto the foot, and underneath thick studs. These shoes were thickly studded with sharp nails in order to maintain a very good foothold in battle. The sandals were built in quality fashion and built in such a way that the soldier who had them tightly strapped would not slip or slide. Now if you turn back to the annals of church history, we are told by historians that one important reason for the success of Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great was that their military shoes for their soldiers made it possible for them to cover long distances in short times, and to be firm-footed in the midst of battle. And what the apostle does is, he gleans on this rich picture and he says the Christian soldier to be expert in the art of warfare must have his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Now what does he mean by the word "preparation"? He means to say the Christian soldier must be shod with preparedness, with readiness. A soldier must be ready for battle at all times. Be always watchful and ready, Jesus has said, and to be ready means to be well-equipped, it means to have on the armor, it means to be able to stand firm. You can't be steadfast, you can't be firm, you can't have a good toe-hold, a good foothold without having shod feet, without getting the right footing. You don't have shoes on your feet, you are prone to slip or to slide, you are prone to be less secure and so the apostle says you must have your feet shod. If you really want to gain the victory of Satan, when you look him eye-to-eye, think not that you only need your head and your chest covered, but you need your feet to be agile, you need to be prepared, you need to be in a state of readiness and readiness means to have your foot gear firmly strapped; readiness means to be able to endure hardship, to stand on the firm studs of the gospel of peace. You must be prepared. Without such steadfastness, you will turn back sooner or later like Orpah, and remove yourself like Demas.

My dear friends, are you shod with preparedness? With readiness? Are your houses set in order? Are you ready for the Master to come? Are your feet on a good and solid and secure foundation? Are you ready to meet the Lord? And also are you ready, Paul is saying here more immediately, ready to meet Satan? Ready to do battle? Prepared with the firmness of the gospel of peace, prepared with the firm studs of the glorious gospel of grace to dig into the earth, to dig into the landscape of Satan's temptations, to be able to gain a good foothold against his devices? Are you in a state of readiness?

Oh, how many details we had, did we not, when we were in the army. How to have our boots shined to perfection. How to tie them. Every time in the morning when we would gather together, isn't that true, those of you who have served in the service, the drill sergeants would come back and look at your boots and each day you had to have on a different pair and you had to alternate them because your boots always had to be ready, they had to be in good condition, they had to be polished well, they had to be firm on your foot. You had to be in a foot position of readiness.

Now, why and with what is this preparedness really concerned? What really gives the Christian believer the preparedness he needs? What gives him the firm foothold in battle so that when the enemy comes, he may not give way? What gives him that security, that steadfastness? Well, Paul says there is only one thing: it is the gospel of peace. To be shod with preparedness can only be to be shod with the gospel of peace. The gospel of peace. Believe the gospel of peace. Experience. These are the sandals with studs underneath that enable you to put your foot down, child of God, to say with Martin Luther, "Here I stand." Why could Luther say that? As we have considered in weeks past, why was he so firm? Well, because his soul was resting, his feet were firmly entrenched in the glorious gospel of peace. And if there is one thing that the Christian church needs today, it is a firm foothold. It is well-tuned studs and nails on which to walk steadfastly with firmness, not being cast about with every wind of doctrine, not sliding and slipping down the slopes of humanism, materialism, and shallow Christendom. Today more than ever the Christian church needs a firm entrenching in the truth of God and the gospel of God both believed and experienced and lived.

We are not only to adorn ourselves with shodness of foot, but we need to walk, we need to move. When you are in the army, my friends, and you will have many training exercises of preparedness for battle, and you will have to use your boots. You can't just wear them and polish them once and think that they will last forever. You need to keep them in a state of readiness. You need to polish them again and again, and so the apostle says your feet must always be shod with the gospel of peace. If you are not grounded in the gospel of peace, my dear Ephesians believers, he would say, when Satan comes, you shall slip and you shall slide. You shall fall prey to his devices. Oh, if you are relying only on your own feelings, only on the internal realities that you've experienced in months and years past, you shall slide and slip in the day of satanic approach but only when your feet are grounded in the gospel of peace shall you persevere.

What do we see all around us today? Well, in much of Christendom today we see a state of unreadiness, a state of compromise with the truth, a state of short-selling the historic, infallible, inerrant word of God. Shallow Christendom preaches to us the dangers of being experientially and objectively unshod. Today there are many people trying to be Christians who hardly know what the Bible says and hardly have a grasp of the outward truth of what the gospel means. And also, my friends, today God's people, that's after all to whom Paul is writing here, he is writing to the Christian believer, are often too too careless about their foot gear. Too often God's people are living for the moment, they are living for a temporary comfort or a temporary sweetness that the Lord may communicate to them, but they are not as concerned as they ought to be that their feet are well-established in the gospel on a good and sure foundation. An old godly man used to often say to me, "Comforts are sweeter than instructions but instructions are better than comforts." And why, my friends? Because it is the instruction, the spiritual instruction of the Holy Spirit that removes God's people from this slippery sliding slope of their temporary feelings and serves to bind them more fully in the gospel of peace, serves to strip them down more richly of all their own righteousness and to have them more firmly entrenched in the only way of peace, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gospel of peace. That's where we must be grounded. That's how our feet must be shod. We must be shod with the gospel of the living God, and if we are not so shod, oh, when Satan comes with his fiery attacks, when he comes to undermine us with temptation or with trial, when he comes with all the bulwarks of his devices to attack the bulwark of salvation, if we do not have a foundation beneath our bulwarks, we shall topple in the day of battle. My dear friends, if our feet are shod only with our own temporary feelings, we will run out of energy, we will run out of agility, we will run out of all that we need, we will run out of power when we are confronted with the source of satanic power. But only when our feet are shod with the gospel of peace, when we have the power of peace on a good foundation, on a Christ-purchased foundation, on a Father-decreed foundation, on a Spirit-wrought foundation, only then shall we have the power of God to persevere through the duration of satanic temptation, through the duration of hellish powers seeking to afflict and tear down the child of God. Only, you see, when we operate in the strength of God himself, when we are moved by the very powers of God shall we have power to stand against the power of Satan.

The gospel of peace. That's how we must be shod and the gospel of peace, my friends, is what we have read to you in Isaiah 53. The gospel of peace, you know what it is. It is what Christ determined to do from all eternity. The gospel of peace, you know is what he came to do in time. The gospel of peace is that with which Jesus himself was shod in his feet all his life journey. It was only because he himself would be the gospel of peace that he could go through the 40 days of satanic attack in the wilderness and say again and again, "It is written. It is written." Satan said, "Just cast yourself down upon the rocks." But Jesus said, shod with the gospel of peace in which he himself is the sum and substance, "It is written, Satan, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Jesus was shod. He was shod for 33 years with the gospel of peace. He had a mission, a mission of eternal peace to accomplish. For 33 years he was shod. For 33 years he had

those glorious Christian soldier's footwear strapped tightly to his feet, the footwear of perfect obedience, the footwear of his own blood to shed abroad for his people, the footwear in which he would pay the price with his own death to deliver his children from all their deserved death and bring them into everlasting life. He was shod with the gospel of peace.

So he went to Gethsemane to Gabbatha, to Golgotha, always in mind, keeping in mind his mission of peace. Why did he not attack in Gethsemane? Why did he allow himself to be arrested? Why did he come out into the moonlight? Because he was shod with the mission of the gospel of peace. Why when he went to Gabbatha did he not answer a word? Why did the people marvel when they threw accusations at him, when they spit at him and rebuked him and mocked him and crowned him with thorns? Why does Pilate have to marvel and say, "Speaketh thou nothing?" Because he had a mission, the gospel of peace. And why when he carried his own cross to Golgotha, why when his flesh was torn as he was lifted on that cross did he utter no complaint? Why when the mockers and tempters said, "If thou be the Christ, come down from the cross and save thyself and us," why when he was challenged and set between murderers and thieves, why didn't he rend the powers of the heavens and call his angels down to consume his enemies? Why was he passive and submissive? Because he had a mission of the gospel of peace. Why did he suffer his body to be buried? Why did he endure hellish agonies and sufferings? Why did he endure so much that he cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death"? Because he had a mission of the gospel of peace. Why when he arose did he not go right back to his Father? Why did he stay on this earth for 40 days in the state of exaltation? Why did he deny himself for those 40 days the full unbosoming of the love of God in his eternal home of glorious bliss? Because he had a mission of the gospel of peace. He had to come and break the locked doors of his disciples and say, "Peace be unto you." Now why did he finally ascend with his church in his loins? His church which in herself has to say, "I am a black bride, unworthy of the least of the bridegroom's attention"? Why did he ascend with her and why did he present her through his own bloody satisfaction to the Father without spot or wrinkle? Why did he cherish her and present her in all his loveliness? Why did he transfer it all to them? Because he came on a mission of the gospel of peace.

You see, my friends, God and the believer, the elect believer are not by nature at peace. God and mankind are at holy war ever since our default in paradise and peace means to be brought together to be one. Peace means to have settlement, to have tranquility and calm and unity and oneness. Now we have undone all that in paradise and we have left paradise at holy war with God. We have left paradise not one with him but with the ragged edges of sin rubbing up against the holy countenance of God. We have left paradise with our lives tossed about and mixed up and angry with God. We have left paradise as sinners in obstinate war with the Almighty, and that's why Jesus came on this wonderful, glorious, incomprehensible mission of peace.

So therefore all God's chosen ones, the chastisement, we have read it to you from Isaiah 53, the chastisement of our peace was upon him. Do you know what that means? That means the price of our peace, the price of death, the price of perfect obedience to the law,

the price of the justice of God to make full satisfaction, that whole price was on Jesus. Jesus paid the whole price. Jesus bore all the wages. Jesus brought in peace and now, my friends, that Jesus who has ascended on a mission of peace is still praying for his people at the right hand of the Father. He is still remembering them moment by moment. Why? Because he is still shod with the gospel of peace. He is still this very day, this very hour in the courts of heaven on a mission of peace. And now from the courts of heaven this very day, he is still even in this very hour, he is still sending out his Godhead, his majesty, his grace and his Spirit to conquer obstinate sinners, to turn them from their evil ways, to make room for peace in their hearts, to show them their sinnership and their need for union with God. Why? Because he is on an eternal mission of peace.

So the very way Jesus' feet are shod, he sends his Spirit from heaven to shod his people with the very sufferings, with the very tribulations, with the very gospel, with the very exaltation with which he himself was shod, with the very price of peace which he has paid. And so, my friends, those shod feet come to be nothing less and nothing more than the full-orbed work of the Lord Jesus Christ in his humiliation and in his exaltation. Every step that Jesus has done from eternity to eternity we can write above it in capital letters A MISSION OF PEACE. And now, my friends, you and I must recognize that only in this great peace-meriting Savior and in this peace-keeping Savior, only in him and in his work can our feet be rightly shod. The studs, the nails of agility that can enable us to walk the landscape of this tempting, trying world, they can only be rightly placed when they are placed in the humiliation and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we can only stand in Christ. He who is the head of the church, as we heard this morning, is also the foot, the foundation of the church. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

The gospel of peace is nothing less than the holy peace that Jesus has earned through the holy war of his sufferings, and now he brings his people through holy war, holy war against self in which self has to be stripped and torn asunder, holy war to come to holy peace. Here again, you know, when you enter the army, everything is torn away from you. Your head is shaved. Your clothes are taken away. And the idea is that you have to have your former life ripped away, that you have to have even your very identity, as it were, ripped away and you are in the army now, you are told, you have to be a real soldier, you have to forget back home but to turn over and study new life. You are no longer your own. You belong to the army. That's what you're told.

Well, in a spiritual way that's what happens. The Holy Spirit works, he strips the sinner down that itself may glory. He strips him down of all his righteousness. He strips him down of the foot gear he has worn all his life. He strips him down of his very identity and he makes him see that he is naked and he has really nothing to wear on his feet, he has no strength to approach the archenemy. Oh, he teaches him his weakness and his frailty and he teaches him the might and the power of Satan, and you see, in that way he teaches the sinner his great need for one who is stronger than he.

Just imagine, child of God, if at the beginning of the way of your spiritual pilgrimage you had been able to muster strength against Satan in your own strength; if you in your own

barefooted sinfulness could have gone out and gained the victory over Satan, you would have become very Christian in your own eyes and you would have become very converted in your own eyes, you would have become something in your own eyes, but now through that stripping, that stumbling, that exposing work of the Holy Spirit whereby you see that you are barefoot, whereby you see you have nothing to offer God, you have no shoes to wear, you have no studs that can stand in the day of battle, you have no foot gear that can hold footage when Satan attacks, when the Lord shows you that you stumble over a very straw that is placed in your path, we have the beginning of the way you thought you would go from strength to strength but now you see you go from weakness to weakness. Why does he do that, my friends? To show you that you need the foot gear of the holy gospel strength of Jesus Christ. He strips down himself to build up. He who breaks down, he tears to heal. We lose our strength of self to gain our strength in Christ, you see.

Now that takes a great strength of God to strip his people down to nothing to make room for the strength of Christ and that's why Isaiah tells us that he strengthens those who have no strength. He first made them strength-less to strengthen them in the inner man with the glorious gospel of peace of the Lord Jesus Christ. My dear friends, may I ask you in a very concrete way do you know both things of what I'm talking about right now? Have you experienced with tears and with sorrow your own weakness? Have you stood amazed at the lack of foothold in your life? And when you have read things in the Bible, for example like Reuben who was as unstable as water, have you said, "O Lord, that is me, unstable as water. Weak and wounded, I implore thee." No foothold. All my righteousness, oh, has it had to go overboard, my friend? Have you been a Jonah cast overboard? But have you also experienced when you have been cast overboard, when you have had to surrender unconditionally to God and expected to perish, that then, oh wonder of wonders, then the sea has ceased from her raging? And then there was a calm and a peace and a fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ as your eyes have been opened to the Holy Spirit's revelation that in Christ all the peace that you have ever sought is accomplished? That Christ has said, "It is finished," and he has said that with the approval of the Triune God, the Father who has decreed it, the Son who has merited, and the Spirit who applies it to your heart? Has he filled you when you have surrendered to him? Has he filled you with a holy peace as you have laid down the weapons of your warfare and all your futility? Has he clothed you, has he outfitted you also with the foot gear, the blood and peace merited by the Lord Jesus Christ?

I told you before but it's suitable, I think, to tell you again that when Ulysses S. Grant was fighting a war, the enemy he was defeating sent a messenger to him and said, "On what conditions, Mr. Grant, will you receive us if we surrender to you?" And Ulysses Grant sent back a very famous message for which he is well-known to this very day, a message of only three words, "On unconditional conditions." You must surrender fully just as you are.

Oh, my dear friend, spiritually that is the very best way and it's the very best time in the life of a child of God, the life of a lost sinner where he may surrender to God with unconditional conditions. Where he may just lay naked at his feet and say, "Lord, I have

no foot gear. I have no strength. All I have here is a mass confusion of sin and guilt and condemnableness and hell-worthiness. Lord, here I am. I can be no soldier. I have no strength. I've engaged in holy war so long and now I must say take me out of the battle for I am sore wounded. Satan is mightier than I. Lord, I surrender to thee." Do you know that, my friend?

Oh, then that holy peace. Ulysses Grant didn't destroy his prisoners but he clothed them and they joined his forces, and my dear friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, oh, when he hears that a sinner surrenders and he gives them surrendering grace, everything is always of grace, of course, but when he hears the music of a surrendering sinner, it is sweet gospel music to his ear, and he reaches down and he picks up the sinner and he holds them close to his bosom and he shows him the whole Christian armor and he outfits him piece by piece and he puts on his feet too the gospel of peace. When we by grace may surrender, we may experience through surrender life's victory. The gospel is a way of paradoxes, my friends. Through surrender comes victory. Through death comes life. Through concession of hell-worthiness comes an open heaven. Through poverty of spirit comes the riches of God's grace.

And therefore I ask you: do you know this holy emptying and surrendering, but also do you know the sweet small voice of gospel peace filling your heart? Are you experientially acquainted with seeing outside of yourselves the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, my friend, do you see that all peace is in him. He is the King of peace. He is the Prince of peace. He is the God of peace. He is the Spirit of peace. Every one of the three divine persons is called peace. The Father is called God of peace in Hebrews 13. The Son Prince of peace in Isaiah 9. The Spirit, the Spirit of peace in Ephesians 4. That's the beauty of God's work. He wages a one-sided warfare. He wins a sinner out of one-sided grace back to himself and he makes upon his own terms the conditions of peace, and those conditions have all been met by the Lord himself and, my dear friend, that is exactly the heartbeat of the gospel. You think that you have to meet his conditions and so you go about to tidy up your soldiery and your outfitting and try to make your own shoes but you don't realize, do you, that he has made the shoes already and he has made every piece of the Christian armor. It is finished. Christ has done it all.

Christ has done it all and therefore we don't believe, as some have believed in conditions from the human side of the covenant of grace. We believe in conditions but we believe that all those conditions have been met by God, in God, through Christ. There is not one condition the electioner must meet because salvation is a salvation of free, really free grace, unconditional sovereign grace. And I ask you this afternoon: have you experienced that in your heart? And have you been so stripped of yourself that there came a time in your life where you were really glad that salvation was unconditional? If you ever want to know have I ever been totally stripped, have I ever been fully naked before God, have I ever lost my own righteousness completely, I would answer you by asking you this question: have you fallen in love with the unconditional nature of the gospel of peace? Only a sinner who is stripped of all his righteousness comes to love unconditional grace because, my friends, if we're not totally stripped, oh, then we want to bring in our own conditions and we want to please God, and we want to do something from our own

strength. Afterwards we want to please God too but then not out of merit, out of gratitude. And afterwards too we will want to serve the Lord but then not of merit, out of gratitude because we recognize that Christ has met all the conditions of peace, Christ has paid the price of peace, Christ remains the Prince and the holder of peace at the right hand of the Father, and one day in everlasting glory, true believers shall throw their crowns to this great Prince of peace and he shall be the peace of heaven forever and ever.

So Paul writes to the Ephesians in chapter 2, verse 14, "Christ is our peace." Is he yours, my friend? Are you shod with the gospel of peace?

Let's sing first before our last thought Psalter 126, stanzas 4 and 5. "Oh, come behold what wondrous works Jehovah's hand has wrought. Come see what desolation great, he on the earth has brought." And what follows. 126, 4 and 5.

"O come, behold what wondrous works
Jehovah's hand has wrought;
Come, see what desolation great
He on the earth has brought.
To utmost ends of all the earth
He causes war to cease;
The weapons of the strong destroyed,
He makes abiding peace.

Be still and know that I am God,
O'er all exalted high;
The subject nations of the earth
My Name shall magnify.
The Lord of Hosts is on our side,
Our safety to secure;
The God of Jacob is for us
A refuge strong and sure."

To be a good soldier, you have to know who you are fighting for. You have to know who the General is. You must have confidence in him. But having all these things, he must also outfit you properly. And now the true Christian soldier is one who is stripped of himself and learns, and would to God it would be more consistently and more consciously learns to live out of the fullness, out of the generalship, out of the confidence he has in the Lord Jesus Christ. And only, you see, when he is justified by faith, Paul says, do we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace with God. Oh, my friends, that means that everything is taken out of the way and the believer feels in his heart peace with God, a oneness with God, a uniting with God. And why? Only because of what Jesus has done. He sees what Christ has done. He sees that Christ has done that for just the kind of sinner he is, and oh, especially if he may be more advanced in grace and the Lord may seal home in justification and the court of his own conscience this great benefit to his soul and the Father himself may speak it and be sealed by the Spirit for Christ's sake that he is justified by faith and has peace with God through the Lord Jesus

Christ. But to whatever degree the believer is led, you see, he needs to know more and more of this gospel of peace and the Holy Spirit will more and more strip him down of all that does not speak of God in Christ, because all that that is not God in Christ leads to confusion and not to peace. But God gives, what God does, what God is leads ultimately to peace, to a wonderful peace.

My dear friends, if we are at peace with God having surrendered by grace to him and seen that he is peace decreer, peace meriter, peace keeper, we may be at peace with one another, we may be at peace with the very animals in the field, with the very nature that surrounds us. We may feel a whole-orbed peace that passes all understanding. Oh, there is nothing, nothing in this world to be compared to the serene joy of being at peace with God. Peace especially because we see through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ our sins drowned and washed away in the force and power of the stream of his blood. To have peace with God means to feel that though the mighty stream of our transgressions prevails from day to day against our will in us, that the mightier stream of the bloody righteousness of Jesus Christ prevails from eternity to eternity. To have peace with God means to feel and believe and experience that his righteousness is greater than my unrighteousness. His holiness greater than my sinfulness. His Savior-hood greater than my sinnership. His Lordship greater than my backsliding. Peace with God.

When we have this, my friends, we are shod most suitably and everything about the foot gear of the gospel of peace is absolutely perfect. A good pair of shoes needs to be made of excellent material. You can't find any better material than the gospel of peace. Sometimes you can buy something in the world which has a lifetime guarantee because it's indestructible, it's claimed. Well, my friends, the gospel of peace through the blood of Christ is foot gear that shall never wear out, that Satan shall never chip away at, and is indestructible. It is more than a lifetime guarantee, it has an eternal guarantee sealed with the Father's approval from eternity and sealed with the fullness of the glory of Triune God one day through all eternity. From eternity to eternity, this foot gear is most suitable because it is indestructible. Its material is perfect.

Secondly, this foot gear is most suitable because it is a perfect fit. How many times you have gone out to get a pair of shoes and came home and you could only wear them a few hours because they pinched you somewhere or they hurt you somewhere, perhaps there were even times you took them back to the store for exchange because they weren't the right fit, but then you've seen other things that are offered for sale sometimes where the advertisement is one size fits all, and it's some kind of elasticity to it. It can fit all. The Lord Jesus Christ's gospel of peace, my friends, fits every sinner who by grace comes to him. The smallest child, the oldest hardened sinner, young and old, poor and rich, educated and uneducated, of all classes, of all tribes, of all nations, all who come to the Savior by grace, the gospel of peace is a perfect fit. They like Mephibosheth who are lame on both your feet, the gospel of peace shall fit you.

The gospel of peace always fits perfectly and, you see, that's the amazing thing. When a lost sinner has his heart opened to the gospel of peace, one of the most amazing things is the word's suitability. The very word of our third point, that word just fills his heart. He

always says, "Lord, in my wildest imaginations if I were to spend years and years trying to carve out the most perfect Savior that my soul needed, I could never have come up with this Savior of the most suitable dimensions, of the most perfect size, of the most perfect shape, with the most perfect qualifications and the most perfect satisfaction as thou art. Thou art a perfect fit. Thou art a perfect Savior. Then to believe that thou hast done all these things not for righteous people or for people who are good with their religious works, but for publicans and sinners, for people who are nothing but hellishness in themselves. Oh, God, what a perfect fit. What a suitable Savior Jesus Christ is." Did you ever feel that?

Then, thirdly, to be shod with the gospel of peace is most suitable not only because of its excellent material and its perfect fit, but also because it gives a firm foothold for all the battles of sanctification to come. That's what we have been stressing at the beginning this afternoon but, my friends, to the very end of the life of God's people there is a firm foothold in Jesus Christ that gives them courage to go on. You know, there are times and places in the lives of God's people where they could consciously say, especially when they are led a bit further in grace, when they could consciously say, "Lord, if it were not for an open eye of faith to behold the Lord Jesus Christ, I could not go on. And were it not for an inner sense of trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, I could not go on. My life is hid with Christ in God. Apart from Christ, my feet would slip. Apart from Christ and his humiliation to merit my salvation but also apart from Christ in his exaltation to keep my salvation, my feet would slip. But only in Christ can I go on. Only in Christ can the nails of my feet pierce the earth and go forward. Only in Christ. Do we not slip and slide down this world's mountains into the valley of sin and destruction? Only in Christ who had his head crowned with thorns to merit the nails of my shoes. Only in Christ who had his arms and hands and feet pierced with nails can I walk with studded shoes in his strength. I will go forth in the strength of the Lord God." A firm foothold in Christ. I hope you know something of it.

Then again, the church is shod with suitability with the foothold of the gospel of peace because only the gospel of peace can give an effectual preservative. The shoes of the true soldier must endure. They mustn't only give a firm foothold, they must endure for he must march on a daily basis, he must march on and on, how long he knows not. So dear child of God, is it not true that you can say, "Only when my heart is fixed on thee do I go on in peace." Or as the Psalmist said, "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." Oh, when the child of God's mind is stayed, it's fixed, it's focused on Christ, then he can climb, he can run, he can fight, he can do all the things he needs to do, he can bear every burden that the God of peace shall put upon him always knowing that there is an end because Christ has finished the work, knowing there is an end, knowing that one day he shall say, "I have fought a good fight and finished the course. Henceforth there is laid away for me a crown of righteousness in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Oh, child of God, the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. What a wonderful word "shortly." Oh, Scripture compares the whole life, the whole marching life of God's people to but a ten day battle and that's all it is, my friends, compared to eternity to come but a ten day battle. Keep courage, child of God, you are shod most

suitably. Don't look for a new pair of shoes. Just look to wear them better, to strap them tighter and to know them more fully and appreciate their fit, and appreciate their perfection, appreciate their perseverance, appreciate their firmness, appreciate the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, what can we learn from all these things? We can learn in conclusion, my friends, three things, I think. The first is this: that true believers are intended to be active. Active. There are times when they are brought into the dream pastures of God's word to rest but most of the time they are called to do Christian soldiery and their feet need to be shod for holy activity. And many times God's people backslide as they grow cold and listless and grow inactive, inactive in personal devotions, inactive in reading those things that can make us wise to salvation, inactive in helping my neighbor and in speaking to him of the things essential to live in comfort and die in peace, inactive in showing love to my neighbor, inactive in the inner closet of prayer. Oh, that our feet are sloppily shod and at best our shoestrings are loosely tied. The shoe itself may be good but it may not be firmly clasped and rightly tied. My friend, one of our forefathers once said you must ask yourself not only whether you have a wedding garment but whether it be well-kept and clean. So I may say of shoes. I ask you this afternoon not only if you have worn, if you have received a pair of shoes, dear child of God, if you are acquainted with the gospel of peace, but I ask you are you walking in those shoes? Are you climbing in those shoes? Are you running in those shoes? Are you fighting in those shoes? Are you living in those shoes? Are they firmly tied and clasped? Are you living by grace, by faith, actively in the sight of holy God?

Secondly, let us remind ourselves in closing what a great price Jesus had to pay to make these shoes of peace. The Son of God had to pour out his own life, he had to wage war on all the powers of hell. And oh, child of God, will you wear his shoes so lightly and so loosely and so listlessly when he has given his very life, when he has given his very life? Not so long ago I was in the home of a father in a different congregation and that father had given a car to his son but his son didn't keep it up. Dents and bruises came in that car. Oil changes weren't met on schedule and the father finally gave his son a warning and openly took back the car. He said, "You can't keep it. I take it back." My friends, God will never take himself back from his people but he warns us, walk in his ways, and one of the great motives the child of God has to walk in his ways is to consider again and again the price that Jesus had to pay to shod their feet with the gospel of peace. Oh, he is worthy, dear child of God, that we serve him day and night with soul, heart, mind and strength. Would to God that we would return more fully the gifts of God back to him.

And the third and great closing lesson we must learn is peace is still available. Peace is still available. When you go to a shoe store, you see many shoes. You may walk away with a pair or two but you leave many behind. My dear friends, God's grace is like a rich storehouse. Oh, there are many elect sinners to whom he must yet shod the gospel of peace to their feet. I hope and pray that many of you are among them. Seek grace to ask him to pray that you too may receive the surrendering grace you need to lose your own foot gear, to lose your own foundations under your feet, and to need the gospel grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ask him to draft you into his army. He is worthy to serve. He is

worthy to fight for. And ask him also to acquaint you with his glorious foot gear, the gospel of peace. He is the Captain with peacemaker, peace-keeper from eternity to eternity.

My dear friend, do you know him? Do you really know him? Then how shall you do on the great day of judgment if you stand with no foundation beneath your feet? With no foot gear to appear before God, you shall perish. You shall perish. You shall have no answer to God, no excuse for your perishing because there was a bounty of shoes that God delights to give to shod sinners' feet with. My friend, it is not God's fault, it is our fault. We try to be at peace with ourselves. We refuse to see we are at war with God. Well, may God teach you the warring nature but also may he teach you the peaceful nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

O great, great Prince of Peace, great mediator who will bring a holy God and an unholy sinner together through the gospel peace blood of Calvary. O Lord, shod many sinners' feet among us with the gospel of peace, with the Prince of Peace, with the King of Peace. Lord, make room for the Lord Jesus Christ in many hearts. Oh, we come Sabbath after Sabbath, Lord, and there are sinners sitting here for many years already and still must say, "My heart is barred shut and I have no room for the Prince of Peace." O God, break through the bars. Cut the iron bars asunder. Become too strong for them. Strip them down. Make them naked and empty and bring them lost and needy to thy feet and shod them at thy feet, upon their feet with the gospel of peace. Go with us further in this day. Perform wonders, Lord, among us. And bring us back this evening into thy house of prayer, we ask it by thy free sovereign grace alone. Amen.