

Ephesians 6:15-16 -The Church's Armor: Gospel and Faith

TSK, GreekLexicon, Poole, Gill, JFB, Robertson, Rienecker, Barnes, Calvin, Moule, Hendriksen, Gaebelein, Trapp, Henry, Clarke, Handfuls, INT
Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: You need the whole armor of God to **defend yourself from the attacks of your very dangerous enemy**. He will throw everything he has so he can destroy you. But the armor God has given to you is **also for offensive battles**. You need God's armor to fight and conquer the world for Jesus.

You will hear about 2 more pieces of the armor – the armor God has given you: The Gospel and faith.

Our headings are:

You fight with the Gospel

You fight with Faith

Our goals are: **That you will be thankful for, and use the armor the Lord has given you to fight to protect yourself and to conquer the world and bring the nations into Christ's kingdom.**

You fight with the Gospel

15 and **having shod your feet** with the preparation of the **gospel of peace**;
1. Christians were called to fight with the Gospel just as the Roman soldiers had to fight with shoes.

2. So how was the Gospel (the shoes) to be used?

a. Roman soldiers needed the right shoes – shoes that would allow them to walk on rough, wet, and sharp surfaces without injuring their feet! They had to travel great distances to conquer the world for Rome. They could be marching for days. Parts of their shoes were made of iron or brass. They had spikes or cleats for better grip.

You see, even if the soldiers had the strongest feet, if those feet were not properly covered, they would be less effective, even ineffective in their war. **So good shoes were necessary.**

b. Similarly, the Ephesian Christians needed to have the right shoes for their feet, feet that were going to take the Gospel and use it to fight Christ's enemies and bring them under his subjection.

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

They needed the strongest shoes – the Gospel of Jesus Christ- for that! **The Gospel was necessary.**

BTW, that was all this was teaching. It was not teaching that the Gospel is like iron and other such things! Simply: The Gospel was necessary.

3. So how important was this Gospel?

This Gospel brought spiritual, eternal peace to those who were warring with God!

This Gospel showed men the **holiness of God**, the **sinfulness of men**, and the **saving work of Jesus** Christ. This Gospel showed men how they could **receive that saving work of Jesus**, a work that brought peace between God and man!

Zacharias characterized the peace that would come from Jesus.

Luke 1:79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, **To guide our feet into the way of peace.**"

This Gospel even **brought peace to the mind**, giving it calmness!

And notice how Apostle Paul said that shoes were actually the "**preparation of the Gospel of peace.**" By saying "preparation" he was **referring to the foundation** – like you must prepare a foundation before you build a house.

4. Lessons:

a. How well do you know the Gospel of peace? Can you tell a stranger of Jesus Christ...why Jesus had to come into this world...what was his work on the cross...why he had to be born as a man...why had to be buried...and what is the result of his work? You should be able to do so. Learn to memorize some verses. Ask, if you need help.

b. The truth is, the Devil wants to destroy the souls of others, and when you share the Gospel with them and they believe, you are helping to liberate them from his stranglehold. Help set someone free by sharing the Gospel with him. Let the light of Jesus shine so that even though the sinner is trapped in darkness now, the Lord can deliver him.

c. Remember to start with the Gospel of peace with your children. The Devil will attack covenant children more than he will the children of his own children. (He has them. Why fight them?) Whereas, covenant children have God's blessings and the Devil can't stand that!

d. This Gospel has to be fresh in your mind. The more you realize your own precious salvation, the more you will fight to spread this live saving message. Be a child of the Word.

You fight with Faith

16 **above all**, taking the **shield of faith** with which you will be able to **quench all the fiery darts** of the wicked one.

1. The Ephesians Christians were called to fight with faith just as Roman soldiers fought with shields.

2. So how were the Ephesian Christians to use their shields of faith?

a. The Roman soldier had to carry a huge shield, so large it could be used to carry a soldier's body home if he died. "Shield" came from a word that originally meant "door,"

showing the size of it. The approximate size was 1.3m high by 0.85m wide. (He could join his shield with other soldiers and literally make a wall to absorb the arrows of the enemy. Sometimes the Roman soldiers would soak the leather in water that was at the front of their shields so they would snuff out fiery arrows shot at them.

b. The Ephesians Christians were challenged to take up a shield as well to fight the Devil. The difference was, their shield was faith. Now some scholars believe this “shield of faith” is referring to the object of their faith – so they would say their shield of faith was the Lord Jesus and he would protect them. That is cute and makes an interesting and true point. But this “shield of faith” does not refer to Christ.

This shield of faith is a true knowledge of who Christ is and firm assurance in what Jesus did for believers. The Christian had to be absolutely convinced what Christ was for him personally. That was his weapon.

3. Why did the Ephesian Christians need a shield?

The enemy was trying to kill them. This is why Apostle Paul used an allusion to the fiery darts of the enemies. As an act of war, enemies would shoot fiery arrows over the city walls on houses so they would burn. (Those arrows or darts were often dipped in a pitch-like substance -or other heavy combustible material- so they would continue to burn even while going through the air.) (Native Americans used similar strategy against the Europeans when they tried to settle in the USA. These were even used in fighting wooden ships.) Sometimes these arrows had the poison of snakes on them!

The Apostle Paul knew Christians’ enemies would shoot fiery arrows at them as they lived their Christian lives and as they worked to conquer the world for Jesus, just like the Roman soldiers would do...to conquer a city.

In fact, if you back up a minute you will notice the phrase “above all, taking the shield of faith.” “Above all” actually means that faith must be “over all” – covering the whole person – the head and the heart! You need to cover the whole body in order to be safe in your defense and offense.

4. The more they trusted in the Lord Jesus, the more they would be able to absorb those fiery darts and not be hurt!

So the evil schemes of the Devil to destroy Christians and to hinder non-believers from coming to Christ, were stopped by the strong faith of the Christian.

5. Lessons:

a. Demons will throw doubts, impatience, frustrations, and may even take away support from around you...and make you feel like your troubles will destroy you. Demons can’t do anything but wickedness. That is their nature! These things could affect your marriage, make you feel overwhelmed with your life, make you feel inadequate to raise your children, and make you think you are not worthy of God loving you.

b. When you feel this way, remember you are God's children through Jesus Christ, and ask God to strengthen your confidence in him. Ask him to let your faith wake up and strengthen you! You will then realize God's love for you and God's power over you and you won't panic. You will then be able to move forward in confidence, doing your daily calling.

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

More, you will then be ready to take that Gospel message and conquer the world for Jesus.

c. But prayer isn't the only thing! Keep reading, listening, and believing the Word of God.

Romans 10: 17 So then **faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

The Holy Spirit then works through that Word to strengthen your faith. Can you imagine how blessed you are compared to the Roman Catholics who had the Bible taken away from them for 1000 years? Use it!

d. When faith is strong, it quenches all the arrows the demons will throw at you as you live for Jesus and win the world for him. Look at this wonderful illustration in the life of father Abraham.

Romans 4: 18 who, contrary to hope, **in hope believed**, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 **And not being weak in faith**, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. **20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief**, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

e. Let me touch on a few more fiery arrows the Devil may throw at you? Every attempt a co-worker or a friend makes to make you take your eyes off of Jesus and doubt is an arrow! Every insult you receive from someone with whom you are sharing the Gospel with is an arrow! Every unfair treatment you've ever received is an arrow. Use your shield of faith to fight!

Conclusion

Christians must fight defensively and offensively with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, knowing that peace with an angry God could only come with the fact (the Gospel) that Jesus died for sinners. And Christians must fight with faith – faith in the Lord Jesus – and expressed in every area of their lives. Doing this would make victory certain! Your soul would be blessed and the sinner would be saved!

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Do you want to fight for your Lord? I hope your answer is “yes.” Your Lord Jesus lived and died for you and you must give him the glory by fighting for his cause.

2. Are you prepared to fight? Are you able to fight? You can only be prepared to fight and enabled to fight if you have true faith in Jesus. You must then use the Gospel he has given to you. The Gospel in your weapon! Wield it well! And pray for a reminder of God’s love!

3. How do you get motivated to keep fighting? Let his Word remind you of your Savior’s love! Nothing makes a man fight more than to fight for the one he loves!

Finally, if you are not a Christian, it means you don’t have the wonderful Gospel of peace in your heart. It also means that you are at war with God. It also means he will defeat you and send you to hell. But he offers that wonderful Gospel to you today, free of charge to you, and if you accept it, God will make peace with you.