

Putting on the Whole Armor of God—Gospel Peace and Faith

Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 6:15-16

September 10, 2023

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The world is searching for peace—peace within one’s soul, peace in families, and peace in nations. But a worldly peace will not bring a true lasting peace because the world’s idea of peace does not remove the true barrier to peace—namely, sin. The world’s peace buries and neglects the sin that brings enmity, hostility, hatred, division, and injustice. Therefore, the world will never find true peace by all of its efforts, treaties, legislation, and organizations (Isaiah 57:20-21).

True peace (biblical peace) can only be found in Him who is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), the Lord Jesus Christ. Only Jesus and His glorious gospel can remove the wall of sin that separates God from mankind and separates husbands and wives, parents and children, family members, friends, and brethren in Christ.

One of the greatest temptations and devices used by the devil to attack the child of God is to thwart our peace of mind in the midst of great trials and to rob us of peace with one another. We are so much more vulnerable to the temptations of the devil to be angry and bitter, to lust, steal, lie, and to fall away from Christ as our first love when we have no peace of mind or are at conflict with one another. A lack of peace leads us into a multitude of other temptations.

Let us consider today, the next two pieces of the whole armor of God that Jesus has already purchased for us and that we must take up and put on daily in order to defend ourselves against the attacks of the devil: (1) The Boots of Gospel Peace; (2) The Shield of Faith.

I. The Boots of Gospel Peace (Ephesians 6:15).

A. In the ancient world, the Roman troops considered their footwear to be very important. Let me illustrate it this way. If in a football game it would be detrimental to wear flip-flops while everyone else was wearing shoes with cleats, how much more necessary for a Roman soldier in face-to-face mortal combat to wear boots that made him ready to fight the enemy and prevented him from slipping and sliding in battle. The boots of Roman soldiers were made of thick leather having metal greaves that covered the shins and extended down to the top of the feet. These boots provided protection against arrows, spears, and unstable ground. Josephus states that Roman soldiers also drove small studs through the heel of their boots to act like cleats in keeping them from slipping and sliding in the midst of battle.

B. To what are the Roman soldier’s boots likened by Paul? Paul says our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Let’s break this down into several observations.

1. Paul speaking on behalf of Christ commands us to put each piece of this armor on—Jesus has secured it for us by His death and resurrection, but it is our duty to put on the whole armor of God by faith. If we fail to put on one of these pieces of armor, it is our neglect, our forgetfulness, our fault, our sin (Ephesians 6:11,13). Armor that we don’t put on will not help us in the battle. May we take ever so seriously our Captain’s command through Paul.

2. When Paul says that we are to shod our feet with “the preparation” of the gospel of peace, let us understand that like boots that are prepared/ready for battle so we are to be prepared/ready for battle daily (when we go to work or school, but even when we are all alone or with our family or with our brethren). These boots of gospel peace are to be worn at all times. The enemy delights to ambush us even when we are least expecting that temptation, so ever keep on your boots of gospel peace—eat in them, work in them, sleep in them, fellowship in them, worship in them because we must always be prepared/ready for Satan’s temptations.

3. What is “the gospel of peace”? It is the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ that brings

peace between us and God, peace within our own hearts, and peace with others. It is through Christ's shed blood on the cross that God has brought peace into this world (Colossians 1:20). It is not through political reform, legislation, the United Nations, or any other organization/ treaty that true peace comes unto us, but through Jesus suffering in the place of guilty sinners (who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world) and Jesus receiving the punishment we deserved. If sin is the enemy to peace (which it is), then sin must be removed in order to bring peace. The God of peace did so in the gospel.

4. Let us be clear that we understand what biblical peace is. True peace is not a mere temporary cessation of conflict in which we only maintain some outward semblance of civility while despising that person within our hearts (that's spiritual murder according to Jesus in Matthew 5:22). Cessation of outward conflict is better than outright hostilities in our marriages and in other relationships, but Biblical peace means reconciliation—the wall of sin that separates us and God and separates us from one another is removed so that there is a blessed communion in enjoying the company of one another. Only the glorious gospel of Jesus can bring true peace because only the gospel removes the cause of enmity—namely, sin which God defines as the transgression of His Law (1 John 3:4). Only the gospel of Christ brings true peace in the following two ways: (1) **Peace with God**; and (2) the **Peace of God**.

a. **The Gospel Peace with God (Romans 5:1).**

(1) This is the very foundation of all peace. God (as Judge) no longer condemns us who are in Christ because Jesus has borne all of the guilt and punishment for our sin upon the cross (Romans 8: 33-34). God is now our reconciled Father and no longer our condemning Judge. This is an objective peace—a peace outside ourselves—a peace God declares because we are united to Christ by faith.

(2) The unbearable weight and burden of guilt has been removed out of the way. The wall of sin that separated us from an absolutely holy God is torn down in Christ, and we are imputed the perfect righteousness of Christ and declared by God our Judge to be now and forever righteous in His sight. God then steps from behind His bench as Judge and throws His arms around us and adopts us into His forever family through faith in Christ. Peace and loving communion with the God of the universe are now ours. This is the gospel of **peace with God**. There is no true peace within or with others without **peace with God**.

b. **The Gospel Peace of God (Philippians 4:6-7).**

(1) This **peace of God** flows like a gentle stream from the fountain of **peace with God**. This is a subjective peace within us and with our relationships with others that Jesus also purchased for us as a part of our inheritance. The **peace of God** guards our conscience against the accusations of the devil and guards our minds against the temptation to worry, fear, and panic when our world seems like it has been turned upside down, or when afflictions assail us, or when we are confused and don't know what path to take—the **peace of God** brings a calm within us which allows us to wisely reason how we should rightly respond to people and to circumstances that confront us.

(2) Rather than reacting in a fit of anger or in panic, God's peace guards our minds knowing that our God of peace is in control of all that comes into our lives, and our God of peace loves us with an everlasting love that can neither increase nor decrease, for He loves us in Christ. This **peace of God** compels us to strive as much as we are able to live at peace with others (Romans 12:18). This **peace of God** compels us to ever work at restoring relationships in our family and among brethren by being easily entreated and by approaching one another in such a way that others know we love them (Matthew 5:9). We are not to look for fights/arguments/debates, but at the same time we are to be ready with the boots of gospel peace to bring true peace and reconciliation with others by means of God's truth and Christ's love.

(3) We are always in a vulnerable place to be tempted by the enemy when we are running around in fear, or in confusion, or in anger. What we must learn to do is to stop and put on the boots of gospel peace by faith—to flee to Christ, to seek His forgiveness and mercy when we fall into temptation/sin, and to remember that God in heaven is not in fear, confusion, or out of control even when we feel that way. Let us arise by faith to those heavenly places and breathe in the peace of God in which He dwells (Isaiah 26:3-4). I dare say that the unspeakable joy of heaven comes from the perfect peace we will

have because all temptation/sin will be forever destroyed.

II. The Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16).

A. The Greek word for shield (*thureos*) is a derivative of the Greek word for a door (*thura*). This shield does not refer to a smaller shield held in one hand while wielding the sword or spear in the other hand. This shield was a large oblong shield which would protect the whole body (it was about 4 feet in height and 2 ½ feet in breadth). In Roman warfare this shield was placed in front of a soldier to protect the whole body from arrows or spears or placed overhead when a barrage of fiery arrows were shot by the enemy.

B. The shield of faith does not so much refer to the body of biblical truth (as in “the faith which was once delivered to the saints” in Jude 3—that has already been covered in the belt of truth), but rather seems to refer to the act of faith in trusting Christ when the enemy assails us (Proverbs 3:5-6).

1. This faith is taking God at His Word (Psalm 118:8-9). It is trusting in God and His truth even when family, friends, co-workers, and governments stand against us. This faith says that God’s truth in Scripture is more reliable than all the “wise men” and “experts” of this world. This faith does not following the multitude or even our own feelings, but relies on, “Thus saith the Lord.”

2. God’s knowledge and understanding are infinite (Psalm 147:5). It is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2). He is ever faithful and always keeps His Word (Lamentations 3:22-23). Nothing or no one can stay His hand from helping us in whatever we face (Psalm 46:1-3,10-11). Therefore, He is worthy of our complete trust in all temptations, trials, afflictions, sorrows, and persecution that we face. His word and promises are forever settled firmly in heaven (Psalm 119:89). We doubt Him only because we do not know Him as we should. To know Him is to trust Him.

C. We can have the truth in the Bible and know what God has promised and even have the other pieces of armor mentioned by Paul, but unless we take the shield of faith with us daily and put the shield of faith in front of us and over us when the fiery arrows of the enemy come our way, our mere knowledge will not be effective in defending us against the attacks of the enemy. “Above all” means that faith is that means by which we put on all of the pieces of armor and stand. Faith puts on what Christ has purchased for us.

D. **Faith is not blind**—it sees clearly what God has said in His Word and clings to it even in the midst of the greatest storm. **Faith is not contrary to true reason**—it clings to a God who is supremely and absolutely reasonable. His reason makes our reason look foolish (Isaiah 55:8-9). His reason makes our reason possible (though we have perverted our reason by sin). It is God’s wisdom in us to trust such a glorious God. It is our foolishness to doubt and disbelieve Him.

E. When the devil assails us with various temptations, let us be quick to put up the shield of faith (to flee to Christ, to trust Him, to commit all our ways to Him) so as to extinguish all his fiery arrows. That is what the heroes of faith have always done and they have ever found God to be faithful (Hebrews 11—Abraham, Gideon, Shadrach, Daniel, Paul).

F. Let us as Christ’s soldiers daily put on the boots of gospel peace and take up the shield of faith by God’s grace that we may be able to stand against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

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