

Ephesians 6:15

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Date: 09 June 2019

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[0 : 00] Sit down and open up your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6. We're doing a series on spiritual warfare.

! We're going through Ephesians 6, looking at the armor of God. It's not really an expository series, it's looking at Ephesians 6 and trying to pan out and read scripture through that lens, if that makes sense.

So we're looking at the provision that God has made in this warfare against evil and against Satan and we come tonight to verse 15. I read from verse 14 where Paul says, As shoes for your feet. Having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. C.S. Lewis in his brilliant book, *Scrutate Letters*, which are really a series of letters from a senior devil to a junior devil.

He says in that book that humanity falls into two equal and opposite errors concerning the devil. And he says either you take him too seriously or you do not take him seriously enough.

[1 : 24] Well the Bible never underestimates Satan's power. But it reminds us if we are real Christians, if we are living a Christian life as we ought to be living it, we can withstand the devil.

And we can actually see him running from us. James tells us in his epistle, he says, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

There's two views that a Christian ought to want and come at more than anything else. We should want to see the back of the devil and God's face.

The devil's back and God's face. And James tells us how we can enjoy it. He says, resist the devil and he will flee from you. And then what comes next? Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

And so what we're trying to do on these Sunday evenings is to take up the whole armour of God to do that. To see the back of Satan and the face of God. We come to the third piece of equipment which is our footwear.

[2 : 31] What you've got on your feet is very important, isn't it? That's really important. I tell you, I'm going to climb a mountain tomorrow. So, you don't try and climb a mountain in posh shoes, in seat shoes or high heels.

If you do that, you'll slip and you'll slide all over the place. You won't make much headway and it'll be dangerous. You've got to have the right kind of footwear, haven't you? And if you're facing the devil, you've got to make sure that you've got your gospel boots on.

And so an introduction, and most of the sermon feels like an introduction. And there are two points coming later, but the introduction is a bit long. I want to remind you of the completeness of God's provision for us.

Something that's really wonderful as you go through this passage. The armour is God's complete provision for you and I against all the wiles or the schemes or the plans of the devil. That's what we're told in verse 13.

It's custom built for us by God. Each piece is forged by God for the devil's scheme. It's a complete covering and protection. Let me try and demonstrate that.

[3 : 36] So, in the Bible, the devil's given lots of different names and titles. One of the titles that Jesus says of him, Jesus calls him the father of lies. And John tells us that the devil is a liar from the beginning.

His very first attack. Do you remember that, children? He said, if you eat of the tree, you will not surely die. Do you remember that? How did he bring down humanity?

How did he bring down the human race? He began with a half-truth. He's a liar. So, it's really significant, isn't it? Can you see what the first piece of armour is? It's the belt of truth.

We need to kind of gather up ourselves. We need to frame our lives with the truth. So that we must never lose touch with reality. The devil tries to distort reality, doesn't he?

It's one of his favourite tricks. But if we're to stand against him, the first thing is to stand with the belt of truth. But the devil is not only a liar, is he?

[4 : 39] He's also a truth-teller. And he can tell the truth, can't he? As many of us know, to our cost. In fact, the devil can do as much harm with a home truth as he can with a half-lie.

The devil calls him, the Bible calls him an angel of light. He is, according to John in the book of Revelation, the accuser of the brethren. He accuses men and women and boys and girls who have trusted Christ.

He's always firing accusations at us. And the trouble is with the devil's accusation is more often they're true than not. They're not just slanderous, but they're true.

And that's why the apostle tells us in the second place that we are to put on the breastplate of righteousness. We see that in Romans 8. He's facing the accusations of the devil.

And he says there, doesn't he, he says in Romans chapter 8, he says, Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? He's facing the accusations of the devil.

[5 : 53] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is it to condemn? It's Christ Jesus is the one who died. More than that, was raised. Who's at the right hand of God.

And he's there interceding for us. What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Do you see what he's doing? Paul in Romans 8, he's under attack.

He's being accused. He's being condemned. And we all know what it's like to have those accusations from the evil one. They don't just come into our minds.

Sometimes they come from our own flesh and blood. Sometimes they come from friends and relatives. And we feel accused. And we feel condemned. And the Apostle Paul says, who is it that condemns God's elect?

God has justified us. God is the one who's put us right with himself. Who shall bring any charge against us? Who is there to condemn us? Christ has died. That's the breastplate of righteousness.

[6 : 50] Christ has died. And he's risen again. And he intercedes for us. And nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. So when the devil comes.

And he whispers in your ears. How awful you are. And how terrible you've been. And when he comes with his half-truths. And his home-truths. We put on the breastplate of righteousness.

And we remind ourselves and him. That in Christ there is no condemnation. That in Christ we have been made right with God.

But why do we need boots for our feet? Why do we need gospel boots? What is the apostle telling us? Well again I think the whole storyline of the Bible helps us.

It is because you and I. Are to trample on the head of that old serpent. The devil. That's another name isn't it? For the devil. He appears in the Garden of Eden.

[7 : 54] Do you remember? As a serpent. As a snake. And in the last book of the Bible. The apostle John refers to him. As that old serpent. That ancient serpent. The devil. And so do you remember the first announcement of the gospel?

What's the first announcement of the gospel? Some people like to have first editions of books. Well the first edition of the gospel is in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 15. And God comes right at the beginning.

And he preaches the gospel. And he preaches the gospel interestingly enough. To Satan. To the devil. And it's his death note. And he says to the devil. I'm going to put war. I'm going to put hatred. Between your seed. The devil's seed. And the seed of the woman. Eve. I'm going to put enmity. Between your seed. And the seed of the woman. And he says to Satan. This great promise. The seed of the woman.

Is going to crush your head. And you are going to bruise his heel. Apostle Paul. Because that's announcement up. At the end of the book of Romans.

[9 : 01] That thought. And the context is really interesting. He's talking about the problems. That these people are facing. As Christians in the church. And he's reminding them. That the Christian life is a battle and a war.

And they're fighting it. And so in Romans chapter 16 and verse 17. He says to the church in Rome. He says. I appeal to brothers and sisters. To watch out for those who create divisions. And create

obstacles.

Contrary to the doctrine. You can avoid them. I don't know how to do them. That's how Satan works. How does Satan work? He works through flesh and blood. More often than not. He does his work through people. Through personalities. And the apostle is reminding. His people of that. He says. For such persons do not serve. Our Lord Christ.

But their own appetites. Their bellies. And by smooth talk and flattery. They deceive the hearts. Of the naive. They're doing the devil's work. Fairly see. And then he says this.

[9 : 59] For your obedience is known to all. So that I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise. In what is good. And innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace. Will soon crush. Satan.

The devil. Under your feet. The grace of the Lord Jesus. Be with you all. The God of peace.

Will bruise Satan. Under your feet. Shortly. Do you see what he's doing? He's reminding. The Christians in Rome. And us tonight. That those of us. Who are in Christ. We share.

In the victory. Of the Lord Jesus. The victory of the Lord Jesus. Is ours. Because we are in him. We have placed our faith. And trust in him. And so we share. In the victory of Christ.

Over Satan. He's reminding him. In the gospel. Isn't it? And so the worst. That Satan can do. Is bruise. The heel of our saviour. That's what.

[10 : 56] The cross is. That's what you see. At Calvary. At Golgotha. It's the awfulness. Of the cross. That Satan. In his greatest hour. Is doing his worst.

And at the cross. Satan. Masses. All the forces. Of evil together. Against the son of God. At Calvary. And the worst.

That they can do. To the son of God. At Calvary. Is to bruise his heel. But with the bruised heel. Of his crucified humanity. The son of God.

Crushes. The head of the serpent. That's the gospel. That there. Upon the cross. In his humiliation. And in his shame. And in his weakness. And in his degradation. The mighty son of God. Breaks the power of the evil one. He destroys his power.

[11 : 52] And that is the gospel. What Paul says to these Romans. What I say to you. Is that you and I. Have got a share in this tonight. We are not only.

Co-heirs with Christ. We are co-conquerers. With Christ. And the fighting. Is no be it. The fighting. Is not over yet. But the victory. Is secure. And the God of peace.

Will bruise Satan. Under your feet. If you put your gospel shoes on. Now it's in that context. That we come to our text. And you might think. Oh we're getting to the points.

But no. There's still quite a bit more introduction. Alright. And there's a problem. With this text. And there's a few issues. In this section. That are not easy. To find out exactly.

What was in the apostles mind. And this is one of them. There's a certain ambiguity. About this statement. And it can mean more than one thing. It's readiness. There's more than one meaning. To what the apostle says.

[12 : 45] And sometimes. And when you come to a text like that. You think. Well the fault is in the translation. And so if you get back to the original. The Greek. It'll be much clearer. But not this time. And the difficulties.

In the word. And verse 15. In preparation. Or readiness. Look at verse 15. Again. Of Ephesians 6. And as shoes for your feet.

Having put on. The readiness. Given by the gospel of peace. And that can mean two different things. And so. Does Paul mean here. That the gospel of peace.

Makes us ready. And prepared. To stand against the devil. That if we're going to stand fast. And withstand. If we're going to be able to face the foe. Then we need the gospel of peace.

To make us ready. To give us firm footing. As it were. Against the devil's attacks. Is that what he's saying? Or is he saying. That we are to be ready.

[13 : 41] And prepared. As the Lord's people. To go out with the gospel of peace. And there's no way. That I can decide. Between these two. As I think.

That when you come to that point. You see that. God intends us. To take both meanings. Let me show you why I think that. Because both are possible. And both fit with the context. The first.

You remember the gospel of peace. It gives us firm footing. It equips us. And it makes us ready to stand. Against the evil one. Well if you take that meaning. That fits really well. The blessed.

Rest in righteousness. The belt of truth. How does a man get right with God? Well it's by. Believing. In the Lord Jesus Christ. And Paul says in. Romans 5. 1.

By being justified. By faith. We have peace with God. And we're able to stand. Against the devil. Because we have access.

[14:36] Into this grace. By which we stand. We're right with God. By faith. In the Lord Jesus. The whole thing. Fits very well together. The order. How do you get. Peace of conscience.

Well by being right with God. How do you. Get right with God. Well by believing. The word of truth. The gospel. So it fits well. Particularly other meaning. To be.

To be ready. To go out with. The gospel. We are. Aren't we. To be ready. To give an answer. To those who ask. For the reason. For the hope. That's with us.

Apostle Paul quotes. In Romans 10. Verse 15. Quotes the Old Testament. And he kind of.

Outbursts. As he exclaims. He's quoting Isaiah. And he says.

How beautiful. Are the feet. Of those who preach. The gospel of peace. But if that's what he means. Here. That we are to be ready.

[15:33] To go out. And preach the gospel. Of peace. How does that fit? In the context. Well it fits well. It fits well. Because you'll never be ready.

To share the gospel. With anyone. If you're not living honestly. And doing what is right. Before God and men. And you cannot do what is right. Unless you know. What is true. In any situation.

You can't do the right thing. In any situation. Until. First of all. You know what is true. In that situation. So here's the order. First the belt of truth. Second. In the breastplate. Of righteousness.

To know what is true.

The belt of truth. And to do what is right. The breastplate. Of righteousness. And then you'll write. In this week. In the gospel. And so I think. Both meanings work. And both are possible. And so I believe. That God actually intends us.

To take these meanings. In both ways. That you and I. Are to crush. The head. Of the old serpent. The devil. In both these ways. You and I. Are to stand on his neck.

[16:30] And we're to put on. The gospel shoes. So shoes. These Roman soldiers. Footwear. Gave them stability. And mobility. You think of a sandal.

Strapped around the ankle. Studs in the circle. Stability. So he wasn't sliding. And slipping all over the place. He was able to stand and fight. And at the same time.

Those boots. Gave him mobility. He's nimble enough. To run around. And to walk around. Stability. Which the gospel of peace. Gives you. Satan would love to knock you. Off your balance.

And he would love to see you. Panic and run. And there are times. Aren't there. When we get cold feet. In the Christian life. And in the warfare. And instead of being.

Ruled by peace. Our hearts are filled with panic. Haven't there been times. In your experience. Of that. And sometimes.

[17:25] You can't explain it. Can you. Sometimes. You know what it's like. That very often. A strange kind of panic. Grips you.

There's an awful. Restlessness. That you can't really explain. And it takes hold of you. And you feel like. Running away from it all. You ever felt like that? Then your feet are.

Ready to slide. Instead of standing. On your ground. You are slipping. And sliding. All over the place. You've lost your footing.

And your feet. Feels like. You're on the slippery slope. That leads to hell. You ever thought that?

You will have thought that. If you're a Christian. For your Calvinism.

For all sermons. You've heard. For all your understanding. Of doctrine. There will have been times. When you will have wondered. Like I have. Am I going to make shipwreck. Of my faith? There must have been times like that.

[18:27] When you thought. I'm on the slippery slope. When you felt. In the words of the psalmist. My feet are almost gone. And the reason. Why it's like that.

More often than not. Is. You've gone out. Without putting your boots up. And that is the reason. To stand. Against Satan. You need the right.

Kind of footwear on. You need verse 13. Your feet. Covered with the gospel. Of peace. And I want you to notice. There's a definite. Article there. Isn't there?

Is. The gospel. Of peace. And maybe tonight. The reason why. So many of us. Are slipping. And sliding. And panicking. And running.

Away in the fight. Is because. We don't really. Where we stand. We don't really know. Where we stand. In connection. With the gospel. I guess.

[19 : 22] It's very sad. One of the saddest things. About London. Is you keep meeting. Lots of people. That would call themselves. Christians. But they don't really. Have any convictions. They don't know.

What they believe. Or why. They believe. What they believe. I think. It can be about. From that famous. Quotation of Luther. We don't know.

Whether he said. Exactly these words. But he certainly said. Words very similar. That when Martin Luther. Faced. The might of the Pope. And the Emperor. And the whole world. As it were. And hundreds of years.

Of church history. Stood against him. And he says. Here I stand. I can. I can do no other. Because he knew. What he believed. They were trying.

To get him. To change his mind. Trying to get him. To modify his belief. A little bit. To compromise. The account. And he said. I can't do that. Because I've got. The gospel on my feet. Here I stand. I can do nothing else.

[20 : 19] And it's so depressing. Isn't it? I don't know. Whether you find it. Like this. That there are Christians. Real Christians. Who never ever take a stand. It's the gospel. The gospel of peace.

That he's talking about here. It's no wonder. Is it? That Satan has a heyday. In churches today. Because we're so wishy-washy. We don't know what we believe. About the gospel. But you notice. How he describes the gospel. He describes this gospel. He calls it. The gospel of peace. And none of his words are wasted. They're not there. Just by chance. To fill in space. He calls it. The gospel of peace. And you cannot stand.

Unless you know the peace of the gospel. You can't face the devil. You can't stand in this spiritual warfare. Unless you know the peace that the gospel brings.

And he's not speaking about the feeling of peace. You see. I'm not ruling that out. I'm not just talking about here. Peace in the heart. That's a good thing.

[21 : 17] But it's not exactly what he's talking about. Because the peace of the gospel. Is a fact. Before it's a feeling. And we need to be really clear about this.

What it means. To put on the gospel of peace. Is to understand. That that peace. Is a fact. Before it is a feeling. It is. With God.

An established relationship. Not an emotional temperature. And if you're going to face. The devil. With just your feelings. You will not stand.

Because your feelings. Like mine. Go up. And down. Don't they. Depending on what you need to do. But what you need to understand. Is that in the gospel. Is that Jesus Christ.

Has come. And he has made peace. He's destroyed. The greatest destructor. The devil. He's destroyed his power. And he's brought in.

[22 : 14] The reign of peace. Between God. And his people. And that is an established relationship. Regardless of how you feel about it. Hopefully you enjoy the feeling of peace. But regardless of your feelings.

It is a relationship. That has been brought in. In. And by the gospel. By the death of Christ. And to wear the gospel shoes. Is to understand that.

Is to know that it is well with your soul. We're going to sing. And this hymn. Of course. We're not going to sing it yet. But I'm getting excited. But there's a hymn.

Isn't it? This hymn. When peace like a river. Attends. All my way. When sorrows. Like sea billows roll. Whatever. My lot.

You've taught me to say. It is well. It is well. With my soul. And the man who wrote this hymn. Was a man called Horatius Stafford. And he wrote this hymn.

[23 : 11] In the aftermath. Of a disaster. A sea disaster. In which he lost his wife. And his four children. And so do you see what. Horatius Stafford is doing. Do you see how.

The devil could have got into. That situation. How the devil could have. Destroyed his faith. Do you see what. What Stafford is doing. He's putting on his gospel boots. The peace of God. And the gospel. Says to him. It is well.

With my soul. And I know it's well. With my soul. He could say. Not because I feel it. But because Jesus Christ. Has died on the cross. And so he can write.

Though Satan may buffet. Though trials may come. Let this calm assurance control. That Christ. Knows my need. And my helpless estate.

And has shared his own blood. For my soul. The devil is. He's no gentleman. And the devil doesn't. Kind of box by. Queensbury rules. The devil does not.

[24 : 10] Hold back. When people go through. Experiences like. Stafford went through. Losing his wife. And four children. The devil does not. Announce an armistice.

When you get over. This terrible tragedy. No. It's then. That the devil. Puts the boot in. That Spafford could say.

It was well with my soul. Is that where you stand? To wear the gospel boots. If I can put it like that. Is to understand. That it is well with your soul. Of course.

You know. Don't you. That the peace of the gospel. Has a horizontal dimension too. As well as a vertical way. That's the apostles argument. At the end of Ephesians 2.

He describes there. Wonderfully. How the Lord Jesus Christ. Has made peace. Between. Sinful men. Women. And boys and girls. And a holy God. Then he says. He is the peace.

[25 : 11] Between Jew. And Gentile. And that peace. Of the gospel. Is a peace. That is not only with God. But it is a peace. With one another. You are brought.

Into the family. Of God. Jesus says. In Luke 11. A kingdom. That is divided. Against itself. Will not stand. And that applies.

To his church. It applies. If I can put it like this. The army of God. That if there is fighting. And if there is prejudice. And if there is snobbery. And if there is grumbling.

And if there is anger. And if there is envy. And if there is jealousy. And bitterness. And if there is division. How on earth. Can we ever face Satan. And the apostle is saying.

Corporately. To us. There is this corporate element. In Ephesians 6. And in the apostles letters. It is very very strong. We overlook it often.

[26 : 09] But a lot of what we take as. Individual exhortation. Is actually corporate. He is talking to the church here. Put on the readiness. The preparedness. Of the gospel. Of Christ.

If you are going to go out. And face the enemy. He says. Well you need to be at peace. With one another. And that is what he is saying. In Colossians. Just flip over the page.

To Colossians. You have Ephesians. Philippians. And then Colossians chapter 3. And again. This image of getting dressed.

And Paul says. In Colossians 3. Verse 12. Put on then. As God's chosen ones. Holy. And beloved. Compassionate hearts. Kindness.

Humility. Meekness. And patience. Bearing with one another. And if one is a complaint against another. Forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you. So you also must forgive.

[27 : 05] And above all these. Put on love. Which binds everything together. In perfect harmony. And then he says. Listen he. Let the peace of Christ. Rule in your hearts. To which you indeed were called.

In one body. He's not saying. You have this wonderful. Feeling of peace. In your heart. That isn't what he's saying. He's saying.

You cannot conjure up. Feelings of peace. These are things. That are given to you. They're not under your control. What he's saying to these people. Is this. Let the peace of Christ. Rule in this congregation. That's what you're called to.

In one body. That is how we're meant to be. In the church. Let the peace of Christ. Be the umpire. Let it arbitrate. In all situations. Let the peace of Christ.

Regulate. The life of that congregation. How else can you face Satan? And so if we're going to stand. In the evil day. If we're going to stand. Against the enemy. We must be at peace.

[28 : 04] With God. We must be at peace. With one another. And there's a sense. Which we must be at peace. Within ourselves too. Isn't it? That's why I think.

In 1 Peter 5. That we're told. To resist the devil. And just before. That verse. He says. This. He says. Cast.

All your cares. Upon the Lord. For he cares for you. If you're distracted.

With your own heart. If you're preoccupied. With yourself. With your own problems. And with your own worries. If everything is a burden for you. But you're defeated. Before you begin to fight. The thing with soldiers. What good is a soldier.

With his mind at home. Distracted by 101 things. You can't concentrate on the fight. His mind is somewhere else. That's why the apostle says. In Philippians.

[28 : 59] He says. To be anxious. For nothing. Be anxious for nothing. It's an incredible thing. To say. Be anxious for nothing. But in everything.

By prayer and supplication. With thanksgiving. Let your requests. Be made known to God. And the peace of God. Which transcends. All understanding. With God. Your hearts and minds. In Christ Jesus. So if we're going to stand.

In the evil day. We've got to put on. The gospel boots. So you've got the issue of stability. And then finally. The issue of mobility. And I will be quick. The issue of mobility.

I've said already. I think you can take the apostle here. That we should be ready. To go out with the gospel of peace. Having your feet fitted. With the readiness of the gospel. And I think of that.

The context. That. The context is defending. And standing. And yet this armor. Is offensive too. Because attack.

[30 : 02] Is the best form of defense. And we know. Don't we. That it is the gospel. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. That wards off Satan. And it's our readiness.

To make the gospel known. That defeats him. The gospel is our weapon. Of defense. And of attack. And it's the only thing. That can help us face the enemy.

Nothing else will do it. The only thing. That you can use. To safeguard yourself. Against the devil. Is not incantations. It's not getting the priest around. It is the gospel. That will protect you.

That's what bruises his head. That's what breaks his power. And our readiness. To make the gospel known. And our readiness. To go out with it. Our readiness.

As a church. To spread it. Is our best defense. And our best protection. Against the evil one. And the reason.

[30 : 58] Why so many of us. Have so many difficulties. In our. Own personal lives. Is we're sitting targets. We've not got gospel boots on.

The early Christians. Never took their gospel boots off. They we sit around with. Cozy slippers on. We never grow up with the gospel. Certainly two churches. There's so many arguments.

And little niggles. And little divisions. And little grumblings. Why? It's because the church. Is not focused on going out. And we have our orders.

We have our marching. Our orders. Don't we? The church has been given. The great commission. We've been commissioned. In Christ's army. Particularly the leaders.

That go into all the world. And preach the gospel. To every living creature. For I am with you always. It's a long march to come out. And so Jesus doesn't say.

[31 : 56] Sit back. And wait for them to come to you. He doesn't say to the church. Put up a sign. Saying. Lost sheep. Welcome. 11 o'clock.

And 6 o'clock. He doesn't say. Wait for the world. To go into your service. He says. Go. Put on your gospel boots.

And go. With the gospel. To every living creature. And those orders. Have never been rescinded. By his church. And there's a song.

Isn't it? By Nancy Sinatra. She sang it. These boots. Were made for walking. And one of these days.

These boots. Are going to walk all over you. And I would say. We can sing that to the devil. Because the God of peace. Will shortly.

[32 : 55] Shortly. Will bruise Satan. Under your feet. Because these boots. Were made for walking. And one of these days. These boots. Are going to walk all over you.

The Bible says. Put on. The gospel shoes. For your feet. Having put on. The readiness. Given by the gospel.

Of peace. Let's sing. Let's sing. About him. Number. Number.