

Main Idea: When it comes to our spiritual armor, we have two vital responsibilities according to Ephesians 6:14-17. It’s vital that we know, and do.

I. It’s vital that we know.

- A. We have what we need.
 - 1. The armor is Christ.
 - 2. The armor is complete.
- B. We need what we have.
 - 1. We must appropriate all the armor.
 - 2. We must appropriate all the armor all the time.

II. It’s vital that we do (14-16).

- A. We must wear the belt of truth (14a).
 - 1. A person puts on the belt of truth when he affirms that Jesus is the truth.
 - 2. A person puts on the belt of truth when he resolves to walk in integrity.
- B. We must wear the breastplate of righteousness (14b).
 - 1. We need positional righteousness.
 - 2. We need practical righteousness.
- C. We must wear the gospel of peace boots (15).
 - 1. The gospel protects us.
 - 2. The gospel prepares us for action.

Make It Personal: Am I ready for battle?

We’re called to stand. We’re warned against falling. That’s what our current series is all about. Standing, not falling. Far too many are falling. “Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12).” What does it take to stand? The answer is given to us in Ephesians 6, as we’re learning in our current series, “*The Christian and the Armor of God.*”

To prepare for this week’s message, a story will help us, a true story about a man who didn’t see something he needed to see, that *we* need to see.

Scripture Reading: 2 Kings 6:8-23

This is a fitting prayer for us on this day. “Lord, open our eyes that we may see that those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” We need to have our eyes opened to these two realities. We need to see that we have an enemy, and we need to see that we have all that we need to overcome this enemy.

A few years ago I went to the friendly folks at Ace Hardware and asked, “What tool do I need to use to do this job?” Sherry and I had been doing a little remodeling project in our laundryroom. One of the tasks was to replace a cabinet and light fixture, which involved putting in a new box to attach the light fixture. I didn’t know, so I asked the salesman.

“Here’s what you need,” he said, and pointed me to a particular drywall knife. I bought it, took it home, and used it, thinking, if I hadn’t bought that tool what a challenge the job would have been.

^{**}Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

² For a previous look at this passage, see the series on “Living with a Warfare Mentality” at WBC in 2003, as well as “The Armor of God” in 2013.

If you don't have the right equipment, even a simple task can produce great frustration. That's true in the kitchen, for you cooks, and for you athletes, and mechanics, and in just about every phase of life.

When you have the right equipment for a task, it makes all the difference. Having what you need, and of course, knowing how to use what you have, produces confidence and satisfaction and the achieving of the task.

A simple principle, but so essential. It's one of the reasons not a few believers struggle in their Christian walk. They don't know what they have, or they've forgotten what they have, or they don't know how to use what they have.

That's what this series is all about, *the Christian and the Armor of God*. The truth is, we are at war and we have a vicious enemy, and yet we can fulfill the task that our Savior has given us, to make Him known to this world.

What makes that possible? The God who sent His Son to save us has given us in His Son the equipment we need to fulfill our mission. It's called the *armor of God*.

We learned about the nature of our spiritual battle last time, from Ephesians 6:10-13. We're not wrestling against a physical enemy, but a spiritual one. And so we need spiritual protection, which Paul calls the armor of God.

This week we're going to learn that when it comes to our spiritual armor, we have two responsibilities. According to Ephesians 6:14-17, it's vital that we *know*, and *do*.

I. It's vital that we know.

Specifically, we need to know two realities.

A. We have what we need. Verse 11 says, "Put on the *whole* armor of God." In the NIV, "Put on the *full* armor of God." Then verse 13, "Take up the *whole* armor of God." In the NIV, "Put on the *full* armor of God." Let those words sink in. Whole. Full. We have available to us the *whole*, the *full*, armor of God.

For what does a person need armor? You need armor if you are at war. And we are. We are in a battle. You and I are under attack. We have an enemy. A fierce, cunning, powerful enemy.

Can we survive? Oh, yes. How? Ephesians shows us how. Ephesians 6 is our warfare manual, but of course, it rests on the foundation of truth presented in Ephesians 1-5. Verse 10 begins, "Finally," which indicates what we're about to hear is the result of what's been said up to this point.

How we stand? We must be *in Christ*. That's the thrust of Ephesians 1. And how does a person move from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ? It's all by grace, "to the praise of His glorious grace," as Paul emphasizes in 1:6.

Next, we must be *in the church*. That's the thrust of Ephesians 2 & 3. We must not battle alone, but as part of the body of Christ. That's where the power of God is experienced, when we are *in Christ*, and *in the church*, as Paul emphasizes in Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

So we have what we need to stand in this battle. It's ours in Christ, and it's experienced collectively in the church. These resources lead to responsibilities, which Paul details for us in chapters 4-6. There are things we need to do, practical things, like

place ourselves in a position to be equipped by pastors for the work of the ministry (4:12), and put off old patterns of thinking and living and replace them with new patterns of thinking and living (4:17-5:21). We also need to honor Christ in the way we treat our wives and husbands (5:22-33), our parents and children (6:1-4), and even in the way we treat our masters if we are slaves, and our slaves if we happen to be masters (6:5-9).

The point is, we have what we need to live differently than we used to, than the rest of the world presently lives. We have it *in Christ* and *in the church*. And when we use what we have, it shows for all to see.

Then Paul says, “Finally.” He’s not done yet, and he’s not changing the subject. He’s going to pull together all he has said previously with a final charge and a powerful illustration. In Ephesians 6:10-13, he says that we must fulfill three responsibilities if we’re going to survive the attacks of the evil one.

We must *depend*, namely, depend on the Lord and on His power (10). We must *display*, that is, we must put on/display the armor of God as we face the attack of the devil (11-12). Finally, we must *defend* (13). Christ had already done the conquering work. Our objective now is to stand, in Christ, and to do it *together*.

I benefitted greatly from an observation by David Powlison, in his book *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles*. He says, “It’s important to remember that spiritual warfare is done together, as the body of Christ. The whole of Ephesians is about the body of Christ, and Paul is not suddenly switching focus in the section on the armor of God... We don’t want to envision a whole bunch of little individuals running around in armor. Instead, envision the body of Christ standing in battle together.”³

So what must we do (and do it *together*) if we are to stand when we are so prone to fall? We find the clear answer as we move into the next section, Ephesians 6:14-17. God has given us the necessary spiritual equipment, and those who stand are those who know that we have what we need, the *full* armor of God.

Just what is this armor? It’s actually quite simple, and the picture comes, not so much from a Roman soldier (as we’ve often heard), but from the Old Testament. Who wears armor in the Old Testament? God does. In the Old Testament (particularly in the Psalms and Isaiah) we see God Himself putting on armor. For instance, listen to David’s prayer in Psalm 35:1-3, “Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me! ² Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! ³ Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, ‘I am your salvation!’”

So God wears armor. The armor of God is *God’s* armor, and He puts it on when He defeats His enemies. But He does something else. He shares it with His people. In the New Testament, we see the Messiah wearing this armor. Look at Jesus, fitted for battle with truth, righteousness, and salvation, rescuing a people held captive by the enemy.

And then, God shares His armor with the people He gives to His Son, those who are in His Son. He gives His armor to *us*, and says in these marching orders, “Put on the whole armor of God.”

So this is God’s armor we’re called to wear. It’s what God Himself wears when He goes to battle. And it’s what God Himself shares with us, by His grace, in the person of His Son, Jesus the Christ. Simply put...

³ David Powlison, *Safe and Sound: Standing Firm in Spiritual Battles*, p. 21.

1. *The armor is Christ.* In a moment we'll begin to look at the six pieces of armor one by one: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and so on. As we'll see these six virtues belong to Christ. To put on the armor is to put on Christ. Paul uses a clothing analogy to communicate the same truth in Romans 13:14, "Rather, *clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ*, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

So this is highly personal. The weapons God has given to us are not merely moral qualities, but divine realities.⁴ Let me illustrate it this way. When an athlete is getting ready to perform, he or she often prepares for the competition by mentally going through a checklist. *When this happens, I'll do this. When that happens, I'll do that.* Putting on the armor of God is like that, but *not* like that. It's more than that, more personal. Putting on the armor of God is not simply saying to yourself, "Okay, I'm going to be truthful today. I'm going to be righteous, no matter what," as if it's all up to you to be truthful and righteous. It's not. Putting on the armor of God means I affirm that I am *in the person of Christ*, and therefore, I now *resolve to be like Christ* as I live this day, by depending on Him (or to use John's language, by abiding in Him).

So this means, my friend, if you don't know Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are fair game for the enemy. In fact, you're presently his prisoner. You need Christ to set you free, and this will happen if you will, enabled by sovereign grace, repent and put your total trust in Him. Why not today? By the authority of the Commander in Chief, I extend to you an invitation to enlist in the army of God.

And if you have, if you do know Christ as your Savior-King, you have all you need for the battle, for the armor is Christ Himself. What's more...

2. *The armor is complete.* Again, it's the *full* armor. There is no chink in the armor that Christ has provided for His people. We have what it takes.

Several years ago, *U. S. News and World Report* shared the following. Back in 1865 William Tecumseh Sherman wrote a letter to U.S. Grant, and said, "I knew wherever I was that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come--if alive." This is the unwritten, unspoken and unbreakable contract of the battlefield: You will leave no one, dead or alive, in the hands of the enemy.⁵

This is the commitment of our Commander in Chief to us, fellow soldiers. The One who died for us, who endured hell for us, who delivered us, will never surrender us into the hands of the enemy.

Let this sink in, brothers and sisters. We have what we need, and though every day is a battle, and every day involves dangerous struggle, if we know Christ, we know that we have all we need.

There's something else we know, a second reality.

B. We need what we have. We have what we need, but we also need what we have. What does that mean? It means two responses are in order.

1. *We must appropriate all the armor.* "Put on the *whole* armor of God." The *whole* armor is needed. You do not have what it takes in your own strength to stand in

⁴Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. 1995, c1985. *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*. Translation of: Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. W.B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, Mich.

⁵ *U.S. News and World Report*, July 29, 1991, p. 5.

this battle. You do have what it takes, but it's not something within you. It's external. It's something you must put on. And you must put it *all* on.

You see, Satan will attack at your point of vulnerability.

"But," you say, "I've put on most of the armor." Okay, how about the belt of truth? "Well, there's just one little shady area I want to hold on to. I'll be okay, won't I?"

How about the gospel of peace boots? Are you wearing them? Are you seeking to maintain peaceful relationships with the people God has placed in your life?" You say, "Well, I get along great with most people. It's not that big of a deal if there's just that one person I'm not willing to forgive, is it?"

You tell me. Listen to Ephesians 4:26-27, "In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." Do you want to give the devil a foothold in your life? My friend, when we excuse one so-called "little" relational sin, it's like a soldier telling himself as he heads into battle, "I'm ready to go! I've only left one part of my body unprotected."

Brothers and sisters, we have what we need. But we must appropriate it, *all* of it.

2. *We must appropriate all the armor all the time.* We must not underestimate our enemy. Verse 12 is clear. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. We're up against demonic forces.

No, Satan is not omnipresent, nor omnipotent. He's not divine. He's a created being, an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. However, Satan is an incredible creature, highly intelligent, and has at his disposal forces that are organized and extremely active. They are powerful (Mark 5:2-4), intelligent (Acts 16:16), and deceptive. They promote false doctrine and religions, can inhabit bodies, inflict illness, hinder Christian workers (I Thes 2:18), oppose the spread of the gospel, and are able to work miracles.

This is our foe. If you want to read a vivid description of how Satan works, check out 2 Corinthians 11:14-15. "And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve."

You say, "Well I'm a Christian. I'm safe in Jesus' arms. Satan can't touch me."

Be careful. Take a close look at what Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:24-26, "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, *who has taken them captive to do his will.*"

Even believers can be duped by the devil so that they act as if they were his subjects. Satan incited David into sinning against God's command (I Chr 21:1). He deceived Peter into denying the necessity of Christ's sacrifice (Matt 16:21-23). He filled the hearts of Ananias and Saphira to lie (Acts 5).

We have a great enemy. Thankfully, we have a far greater Savior!, who came to the earth 2000 years ago, went to the cross, and according to Colossians 2:15, "...disarmed the powers and authorities" and "made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

So what must we do? First, make sure we are IN CHRIST. And then secondly, live like it by living in vital connection to His church. Standing for Christ is a community effort, and together we fight, not *for* victory, but *from* victory.

“We are more than conquerors *through Him* that loved us (Rom 8:37).” How do we conquer? *Through Him*. This is the life of a Christian soldier. It’s a life of putting on our armor, which is a life of putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the exchanged life.

Back in the 1800s, Horatias Bonar wrote this song that says it well.⁶

*Upon a life I have not lived,
Upon a death I did not die
Another’s life, another’s death, I stake my whole eternity*

*Not on the tears which I have shed
Not on the sorrows I have known
Another’s tears, Another’s griefs,
On these I rest, on these alone.*

*O, Jesus, Son of God, I build on what thy cross has done for me.
There both my life and death I read my guilt and pardon there I see.*

*Lord, I believe, O deal with me
As one who has Thy Word believed.
I take the gift, Lord look on me
As one who has Thy gift received.*

Friends, it’s not about what we do. It’s all about Him and His work. In Christ we have all we need, and we need what we have. But it takes more than mere knowledge.

II. It’s vital that we do.

So practically speaking, how do we prepare ourselves so we can stand in Christ? Paul tells us in verses 14-17. We need to *do* something. We need to take specific action with regards to the armor we have.

This is critical to see. Each piece of armor is something we *have*. But each piece of armor is also something we must *appropriate*.

Ever done any welding? A welder understands this, for he exposes himself to dangerous light every time he does his work. That’s why he has a shield. But the shield will do him no good unless he *uses* it.

That’s what we must do with the armor of God. *Use* it. How? Let’s find out. We’ll look at the first pieces of armor now, and the rest next time, the Lord willing.

When Paul wrote Ephesians, he was a prisoner in Rome. According to verse 20 he was in chains. It’s possible he was actually chained by the wrist to a Roman soldier. Here Paul identifies the six main pieces of a Roman soldier’s equipment: the belt, the breastplate, the boots, the shield, the helmet, and the sword. He says that each of those portray a spiritual resource available to us in Christ.

⁶ It’s called, “Upon a Life I Did Not Live.”

Verse 14 begins, "Stand therefore." The word "stand" is a command. It's followed by a series of participles which tell us HOW we are to stand. Here's the first participle. "Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth."

A. We must wear the belt of truth (14a).

He mentions, first, the belt of truth. The soldier's belt, which was usually made of leather, was what he put on first. Actually it was an undergarment, and not a piece of armor. Yet it was essential. The belt held his sword. The belt wrapped around the soldier's waist in order to draw up his tunic and keep it from dangling down to his feet. He couldn't go to battle if his garment was loose fitting.

You running backs understand this. You don't wear a loose fitting jersey. Why not? You don't want to give your opponent an easy way to grab hold of you. And so, the belt was necessary, for it gave the soldier mobility and freedom.

But it's not just a Roman soldier that wore a belt. Paul is taking this image from Isaiah 11:5, in which Isaiah gives a prophecy 725 years BC regarding the coming Messiah. He's going to come from the line of David, and the Spirit of God will rest on Him. He will invade this earth that's presently held hostage, rescue the poor, and kill the wicked. And here's what He will be wearing, says verse 5, "Righteousness [i.e. truth] shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins."

Jesus Christ is that soldier. He is the One who put on that belt of truth, and conquered the enemy, and rescued the hostages.

Now you, the people He has rescued, do the same. Fasten on the belt. What belt? What is our belt as Christians? Paul says our belt is the same as our Savior's. *Truth*. That which is objective and unchanging, that which is solid and secure, rather than subjective and unreliable. It's truth brings deliverance and freedom. The person who knows the truth, who tells the truth, who lives by the truth, is the person who stands strong and experiences freedom in his life.

What is truth? Truth is God, the One who never changes. Truth subsequently refers to what God has said, for when the One who is truth speaks, what He says will be truth. Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17)."

So God is truth. His Word is truth. It has to be, because God cannot lie. Ultimately, truth refers to the person God sent to make Himself known to the world, His own Son, Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the *truth*, and the life (John 14:6)."

So how do we put on the belt of truth? It involves two actions.

1. *A person puts on the belt of truth when he affirms that Jesus is the truth.* That happens initially at conversion, but it also needs to happen in our lives every day. Satan is a liar. One of his primary tactics is deception. We need to affirm that Jesus is who He claimed to be, the truth.

Yet this word "truth" also carries the sense of integrity and sincerity, even the idea of dependability and faithfulness. Thus, a second action...

2. *A person puts on the belt of truth when he resolves to walk in integrity.* This is our calling, says 1 Peter 2:21, "to follow in His steps," to walk as Jesus walked.

Friends, at all costs we who name the name of Christ are to be honest and truthful, not shady, not unethical in our lives. Why? Here's one very practical reason. Because when we resort to dishonesty, we are playing the devil's game, and we'll never be able to beat him at his own game. He is a liar and the father of lies.

Charles Hodge observed, “Let not anyone imagine that he is prepared to withstand the assaults of the powers of darkness, if his mind is stored with his own theories or with the speculations of other men. Nothing but the truth of God clearly understood and cordially embraced will enable him to keep his feet for a moment, before these celestial potentates. Reason, tradition, speculative conviction, dead orthodoxy, are a girdle of spider webs. They give way at the first onset.”⁷

There’s a powerful word picture. A *girdle of spider webs*. That’s what reason, tradition, speculative conviction, and dead orthodoxy produces. A girdle of spider webs.

So does playing with the truth in our daily living. Let’s be honest. There is a great lack of truthfulness today, even in the lives of those who call themselves Christian. Their word means little. You can’t count on them.

Live that way, and you’re wearing a girdle of spider webs when it comes to defending yourself against the enemy. “Put on the belt of truth,” says our text. This is where it starts. You’ll never, never stand against the powerful forces of Satan unless you affirm that Jesus is the truth and, by His grace, resolve to walk in truth and integrity every day.

Remember, we have what we need, and we need what we have. So let’s put on Christ, who is the truth. And choose to walk in His steps. When we’re closing that business deal, and doing our tax returns, and giving our word that we’ll do something. As well as when we’re wrestling with tough theological questions. Let’s put on the belt of truth, and then we’ll be able to stand against the wiles of the evil one.

How can we stand in the battle? We begin by putting on the belt of truth.

B. We must wear the breastplate of righteousness (14b). “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place (NIV).”

This image comes from Isaiah 59:17. Who else arms Himself this way? The Lord God does.⁸ This is another Messianic prophecy. What will the Messiah do when He comes? He will come as a warrior on a mission, says Isaiah 59:17, to rescue His people, and destroy those who resist. “He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak.”

Satan is the accuser (Rev 12:10), and he loves to accuse God’s people. “You call yourself a Christian. There’s no way you can be a Christian, not after what you just did,” he whispers. How do we withstand his accusations? By doing this, says Paul. Stand in dependence upon your Deliverer, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.

No Roman soldier in his right mind would ever go into a battle without his breastplate.⁹ The Romans had different kinds of breastplates. The most common type was a molded metal chest plate that covered the entire torso, from the neck to the top of the thighs, on both his front and back. Obviously the breastplate was critical.

Friends, a soldier could be in great shape, a great warrior, great at hand to hand combat. But he’d be a fool if he went into battle without his breastplate. Why? What

⁷Hodge, C. 1996. *Commentary on Ephesians*. Index created by Christian Classics Foundation. (electronic ed.). Christian Classics Foundation: Simpsonville SC

⁸ Observation by David Powlison, p. 28.

⁹ Observation by John MacArthur

did this piece of armor protect? It covered the heart and the rest of the vital organs. One arrow through his heart and he's done, no matter how physically fit he is.

What is our breastplate? Paul says we must put on the breastplate of *righteousness* (lit. "breastplate which is righteousness"). There are two kinds of righteousness in the Bible, and we need both.

1. *We need positional righteousness.* Positional righteousness is a right relationship with God. We enter this world as sinners cut off from God. We need to be reconciled to God, made right with God. The Bible calls that justification.

When a person repents of his or her sin and believes in Christ, God declares that person to be right with Him. He does so on the merit of His Son. He gives to the sinner the perfect righteousness of Jesus' perfect life (see Romans 3 for more).

That's where spiritual protection starts, with *positional* righteousness. Listen to Isaiah 61:10, "I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness..."

Has God clothed you with a robe of righteousness? Is your heart protected by the righteousness of Christ? This is our greatest need. Secondly...

2. *We need practical righteousness.* We could call it moral righteousness. Again, we have what we need. 2 Corinthians 6:7 says we have "weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left." But what we have we are to put on. Ephesians 4:24 tells us "to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

We obviously need both, positional and practical righteousness. In fact, you can't separate the two. Being righteous is just as important as being declared righteous.

The name "Satan" means adversary. The word "devil" means slanderer. The evil one loves to attack us by flinging accusations against us, by inflicting us with thoughts of doubt. And he has a hey-day with those who fail to put on the breastplate of practical righteousness.

In his book, *The Believer's Armor*, John MacArthur says the breastplate many Christians are putting on today resembles a paper bib more than the breastplate of righteousness in Ephesians 6. A paper bib may keep baby food off an infant but it won't protect him from a sniper's bullet. When we substitute programs, techniques, and methods in place of Christ's righteousness, we're exchanging the breastplate for a bib.

Here's something you'll never see in the military. They don't say, "Well thanks for coming to boot camp. Since you're here, it would be nice if you'd wear our uniform. And if it wouldn't be too much of an inconvenience, would you like to live in our barracks, eat our food, and take our orders?"

No way. And no way for the Christian. We have all we need, but we need all we have. We need to put on the righteousness of Christ daily. How? Every day we need to review our position. Perhaps quote 2 Corinthians 5:21 out loud and affirm its truth. "Be holy as I am holy," God says in 1 Peter 1:21.

Can you say the following words truthfully as the testimony of your life? Here's what Paul trusted in (Philippians 3:9): "I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a *righteousness of my own* that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the *righteousness that comes from God* and is by faith."

Are we ready for the battle yet? No. We're but a third of the way there.

C. We must wear the gospel of peace boots (15). “And as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”

Some people love shoes. In our society shoes are to a large degree a fashion item. Originally shoes were for protection. One commentator observed (MacArthur), "Frankly we don't need that much protection for our feet. Our streets are paved. Our cars, churches, and offices are carpeted. For the most part we aren't walking over rough stones, wading through mud, or strolling across thorny bushes. We need to understand how terrible the terrain was during the time of Christ."

A soldier needed shoes. But not just any shoes would do. The Roman soldier wore a battle boot. It was like a leather sandal with hob nails on the bottom, tied up with leather straps around the ankles and shins (like a studded tire). Why the studs on the bottom? To keep the soldier's feet from slipping! In close, hand to hand combat, sure footing was critical. One slip and you're done.

Where did Paul get this picture? From Isaiah 52:7. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”

Whose feet are beautiful? Isaiah 52 makes it clear that these shoes belong to the Lord Himself who will come in person, saying, “Here I am (verse 6). I have come to bring salvation.” And how will He do it? He tells us in the very next chapter, Isaiah 53, by becoming The Lamb that would rescue sinners by dying for them.

As Dave Powlison puts it, “The man wearing these shoes is on the march. Stand up and join him.”¹⁰

What is it that gives a person stability in life? Paul tells us in verse 15. We need to have our feet fitted with the “readiness” [KJV says “preparation”]. What does that mean? Paul says our feet need to be equipped. They need to be shod with something. With what? The “gospel of peace.”

My friend, the gospel *is* peace. Man was at war with God, but God made peace through Jesus Christ. So we who belong to Christ are at peace with God. That means we aren't enemies any longer! Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

That's why the devil hates the gospel. That's also why we need the gospel. The lost need it, yes, but we believers need the gospel too, for the gospel does more than just save us. The gospel is part of our armor, and as such, helps us in two ways.

1. *The gospel protects us.* That's why we cover our feet with it. Habakkuk 3:19 says, “The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights.”¹¹

2. *The gospel prepares us for action.* Do you know who the stable Christian is? It's the one who is sharing the gospel of peace with others. Do you know why? If the gospel doesn't mean enough to me that I'm willing and ready to share it with someone else, then it doesn't hold the place of affection it deserves in heart. But if I have have on

¹⁰ David Powlison, p. 30.

¹¹ Hodge states, “As the Gospel secures our peace with God, and gives the assurance of his favor, it produces that joyful alacrity of mind which is essential to success in the spiritual conflict. All doubt tends to weakness, and despair is death.” Hodge, C. 1996. *Commentary on Ephesians*. Index created by Christian Classics Foundation. (electronic ed.). Christian Classics Foundation: Simpsonville SC

the gospel of peace boots, if I am taking the gospel with me wherever I go, then my footing in life will be certain and secure.

Dear church, this is why we are here. Before He left the earth, the One with beautiful feet said in Acts 1:8, “You shall be my witnesses.” He is on the march, and He invites us to join Him.

That’s what the armor is all about, standing strong, so we can spread the gospel long.

Make It Personal: Am I ready for battle?

“Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before His presence with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.” Jude 24-25

Closing Song: #479 “Onward Christian Soldiers”