

Christian Warfare

The Gospel Of Peace

Ephesians 6:13-17

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17 (NASB))

Thus far in our study about the “full armor of God” we have “put on” two of the garments of that armor. We have “girded our loins with Truth” and we have “put on the Breastplate of Righteousness”; now today, we are told that we must “shod our feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace”.

May we begin our thoughts today by again reaffirming our understanding that as we “put on” these garments of the “armor of God” we are, in reality, “putting on” the very Person of Christ Himself. Yes, it is a mystical thought and hard to comprehend, but is nonetheless exactly what is taking place. In Romans 13, we are told to

14 . . . put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14 (ESV))

So then, again as we “put on” “Truth”, Christ Himself is the “Truth”. And Christ is our “Righteousness”. And now here, as we “shod our feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace”, we are again “putting on” Christ.

The word here for “preparation” is not a word that just means some preparedness that we would accomplish. While yes, we should be prepared; this word “preparation” has a deeper meaning. As it is used in this context, it has the connotation of being a “solid foundation”. And the “gospel” is the “solid foundation” for salvation and Jesus is the “cornerstone” of that foundation.

And then also the “shodding of the feet”, the visual image of the specially constructed sandals of the Roman soldiers with hobnails protruding out from the bottom of the soles so that as the soldiers engaged in battle their feet would grip the ground and they would, as these words tell us, be able to “stand firm” therefore.

Again, these are very purposeful words, intended to bring understanding to our otherwise unlearned minds. And it should be our “free will” desire and response to ask, and to seek, and to knock at the door of God to find the deeper meanings of these truths.

And that is especially so as we consider our giving forth of the “Gospel”. So often, as we are faced with telling someone about the “gospel”, instead of our reliance being upon God and His provision, our thoughts go immediately to self, similar to that which Moses experienced when God told Him to go and tell Pharaoh to let His people go. Moses complained that he couldn’t speak very well.

We get concerned about our ability to say the words right, to give the “gospel” simply and correctly. But that should never be. The power of the gospel is never in our words or our ability to speak. The power resides in the gospel itself. It is the very power of Christ Himself. And no stammering tongue can stand in its way. Listen to these words in Romans 1,

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16 (ESV))

Folks, yes, as believers, we should always be diligent in our study of these scriptures so that we can know them, but that is not the determining factor in the effectiveness of the words we speak. Christ Himself is in this gospel and we must simply speak it forth and then let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

Next, here in this verse, this “Gospel” is called the “Gospel of Peace”. And as I prepared for this message, one bible study that I read asked the simple question, “What is the “gospel of peace”, and is the “gospel of peace” different from the other references to the word “gospel”. We read about the “Gospel of the Kingdom”, and the “Gospel of Jesus Christ”, and the “Gospel of the grace of God”, and now here, the “Gospel of peace”. Is there any real difference implied in the varying uses of the word “Gospel”? And the answer given was a simple one, that there is no real difference; that the Greek word translated gospel, “euaggelion”, simply means “good news”. The differences come from the context in which it is used.

But the simplest answer is that “It is the “good news” about all that Jesus Christ is and all that He has done for each of us through His grace and mercy; and specifically, as spoken about in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, the unmerited pardon for all of our sins provided through His death, His burial and His resurrection.

And through the power of His “Gospel”, we gain eternal life for our souls. Listen to these words from 1 John!

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11-12 (NKJV))

Praise the Lord!

Now also, as we consider the “peace” spoken about here that the gospel brings with it, we must again keep in mind that this is no ordinary measure of “peace”. The very person of Christ Himself dwells within this “peace”. In John 14, Jesus said,

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (John 14:27 (ESV))

Peace can often be such an elusive thing for so many, many people, especially for those who have not surrendered their lives to Christ. These scriptures use the word “enmity” to describe that kind of “lack of peace”. And that enmity often fills the heart and mind of a person, anger, frustration and bitterness fills their lives, influencing and controlling so much of what they experience each day. Listen to how God describes it in Romans 8.

7 . . . the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

Note in those words that though the “enmity” being felt by an unbeliever is most often directed against other people, its real problem is with God. Verse 7,

7 . . . the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (Romans 8:7)

Folks, this kind of “lack of peace”, this “enmity” is of a nature that cannot be dealt with through the “behavior modification” programs and the “anger management” programs that the world offers to man. The only cure for this kind of “enmity” is the “gospel of peace” that Jesus is able to provide.

Again, may I bring our thoughts back to the “armor of God” and to the reason we are putting it on. We are stepping out onto the battlefield of the world every day. And we are engaging with people that these scriptures call “carnally minded”, some of them strangers, but most often our co-workers, some our closest friends, and even our family members.

But they are suffering from all the effects of not having Christ as their Savior, especially, as spoken about here, an “enmity” towards God. And they have anger, frustration and bitterness towards the people around them.

And you and I have to always keep in mind that no matter how much we may want to help them with our good advice and counsel, we ourselves cannot “fix” them. The only effective remedy that we can offer to them is the “gospel of peace”, the power of the Lord Jesus in their lives.

Thankfully, some will listen and respond as you give them the gospel, but sadly others will not, but regardless of their response, we must keep marching forward with this gospel. That is the essence of the command concerning this portion of the armor. We are to “shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace”, and keep pressing forward.

Listen to these precious words that ascribe “beauty” to the feet of those who are willing to carry the “gospel of peace” on to others! This from Romans 10,

14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace!” (Romans 10:14-15)

There is a very special mission organization based in Fort Worth, Texas that call themselves “Beautiful Feet Ministries”. French Camp Academy students go there each year to join with the workers of that mission by going out on the streets of Fort Worth to present the “Gospel” to anyone who will listen. Several of our local churches also send groups out there to do the same.

And Beautiful Feet Ministries also goes out from Fort Worth and ministers in other cities and even in other countries. And through their efforts, they fulfill this calling spoken about here in Romans 10.

15 . . . “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace!”
(Romans 10:15)

The “Gospel” truly is the “good news” about salvation and about the eternal life that can come to every soul who will believe in and receive Christ as Savior and Lord.

But what is it that causes people you approach on the street to even want to listen and receive the “Gospel” that you are prepared to give them? Thankfully, that is the part

that God's Holy Spirit takes care of. The Holy Spirit is always busy at work, reaching into every soul and drawing them in the direction of Christ.

A. W. Tozer suggests that one of the ways that the Holy Spirit does His work is given in Ecclesiastes 3. There we are told that

11 He (God) has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV))

Note the wording of this verse carefully! Here in this special passage, God has just finished giving explanation for many of the occurrences of life, both pleasant things and very difficult things, saying . . .

1 To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: 2 A time to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted; 3 A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 (NKJV))

And His words go on and on with the many things of life . . .

And then, right after saying those things, God here tells us about a special concern that He has put into each of our hearts, a concern about "eternity". Verse 11,

11 He (God) has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV))

"Eternity" is not an easy thing for our natural minds to comprehend. Eternity is that mysterious unfathomable existence that takes place "outside of time as we understand time to be", a mysterious existence that took place before "time" actually existed, and then also a similar mysterious existence that will take place long after "time" ceases to be. And the manner in which this scripture is worded implies that God has placed a desire within our hearts to know as much as we can about "eternity", and not just an ordinary desire, but a "hungering" kind of desire.

But strangely, at the same time, God has made our understanding of those "realms of eternity" "unknowable" to us. Our minds are completely helpless to fathom what eternity really is. Those words again,

11 . . . He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV))

May I repeat what I am saying to us . . . The intent within these words of scripture is to say that God has intentionally placed an unquenchable “hunger” within the hearts of men so as to draw them to want to know as much as they can about eternity, what happened before the earth and the universe were formed, and even more importantly, what will happen when it all suddenly ceases to be.

As we look at our culture today and see only busy minds and busy hands caught up in concerns about self and the things that are happening now, we might not be able to clearly recognize that there is a “hungering” really taking place. But it is! It is!

Responses are different, but most everyone is in some way seeking to understand about eternity. Those with scientific minds search through physics and mathematics calculations, trying to figure out how the universe and “life” came into existence. Others will form their beliefs and opinions from mystical sources, like those found in eastern religions, declaring that the “spirits of men” have always existed and are just reincarnated over and over again in different physical forms.

And atheists also do a similar thing, making bold claims about not caring about such things as eternity, saying that it doesn’t exist. But sadly, they really do also hunger. They simply name their “hungering” something else and suffer without relief.

But why is knowing about “eternity” so important to the human heart. It is because the concept of eternity declares to anyone who will listen that there really is “time” beyond “time”, “time” beyond our last breath, life after death; which brings the question, “If that be so, if there is time beyond my last breath, where will I then be and what will be my condition of existence.” And with that question also comes an element of fear, and rightfully so!

And therein lies the necessity and the opportunity for the “good news”, the “Gospel of Jesus Christ”. In the “gospel” all of the mystery of eternity is made clear. And for those who will receive it, all those elements of fear will be dispelled, because for those who receive the “gospel”, “life after that last breath” is happily assured and guaranteed. Because of that, the “gospel” truly is “good news”.

Before we close, may we quickly give one final thought to this matter of “shodding our feet” with the “gospel”; first, that it is the “gospel” and the “gospel” alone that God has ordained with power to save men’s souls. Romans 1,

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16 (ESV))

Secondly, while it is a simple truth that God Himself really can do all things without any help from us, it is also true that in most every circumstance we read about in these scriptures, it is God's custom to use men and angels to actually carry forward with the doing of His work. We can see that from accounts such as with Noah and the Ark, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all their travels and involvements, and with Moses leading the people of Israel and on and on.

And now here, God has especially done that with the "gospel". He has ordained that it must be our "feet" that will carry the "gospel" to a lost and dying world. His "Great Commission" charges each one of us who have received Him as Savior and Lord with the responsibility to "go ye into all the world and preach this gospel" to anyone who will listen. And that we must do! Listen as we close.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20 (NASB))