

“Spiritual Warfare 4: Fancy Footwork”

Text: Ephesians 6:10-15

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

Footwear used to be for protection. Today it is more of a fashion statement. What is the most popular shoe sold today and what is its cost?

- Adidas Response \$79.99
- New Balance 800 Series \$94.99
- Gary Payton Nike \$125.00
- Nike Air Max \$150.00
- Nike Jordan Retro #5 \$150.00

Here is a humorous example from columnist Dave Barry ...

"You want to know what's wrong with America? I'll tell you what's wrong. Too many kinds of sneakers. This problem was driven home to me dramatically when my 10 year old son decided to join the track team. At first I was in favor of this because I was a track man myself at Pleasantview High School where in 1965, and I hope I do not sound too boastful here, I set a NY state record for shortest time on a track team before quitting. So I was glad that my son became interested in this character building sport until he announced he needed new sneakers. This troubled me because he already had new sneakers which cost approximately as much as an assault helicopter but are more technologically advanced. They're the heavily advertised sneaker that have the little air pumps inside. This feature provides an important orthopedic benefit. It allows the manufacturer to jack the price way up. I have done a detailed scientific study of several other parents and my current estimate is that sneakers absorb 83% of the average U.S. family income. This has got to stop! We need Congress to pass a law requiring the sneaker industry to return to the system we had when I was growing up under which there was only one kind of sneaker - namely U.S. Keds which were made from Army Surplus tents and which costs about \$10 or roughly one dollar per pound. This simple act would make our nation strong again. Slow but strong."

Paul tells us in verse 15 that if we're going to live in victory we must put on a spiritual shoe. Tonight I want you to notice two things about this shoe ...

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I. The Function Of The Shoe

Once the breastplate had been fitted into position, the soldier put on his strong army boots or *caligae*. Josephus described them as "shoes thickly studded with sharp nails" (War VI.1.8) so as to ensure a good grip. The military successes both of Alexander the Great and of Julius Caesar were due in large measure to their armies' being well shod and thus able to undertake long marches at incredible speed over rough terrain.

In Paul's day the roads were rough, there were thorns and stones in the roads. There was no pavement or carpet like we have today so shoes were critical. They needed them for protection. History tells us that there have been a number of battles and wars lost because the soldiers did not have the proper footwear. Because when the footwear goes it's hard for the soldier to fight. During the Roman times they had a version of our modern-day mine field.

Many times before a battle was fought the enemy had a method where they would take sharp stakes and drive them into the ground. There would be a razor sharp edge sticking out in an attempt to have the soldier's feet punctured so they couldn't fight. To combat this the Roman soldiers wore a heavy soled shoe that was kind of like a boot with leather that came up the back of the leg. It would lace around and the shoe would be very thick. Embedded in the bottom of the sole would be something like a cleat or a metal that would help them to grab onto the surface that they were fighting on. They didn't want to slip or slide in battle.

Paul is telling us that there is a shoe that Christians need to wear that will create stability. That shoe will keep the Christian stable and keep you from falling. That leads me to the second thing I want you to see ...

II. The Foundation For Standing

Verse 15 is not altogether easy to understand. Literally it reads: "and having shod yourselves as to the feet in readiness [*en hetoimasia*] of the gospel of peace." But what is this readiness or preparation? It can mean preparedness, for the term is applied to a ship's tackling.

[Part of the Christian soldier's equipment is his readiness to go out at any moment to announce the Good News to others. As in Ephesians 2:17, the apostle may be recalling Isaiah 52:7 with its reference to the feet of the herald. *Hetoimasia* can also signify a prepared foundation or base, as frequently in the LXX. In that case the sense would be that the gospel of peace with God through which the believer himself has already been reconciled (Eph 2:17) affords him a sure foothold in the campaign in which he is engaged. This second interpretation is more suitable to the context and had been adopted by the NIV in its first edition "with your feet fitted with the gospel of peace as a firm footing."]

Question: What does "fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace" mean?

Evangelism? Preaching? No! **It has to do with standing.** He's referring to it in the tense of fighting the devil. What he is saying is that if our feet are fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace then we will be able to stand the enemy.

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Read: Romans 10:15

"And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Question: What is the "gospel of peace"?

Man is powerless, weak, ungodly, wicked, and evil. We are unable to gain our own salvation apart from Christ. We are God's enemies until we understand the gospel and receive its message. The Good News to us is that while we were still walking in sin Christ spent His life so we could have peace with God.

Read: Romans 5:6,7,10

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us ... For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

Read: Romans 5:1

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

We now have peace with God. We're no longer an enemy. Now we have grace and hope and help and favor to us. That's what the Gospel of peace is all about. We were on opposite sides of a great gulf from God and He reached out by way of Calvary and the end result is that God is on our side. A better way to state that may be that **we are on God's side**. So, to have your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace means that you not only have experienced Jesus Christ in your life but that readiness is that you now know one thing about your life - **you know that God is on your side!!!** If you're going to stand against the enemy you need to know that God is on your side. (Look at your neighbor and say ... "God is FOR YOU!!!)

Read: Romans 8:28

"And we know that in all things *God works* for the good of *those who love him*, who have been called according to his purpose."

Read: Romans 8:31,35,37

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is *for* us, who can be against us? ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... No, in *all* these things we are *more than conquerors* through him who loved us."

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Bully Illustration: Cherry & The Buffalo High School Incident

Read: I Samuel 17:4,8,10-11,20,22,24,32-33,37

⁴A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall ... ⁸Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me ... ¹⁰Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified ... ²⁰Early in the morning David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry ... ²²David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers ... ²⁴When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear ... ³²David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth” ... ³⁷The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Question: What did Saul and the Israelites forget?

That God was on their side!

Question: When did faith take place in David's story?

Faith took place when David went down to the stream (v. 40). David's statement in verse 37 is a catalyst to faith. It was an attitude he had. Faith is based upon knowledge in something or someone. Faith follows knowledge. David knew that God was on his side which allowed him to fight Goliath.

It's a progression in Ephesians 6. You're ready to fight and you put on the holy life and you walk in righteousness then you can stand on the confidence that God is for you. He'll provide for and deliver you. It is very hard to stand when you don't have the confidence that you're in line with God.

Read: Psalm 34:1-10

"I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice. Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together. I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them. Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing."

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Read: Psalm 37:5

"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun."

Read: Psalm 54:4

"Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me."

Read: Psalm 55:22

"Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall."

Read: Psalm 56:9

"Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me."

Read: Psalm 91:1,2,9-11,14

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust" ... If you make the Most High your dwelling — even the LORD, who is my refuge then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways ... "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

The bottom line once again is found in Romans 8:31, "...If God is for us, who can be against us?" So tonight be encouraged that if you're facing a giant of sickness, or a financial crisis, or if you're doubting God ... be strengthened to know that God is on your side!!!! You are not in this battle alone.

I realize that there are some of you here tonight and you've never realized that you weren't on God's side. You've felt a strange emptiness and have had a desire for it to be filled but weren't quite sure what was missing and tonight you understand that it's the Lord that you need in your life. There is no need to fight the battle alone. There is no need for you to go on any longer being an enemy of God. Jesus died for you and wants to have fellowship and leadership of your life and tonight you want to be on God's side. I want to give you an opportunity to do that.

Others of you are here tonight and have forgotten that God is on your side. You've made a commitment to follow the Lord but have been feeling that you're all alone and tonight you realize that He's been with you all along and you want to thank Him for not giving up on you.

Next Week: Shield Of Faith