

The Armour of God (The Sandals of Peace)

Ephesians 6:15

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, May 30, 2021

Well, before we begin our sermon this morning, I did have one other announcement I wanted to mention before I forgot. And that is that if you're new to our church, we noticed we've had some new visitors with us, we say welcome to you, special welcome to you. And also let you know we want to have a special informational meeting next Sunday after church, after the third service. Now you say after church, people wonder which one, the third service at 12:30. We want to bring in some pizzas and get some drinks and just kind of have an informal time of talking to you about Grace Fellowship Chilliwack, maybe some history of our church, where it began and answer any questions that you might have. We know that some of you come from different backgrounds, you come from different churches. And so you might have some questions about why we do certain things the way we do, and we'd love to talk to you about that with the elders. We do have an elder board here at Grace, there are three elders, myself, Kevin Laser, and Quentin Smith, Kevin just did the Scripture reading. And we would love to talk to you more about our ministry here. But that'll be next Sunday at 12:30. And there will be pizza, if you just call our church office and let us know.

And with that said, I want to begin our sermon time this morning by asking you to open your Bibles with me to the book of Ephesians. Please open with me to a book that says a lot about the church, about what it's supposed to do and what it's supposed to be. And that is the book of Ephesians, chapter 6. As you're turning there, we are in the final chapter of the book of Ephesians this morning. This is the last one, it's on the armour of God, which is a very exciting portion of Scripture, it's so interesting, I thought we couldn't rush through it, we needed to take it one piece at a time. Nothing excites people more than talking about weapons and armour. And so that's what this passage is about. And if you read in verse 10, it says this, Paul writes, and he says,

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 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. Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;** 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.

And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

We'll end our reading there. Just to say a few words about that. If you've been with us for a while, you'll know that we're in a series on the book of Ephesians, called the “All of God” series. That's the title of it. That's what we're calling it, the All of God series, because that's what the book is about. It tells us that our salvation is all of God. It says all the blessings and riches and treasures of the Christian life come from His hand and not from us, which is a theme that's continued in the last chapter. It's a theme that's continued here in Ephesians 6, because verse 10 says, finally be strong in the Lord. It uses that phrase ‘in the Lord’ there. The verse actually goes on and says, in the strength of His mind, and that's three words for strength in this verse, three words for power, but they all go back to this fact, you get this in the Lord, because that's where your power comes from. You get the strength to live the Christian life from your relationship to Him. In fact, this term ‘in the Lord’, it's a locative phrase in Greek, which means it's a term of location. Because it refers to the fact that when you trust in Him, when you believe in the Lord, your soul changes locations, it goes from one place to another. When you guys came into the tent this morning, your body changed locations, you went from the light outside to a darker setting within. In a similar way, when you trust in Christ, your soul goes into Him, and one of the benefits of that is strength, and power, and might. Think about it this way. Paul says, yes, your salvation is all of God. Yes, all the blessings and riches and treasures come from His hand, but so does the ability to keep them, so does the ability to hold on to your treasures. That comes from him too. That's good news. Because if you think about it, we can't do that, we can't hold on to our salvation because we sin, we mess up, we fail. If it were up to us, we would lose our salvation. But Paul says, it's not up to us. It's up to the Lord and He never loses it.

And one way He helps us to hold on to our salvation is with the armour of God. One way he helps us hold on to our possessions is with his armor. And as he describes it, Paul mentioned six pieces of armor here, he gives us six items in the list. And the third one is mentioned down in verse 14, sorry, verse 15. If you look in verse 15, again, and it says, stand firm, therefore, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I'm gonna walk you through this passage in a moment, we're going to talk about what it says. But the third piece of armour here is called the sandals of peace. The sandals of peace, which is interesting, because if you notice the word sandals is not in the passage. It's not mentioned in the Greek or in the NASB version, because it didn't need to be, because when Paul mentions your feet here, everybody knew what he was talking about. Everybody knew what he's referring to. He's referring to your sandals. He's referring to the piece of armour that covers your feet. I noticed as you guys came in today, not too many of you are wearing sandals, it is warm outside, but not that warm. Most of you are wearing something else. But it wasn't that way back then. It wasn't that way at this point in time, because the technology for the modern shoe had not been invented. They didn't know how to do that. So everybody wore sandals. Cold, hot, rainy, dry. This is the only thing they had. A pair of open-toed kind of slippers made out of leather, that would go over the bottom of your feet. They would rest on top of the bottom. Which was essential to them, it was a big part of their wardrobe

because they walked everywhere. They traveled everywhere entirely on foot, especially if you were a soldier, because they didn't have planes back then, they didn't have boats or ships to transport the army. All they had was your feet. You had to walk there. You wanted to go to battle, you walked, you marched behind the guy in front of you. Which meant that this part of your armour was very essential, it was very important. Because if you didn't have this, you couldn't fight. If you couldn't walk, you couldn't get to the battle, so that you were useless. They would just leave you by the side of the road. So to prevent that, generals at this time often spent a large amount of money on their soldiers' footwear.

We often don't think of shoes as being that important. But generals back then spent a lot of money on their sandals. In fact, it was said that some famous commanders like Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great won their battles almost entirely on the basis of this, almost on the basis of their soldiers' feet because they moved so quickly. They covered large amounts of ground so fast. It was said that was the secret of Alexander's military success, his army caught everybody off guard because of their movement, and Paul says in a similar way, if you want to win the battle against the enemy, you need to shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. You need to cover your feet with the peace of God. That's a long phrase there. It's kind of hard to read, but the keyword is peace. Which is the word 'eiréné' in Greek, which refers to a state of calmness or tranquility of the soul. It refers to a state of rest that comes from being a Christian. If you notice, Paul puts this right after the breastplate of righteousness in verse 14, he puts it right after that piece of armour, because a soldier would put his sandals on right after that, he would put his sandals on right after he put on his breastplate. And the significance is that once you've trusted in Christ, once He is your righteousness, then the next thing you need to do is this- you need to have peace with that. You need to let it soothe your soul. You shouldn't go around feeling anxious all the time. You shouldn't be worried and afraid.

And I mention this because so many Christians do this today, don't they? So many Christians are anxious people. They're worried and afraid. Because they try and they try and they try and they fail and they try to repent of their sin, it doesn't work so they get angry with God. They get upset. Paul says it shouldn't be that way for us. You shouldn't be upset and angry. Because you have peace. You're not trying to get it, you already have it. You're not trying to earn peace or work your way to peace, it's already yours. I also mentioned this because other Christians do this as well, they get so lazy in their Christian life, they don't ever go anywhere. You see them today, they're in this sin, you see them tomorrow, they're in the same place. Same sin, same weakness, same problems. To the point, they just give up, Paul says you shouldn't give up. You shouldn't do that. You need to keep moving, because God has given you sandals of peace. On one hand, you have peace with God, you're settled, on the other hand, you need to go somewhere with it. You need to move and make progress. And that's what I want to talk to you about this morning. In fact, if you followed some of the recent conflicts in the States and the wars there, you'll know, there is a common problem that's come up with soldiers who returned from the battlefield known as PTSD, post traumatic stress disorder, where the soldiers come back stressed out and traumatized over all the things that they've seen and heard. And as I was studying this passage this week, it really struck me that, there's a spiritual version of this as well, there is a Christian version of

PTSD, where you come back stressed out and traumatized over the fight with sin. To the point that it paralyzes you, and you don't do anything. Well, what we're gonna see this morning is that God has an answer to that. He has a way out of the trauma. And that is by remembering that he has made peace with you. And that's what we're going to talk about this morning.

So if you're taking notes in Ephesians 6, we're going to look at three tips for wearing the sandals of peace. That's our outline for today. That's what it's about. If you're taking notes in Ephesians 6:15, we're going to look at three tips for wearing the sandals of peace. And we're going to do this because let's be honest, this is a beautiful word, isn't it? The word peace. You might just smile when you say the word peace, you might feel like you don't have peace. Today, you're missing it. The word rest. We live in a world where there's so little peace right now. It's such a rare thing. Things are so crazy right now, aren't they? They're so messed up. In fact, someone asked me recently, they said, what's it like pastoring a church in Canada right now? And this is what I said. I said, it's like pastoring a church on a roller coaster. Every day just up and down and sideways. And people's heads are spinning right now. They don't know what to do. But the truth is that as a Christian, it doesn't have to be that way for us. As a Christian, it can be different, because even if it's crazy out there, it doesn't have to be crazy in here, amen? And even if it's wild and nuts and messed up in Chilliwack and BC, it doesn't have to be that way in our heart. You can have peace with God. A peace that transcends all that, a peace that goes beyond. And in fact, this is what separates a Christian from a non-Christian at the end of the day, it's the issue of peace. Because we all experience the same thing out there, but a Christian deals with it differently on the inside. And that's where we're going to look at in this passage.

So if you're taking notes, three tips for wearing the sandals of peace, the first one is that **you have to put them on**. A first tip for wearing the sandals of peace, is that you have to put this on. Which means that in order to fight your sin, you can't just look at God's peace and admire it from a distance, you have to apply it. You have to apply it to your lives. If you look back in verse 10 again, Paul writes, and he says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armour of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." I read all that to you again because I wanted you to see that a keyword in this passage is the word 'stand'. It's repeated three times in here for emphasis. It comes up over and over again, to say this is what God wants you to do with the devil. This is what He wants you to do with your sin when it comes. He wants you to stand up to it, He wants you to fight. A lot of Christians make the mistake of thinking that the best way to deal with sin is to run away and flee from it, and there's a sense in which that's true. There's a sense in which you need to run away from sin. But there's another sense in which you need to fight it and kill it. And that's what this is

referring to here. And the piece of armor that helps you with this in verse 15, is the sandals of peace, because that's what you stand in. That's what you fight in. You do it in your sandals.

And just to say a few words about this, if you think about it, we wear a lot of different types of shoes in our world today. We have a lot of different styles. Some of you have a closet full of them, you have a house full of them, full of shoes. But it wasn't that way back then. Because in the first century, you had one type of shoe and that was it, you had your sandals. And in fact, the Roman soldier would have typically had two pairs of these, he would have had two pairs of sandals, his work sandal and his house sandal. Because his work sandal would have been very uncomfortable, because it had a pair of sharp nails or spikes on the bottom of them. And anybody knows that a wife would not let you in the house with those. And so kind of like our modern cleats, they had tacks on the bottom. I'll talk about that in a moment. And also they were very heavy. They were cumbersome because they were covered in jewels. They were covered in rich gold and silver, because they were soldier's way of saying, 'Look at me, look at how great I am.' They would decorate their shoes that way. Our modern armies don't do that, I think they probably get mocked and laughed at, if they came to war with jewels on their boots. But that's what they did. They were also often covered in dirt and blood and guts from the battlefield. Because they were a source of pride for the soldier, they were a source of admiration. And in a similar way, this is a source of pride for us, this is a source of admiration. Paul says, you need to shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

The word 'shod' here, it's the Greek word 'hupodeo', which is a compound word from 'hupo'- under, and 'deo'- to bind. It means to bind under, or strap something under your feet. Because that's how the Romans wore them, they would wrap a cord all the way from the top to the bottom of their sandal and tie it off. To make sure it didn't come off in a battle, to make sure it didn't fall off. Because as you can imagine, there would be nothing worse than that, and nothing more dangerous. And in a similar way, Paul says we have to do this with God's peace, we have to do the same thing with this issue. We have to wrap it around us, so it doesn't come off. And let me tell you why this is important. Let me tell you why he puts us in here, in a passage on dealing with sin. Because when sin comes the first thing it threatens is your peace, isn't it? The first thing it threatens is your state of mind, your joy, your comfort, your rest. Because it gives you PTSD, it stresses you out, because it makes you say, 'well, there's no way I could be a Christian and act like this. There's no way I could be saved and do this evil deed.' And so it gives you turmoil inside, it makes you go nuts. So in order to fight that, Paul says, in order to get over it, you've got to put this on you, you've got to go back to the fact that you're not saved by that, you're not a Christian because of the things that you do. You're Christian because God has made peace with you. You're a Christian because of Christ, and Christ alone. And when sin comes, you have to go back to that, you have to remember that.

You know, they've done studies on this recently and found that people are really struggling with this today, they're really struggling with peace. Because anxiety is on the rise, at least according to some of the studies. People are more worried now than ever before, because of COVID-19 and the things related

to that. But what the studies have also found is that in many cases it's not that different for Christians. Unfortunately, we're anxious too, but over something else, a lot of Christians are anxious over their sin. They're worried over their failures and their shortcomings and their weaknesses. To the point that it paralyzes them, it keeps them from going anywhere. Because every time they fail they they bring back up the list of all the evil things they've done, all the terrible things in their mind, and they say, 'oh no, God is gonna get me now, He's gonna send me straight to hell.' And what they don't realize is that that's not the way salvation works. That's not the way the Christian life works. Because if you've trusted in Christ, God doesn't send you to hell anytime you sin. He doesn't punish you because He's already done that at the cross. He's already punished His Son there. And so you need to let it go now. You need to trust in that work on the cross, and move on with your life. You know, it's been said that it's a foolish thing to beat yourself up for the sins that Jesus died for. And it's a silly thing to kill yourself for the things that killed Him on the cross, you shouldn't do that. That sin is dead, it's buried and leave it alone. And let it bring you peace.

Now, this doesn't mean that we don't take our sin seriously, because we do, we take it very seriously. In fact, that's what this chapter is about. The whole armor of God was given to you to take your sin seriously and kill it. And this doesn't mean that we don't grieve over sin, and mourn over it, because we do. We grieve over sin all the time. But it means that we don't stay there. This just means that we don't stay in the same miserable place, because we remember God has made peace with us. You know, I'll never forget the time when I'd given into a sin some time ago, I'd lost my temper and kind of blew up on someone. And I felt terrible about it. I felt awful until a buddy of mine said Jeremy, Jesus already died for that on the cross. Don't you think that's enough? Don't you think you should leave it there, and repent and move on? And friends, he's right. That's how we need to handle our sin this morning. Because God has made peace. Which brings us to another point to consider, another tip for wearing the sandals of peace. The first one is you need to put them on. Which means that in order to fight, you don't need to look at God's peace from a distance and just admire it, you need to apply it to your lives, need to wear it under you.

That brings us to a second point to consider, and that's this. **You need to use the sandals as well.** A second tip for wearing the sandals of peace is that you need to use them. Which means you need to let them take you somewhere. It's the whole point of shoes, isn't it? The whole point of sandals is to get you from one place to another. And so in the fight with sin, you need to use the peace of God to do that. To help you make progress. And I won't read this passage to you again, for the sake of time, I won't go through everything that it says. But I do want to mention that as you read this passage and go back through it, one thing that jumps out at you are all the action verbs in here. Paul gives you multiple calls to action or to do something, because that's the point. That's what God wants you to do with your sin, He wants you to act on it. He wants you to do something about it. He doesn't want you to sit there like a bump on the log, or sit there and just say, 'Boy, this is terrible.' He actually wants you to put it to death. And in order to do that, verse 15 says you need to shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

The word 'preparation' is helpful for this point, because it's a word that means preparation or readiness. The sandals were given to make you ready to do something. In fact, some of your Bibles translate it that way. Because if you have the ESV version, it says, "And having put on the readiness of the gospel." A lot of us don't do that in our world today. When you put on your shoes, you're not always ready to do something. But if you think about an athlete or someone like that, when he puts the shoes on, he's ready to play, right? That's the whole idea, if you're a soldier, you put on your shoes, you're ready to go to war. That's what this is for. Some of you do have work boots, you put them on when you're ready to work. These shoes were given for you to be ready to fight and kill your sin. They weren't given to you to be lazy. So that you would say, when you sin, so that you wouldn't say, 'I don't need to worry about that sin because Jesus died for it.' That's not what these sandals are for. They weren't given to you, so you would say, 'well, I don't have to take care of my sin because it's already been taken care of at the cross.' That's not the idea here. It should have the opposite effect on you, because it should make you say when you sin, you should say, 'I can't believe Jesus did that for me. I can't believe that He died for me. He loved me enough to go to the cross. And I'm going to repent now. I'm going to turn away from it.' When you see the Savior's broken and beaten body, and when you see His bruised and swollen face, and you realize that I did that, it was my sin that put Him there, it should make you change. You can't go on the same way.

You know, in my studies this week I came across a list of 10 reasons why a Christian should hate sin. And they were very helpful. Because it mentioned several things like the fact that sin is so ugly, you should hate sin because it's hideous and repulsive and can't help but hate it. And it said you should also hate sin because it's deadly, it'll destroy your soul. Nothing good ever comes from sinning. But the greatest reason it mentioned was this, the greatest reason you should despise sin is because Jesus died for it. It was your sin that took Him to the cross. He didn't go to the cross just to make the world a better place and to help people get along, He went there first and foremost, to die for your wretched behavior. So that you could be right with God. It's your sin that did that. And the cross should compel you to hate it now. It should make you look at your sin and say, 'I can't stand it, it makes me sick.' Because of what it cost Him.

In fact, that's what the book of Ephesians is about. As we studied it, you'll know this is the message of the book. And that is that you need to change in light of what God has done for you. First three chapters are all about what God has done, He has saved you, He has raised you, He has seated you up in the heavenlies. And the rest of the book is the fact that you need to live that out now. Your life needs to be different as a result of the cross. It needs to take you from the heavenlies and put feet on it. Make you walk it out. Which brings us to one more point to consider this morning. Just one more tip for wearing the sandals of peace. Just to review, the first one is you need to put them on. Which means that in order to fight sin, you have to take what Jesus did and apply it to your lives, you have to live it out. And second one is this, you need to use the sandals as well. Which means you need to let them take you somewhere, you need to let them move you to a better place in the fight with sin. As you look at the

cross, and as you look at what Jesus did for you there, it has to compel you to move. We sing a lot of songs and we say, 'boy, that song moved me. It emotionally took me somewhere.' The Cross has to do that for you as a Christian.

Which brings us to one more point to consider, just one more tip for wearing these sandals. And that is this **you need to stand in them**. We've already said a few words about this. So I won't say too much more. But a third and a final tip for wearing the sandals of peace is that you need to stand in them, which means that you need to rest in them. You need to put all your weight in them. So you don't trip and fall in the battle. If you read, starting in verse 14, again through verse 15, Paul says this, he says, "Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness. And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." I wanted to read that to you, because if you notice, verse 14 mentions that word 'stand' again. And I really can't emphasize this enough, because Paul uses the word 'stand' over and over again, to remind you that this is how you win a war. This is how you get victory over it, you have to stand up to the enemy. Nobody ever won a war by backing down. Nobody ever won a war by giving in, you have to resist. Which is why this part of the armour is so important, because this is what you stand in.

And just to explain that, you know, the Roman soldiers didn't fight the way we do. They didn't fight with the same battle strategy. Because they did it close up. They did it, they liked to do it nearby, man to man. Most of the fighting that goes on today occurs far away, you hide behind a rock and you shoot somebody 100 yards away. But that wasn't the way they did that. They would shoot arrows from time to time but the Romans thought that was sissy, they thought that was kind of a weak way to fight. So they wanted to do it hand to hand, which means that in order to do that, we'll actually explain that a little more, they would often form a shield wall. We'll talk about this next week. But they could almost stretch for a mile long against the enemy. And the idea of the wall was, that anything that came up against that would meet resistance. And in order to do that you had to have one piece of equipment, that kept you in the same place, when the enemy came. And that's what these sandals were for. They were there to keep you from being pushed around. They were there to keep you from being shoved in the battle. That's why they had nails fastened to the bottom of them. They weren't for kicking or stepping on the enemy. Although they probably did that from time to time. They were primarily to keep you from falling over. They were to keep you from compromising your position.

And Paul says this is the same way with this. It's the same way with the battle with sin. You need something to keep you from compromising. You need something to keep you from falling over. And that is the peace of God. And this is so important. It's such a big deal, because so many Christians seem to forget this today. They forget that the enemy wants them to compromise. It's one of his strategies. The devil loves to trick you. He loves to get you to change your mind. And some Christians fall for that, because they're so wishy-washy all the time. They just go back and forth between this idea and that idea, this doctrine and that doctrine. Paul says you shouldn't do that as a Christian. You shouldn't go back and forth, because God wants you to stand. He wants you to stay in the same place. Just like you have nails

fastened to the bottom of your feet. So that when the enemy comes, he meets resistance. So when the devil comes, he doesn't push you down. This is also important and such a big deal, because some people forget this. They forget to fight for the right things. They fight, but they fight for some side issue. They fight, but they want to fight over something like the coronavirus or the vaccines, and all this stuff going on with that. Paul says that's not what we fight over, primarily. That's not what we stand over, we stand over the gospel.

The word 'gospel' actually is mentioned in verse 15 here in this passage, and it is the word that means 'good news'. You have peace with God because of good news. And the good news is that Jesus died for your sins. That's what you stand on. That's what your feet rest on. So we need to remember that. I can't tell you how many times I've seen people forget this in recent weeks. How many times I've seen them stand on the wrong thing, and stumble over and lose their balance and lose all sense of perspective. What this passage says is there's a better way to handle that, there's a better way to respond. You need to trust in Jesus Christ and call on His name. He's the one who saves you. He's the one who died for you. And friends, let's face it, this world is changing, isn't it? Make no mistake about it, it's getting worse. I read in the history books that Canada used to be called a Christian nation, years ago, let me tell you, that day is over. It may come back, but it may not. And if you're going to be a Christian in the next 10-20-50 years, you're going to have to get used to the fact that you're not going to be very popular for it. People aren't gonna like you. But that's okay. That's alright, because you have something to stand on. You have something to rest on. And that is the peace of God in the midst of all of that. Even if it's crazy out there, it doesn't have to be crazy in here. So will you do that this morning? Will you stand on the peace of God? Let me close in a word of prayer. And ask the Lord to give us grace that we would do that.

Father, we pray for your help in this, this morning. As we think of your peace and rest and all these things that we've talked about, we were reminded of the fact that we do fall short in this area. And not one of us probably would say this morning that 'wow, I'm always at peace. And I'm always at rest. And I'm always standing on the right things and moving in the right way and all these things'. Father, we need your grace. Thank you Lord for this reminder, that we have such a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ who died for our sins, and not only that, He gave us peace with you. And even, furthermore, He gave us this armour that we can wear in the battle with sin. So Lord, would you help us to go out this morning and apply this and live this out? May we stand on the grace that you've given us. And as we have the Lord's Supper would Christ be glorified. As we use this memorial to unite us, draw us together and to give praise and glory to your name for the sacrifice of our Savior. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.